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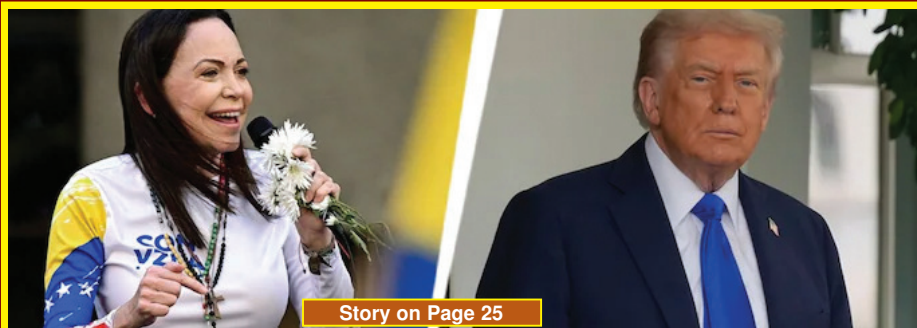
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## Venezuela's Maria Machado dedicates Nobel Prize to Trump

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



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



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## The American Dream turned nightmare Gujaratis in Peril in US Motel Business.

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

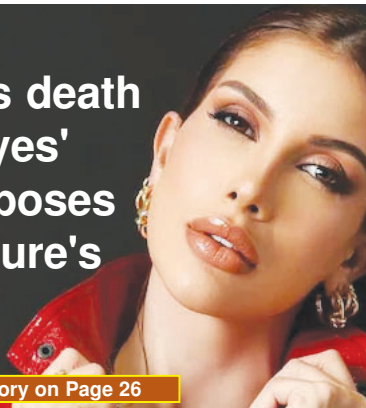
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## Big Crackdown Coming: India To Audit All Cough Syrup Makers

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

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

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# The American Dream turned nightmare Gujaratis in Peril in US Motel Business

(By Our Staff Reporter) Recent tragedies highlights disturbing trend: Gujarati motel owners in the US are facing increasing violence. Rakesh Patel, who was shot point-blank in the head in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania is a stark reminder of the dangers. This isn't an isolated incident. Here's a look at some recent violence:

## Why is this happening?

Motels are often targeted by criminals due to their cash-heavy nature and isolated locations. Long hours and understaffing make owners vulnerable.

Lack of adequate local government support and community initiatives. We need to stop this cycle of violence. Many Gujarati families have found success in the American motel industry, but a dark side

is emerging: a rising number of violent crimes targeting them. Why are they particularly vulnerable?

**Here are some key factors from recent reports:**

## Risky, Remote

**Locations:** Many motels are in isolated areas, making them easy targets for criminals and difficult for law enforcement to respond quickly.

**Late-Night Solo Shifts:** Often, family members, including women and seniors, work alone during late-night hours, increasing their exposure to danger.

**Cash-Intensive, Soft Targets:** Motels, especially budget ones, often handle significant amounts of cash and

are perceived as "soft targets" due to limited security measures.



It's a heartbreaking situation for a community striving for a better life. We need to raise awareness and push for better safety protocols and support for these families.

The Gujarati community, the Patels in particular, is known for owning and running profitable businesses across the US. But a pattern of the community's vulnerability to crime while

operating businesses has emerged in recent years. This year alone, there have been at least seven deaths of Gujaratis operating or owning motels in the US. The most recent incident was reported on Monday, from Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, where

Rakesh Patel (50), a native of Surat, was shot point-blank in the head. Patel, who was a partner in the motel, worked as the manager there. Another incident was reported on October 5, when Anil Patel and Pankaj Patel, with roots in Gujarat, were shot dead at a motel in North Carolina. This came months after a Gujarati woman and her father were gunned down in South Carolina during an attempted robbery at a convenience store. Reports suggest that most attacks on Gujaratis in the US have been linked to robberies or

disputes at motels, gas stations, and convenience stores—businesses the community is known to own. These businesses, especially motels and gas stations, are often tucked along highways, or in isolated towns, according to a New York Times report, making them a hotspot for crimes ranging from drug deals to prostitution, break-ins, and shootings. On September 10, Chandra Mouli 'Bob' Nagamallaiah, a Karnataka native managing the Downtown Suites Dallas Motel, was beheaded on its premises. The motel that Nagamallaiah managed was owned by a person of Gujarat origin.

## OVER 60% OF US MOTELS OWNED BY GUJARATIS

Motels and gas stations are very successful businesses, where the cashflow is steady—a reason why Gujarati business owners have grown exponentially in the US since the 1960s.

## Indian man breaks into Singapore flat, molests US woman in sleep; jailed



An Indian national, working in Singapore's construction industry, has been sentenced to 13 months in jail after pleading guilty to two charges of voyeurism and one count of outrage of modesty of an American woman. Indian national Thirupathi Mohandas, 41, had four other charges, including two counts of housebreaking, taken into consideration during his sentencing. Mohandas found the woman attractive after seeing her in a condominium unit through a window and broke into the apartment to molest her while she was asleep. The Straits Times newspaper reported.

The 35-year-old American woman discovered his act, but he escaped, only to break into the apartment again just two days later – this time looking at her while he committed a sex act. "As a result of the accused's actions, the victim felt scared and disgusted," Deputy Public Prosecutor Ernest Chua said, adding that the victim sought help

from her condominium's security guard, who called the police. Before midnight on May 4, Mohandas was arrested by police officers who saw him loitering in the area outside the condominium unit. He admitted that he had intended to see the woman again. Chua asked for Mohandas to be jailed for between 12 and 18 months, noting the high degree of premeditation and serious violation of privacy in this case, according to the report. Mohandas' lawyer Ang Boon Yaw said: "(My client) is deeply ashamed of his behaviour and has cooperated fully with the authorities throughout the investigation period." District Judge Sharmila Sripathy-Shanaz said during sentencing that Mohandas had conducted a sustained campaign of harassment over three days, and his actions reflected a "recalcitrant brazenness and audaciousness".



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# PM flags Khalistani extremism in meeting with Starmer: Need to move against them

Vikram Misri described Keir Starmer's visit as "truly a partnership for the people", highlighting that India and the UK are working together on multiple fronts to benefit citizens of both countries.

(By Our Staff Reporter) During UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit to India, the issue of Khalistani extremism was discussed in detail in his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said. "PM Modi emphasised that radicalism and violent extremism have no space in democratic societies and should not be allowed to use or abuse the freedoms provided by societies. There was a need to move against them within the legal framework available on both sides," Misri added. Misri described the visit as "truly a partnership for the people", highlighting that India and the UK are working together on multiple fronts to benefit citizens of both countries. He noted that the landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two nations will support India's vision of a Viksit Bharat and generate employment



opportunities for the youth. Starmer is accompanied by a high-powered delegation, including 125 of the UK's most prominent business leaders, entrepreneurs, and educationists—the largest-ever UK business delegation visiting India and nine vice-chancellors from major UK universities planning collaborations in India. PM Modi also said that these nine UK universities will open campuses in India. The UK PM engaged with

Indian business leaders, visited Yash Raj Films to explore collaboration in film production, and participated in a football-related event. In his address, Starmer asked industry leaders from both countries to outline what their governments could do to remove barriers preventing them from capitalising on opportunities. "We want to support you to maximise the potential in relation to this trade agreement," Starmer said, noting

that trade and investment had already seen a £6 billion boost in the three months since the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was signed in July. The discussion on radicalisation came against the backdrop of a recent breach of security during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to London in March, when protesters disrupted an event at Chatham House. On the official side, PM Modi received

Starmer at Raj Bhavan for wide-ranging discussions on regional and global issues. The leaders also interacted with UK university vice-chancellors and the reconstituted India-UK CEOs Forum. Trade and investment were a key focus, with Misri noting that the FTA is undergoing ratification in both countries. The visit provided an opportunity to deepen economic engagement and derive full benefits from tariff reductions. New joint investments were also announced to boost the climate technology startup fund, supporting innovation and technology collaboration. Misri further highlighted that India has received UK support for a permanent seat on the reformed UN Security Council, calling it a significant gesture of mutual appreciation.

## Mobile for repair reveals sex assaults, gets Indian-origin brothers jailed in UK

(By Our Staff Reporter) A routine repair job of a mobile phone led to the conviction of Vruj Patel, a 26-year-old Indian-origin man from east London, who was sentenced



visible in the recordings. Vruj Patel admitted to serious charges, including rape of a child under 13, assault of a child under 13 by penetration, and causing a child to engage in sexual activity, all related to one victim. He also confessed to raping and sexually assaulting a woman over 16. Patel was placed on the sex offenders' register indefinitely, while Kishan faces a 10-year sexual harm prevention order, according to the BBC report.

### POLICE ISSUE APPEAL FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS TO COME FORWARD

to over 22 years in prison for horrific sexual crimes, including the rape of a child under 13. The sentencing took place at Snaresbrook Crown Court on October 7, 2025, after Patel pleaded guilty to 17 charges. His brother, Kishan Patel, was also jailed for 15 months for possessing indecent images of children. The case unravelled when videos depicting child sex abuse were found on a device belonging to Kishan Patel. Detectives identified Vruj Patel after his face appeared briefly in one of the clips, according to the BBC. Further searches uncovered additional footage, including recordings of Vruj raping a young woman after a university night out and voyeuristic videos of a young girl. The Metropolitan Police confirmed Patel's identity through clothing and jewellery

Detective Sergeant Rob Blant, who led the investigation, called Patel a "cowardly, opportunistic offender" who targeted vulnerable women and children. "His sentence reflects the severe threat he poses," Blant said. Most contact offences occurred in 2018, but Patel's voyeuristic behaviour predates these incidents. Suspecting more recent offences, police have appealed for survivors to come forward, noting Patel may have had access to children at his or relatives' homes. The discovery of such material during a device repair highlights the hidden nature of these crimes and the role of technology in exposing them.

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# Modi Praises Netanyahu and Trump for Gaza Peace Deal, Joins Global Leaders Welcoming Ceasefire Agreement



(News Agency) Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the successful implementation of the first phase of U.S. President Donald Trump's

Gaza Peace Plan, calling the agreement a major step toward restoring stability and humanitarian relief in the region. In a post on X, Modi said he welcomed the release of hostages and the expansion of

aid to Gaza's civilians, reaffirming that "terrorism in any form or manifestation is unacceptable anywhere in the world." Israel's Prime Minister's Office confirmed the conversation, stating that Modi had personally called Netanyahu to convey his congratulations on the "agreement achieved for the release of all of the hostages." Modi's statement comes as world leaders across continents hailed the deal as a breakthrough after two years of devastating conflict. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the development a "crucial step for global stability," noting that halting violence anywhere in the world "increases security for all." He expressed gratitude to Trump

and the United States for their diplomatic leadership and urged continued international cooperation to ensure peace holds. French President Emmanuel Macron also celebrated the ceasefire, describing it as "great hope for hostages, for Palestinians in Gaza, and for the entire region." In a message on X, Macron commended the mediation efforts of Trump, Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey and called for full compliance with the agreement, emphasizing that it should mark "the end of war and the beginning of a political solution based on the two-state framework." Macron added that France stands ready to participate in reconstruction efforts and will

discuss next steps with international partners in Paris. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen echoed Macron's remarks, calling the peace agreement "a result of broad international collaboration" and praising the roles of both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. She underscored that "all hostages must be released safely and a permanent ceasefire must be established." Von der Leyen reaffirmed the European Union's commitment to humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, saying the EU "will continue to support the swift delivery of aid into Gaza" and stand ready to help rebuild when conditions allow.

## Punjab farmers slam hefty fines on paddy burning amid inadequate flood compensation

(News Agency) Farmers and labour unions, responding to a nationwide call by the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (Bharat), staged statewide protests across Punjab on Monday, burning effigies of the Centre and state government at 112 locations across 19 districts. Addressing a large gathering at Golden Gate in Amritsar, union leader Sarwan Singh Pandher demanded immediate compensation for farmers affected by recent floods. He

sought Rs 70,000 per acre for damaged paddy crops, with 10% of that amount allocated to farm labourers. He also called for full compensation for livestock and poultry losses, repair of damaged houses, and free supply of diesel, fertilisers, and seeds to support the upcoming wheat sowing season. Pandher urged the government to remove the five-acre cap on compensation and ensure relief reaches all affected farmers. He also demanded a

judicial enquiry into the alleged mismanagement of water releases from Punjab's dams, and proposed building permanent embankments by converting vulnerable river stretches into canal-like structures to prevent future flooding. On the issue of stubble burning, Pandher criticised the imposition of Rs 30,000 fines on farmers, pointing out that the compensation for crop damage barely amounts to Rs 20,000 per acre. He argued

that farmers do not burn stubble by choice and urged the government to either ensure proper stubble management systems or provide Rs 200 per quintal or Rs 6,000 per acre to help farmers manage it on their own. The Morcha also demanded an end to FIRs, fines, and red entries against farmers for burning stubble. Pandher claimed 94% of pollution comes from the corporate sector, yet farmers, who "produce oxygen year-

round", are being targeted. He warned of massive gheraos of officials if action against farmers continued. Other demands included no deductions in paddy procurement, payment of pending sugarcane dues, and fair prices for cotton and basmati crops. Despite bad weather, all 112 protest sites saw strong turnout. Thousands of farmers, labourers, and women joined the protests under the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha Punjab.



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# PM Modi Condemns Attack on Chief Justice Gavai, Calls Incident 'Utterly Condemnable'

(News Agency) Prime Minister Narendra Modi has strongly condemned the attack on Chief Justice of India BR Gavai that took place earlier today inside the Supreme Court premises, calling the act "utterly condemnable" and saying it has "angered every Indian." The Prime Minister spoke directly to Justice Gavai on Monday evening to express his concern and appreciation for the Chief Justice's composure during the shocking event.



place for such reprehensible acts in our society. It is utterly condemnable," the Prime Minister said in a post on X. He also praised the Chief Justice's calm reaction, adding that it demonstrated his "commitment to justice and the spirit of the Constitution." The incident occurred when an elderly lawyer, identified as Rakesh Kishore, threw a shoe

not reach the bench, and Kishore was quickly restrained by security. Chief Justice Gavai, who was seated with Justice K Vinod Chandran, remained calm and told the courtroom, "Don't get distracted by all this. We are not distracted. These things do not affect me," before continuing the session as normal. Eyewitnesses reported that Kishore, a Delhi-based lawyer, shouted "Sanatan ka apman nahi sahenge" (We will not tolerate insults to Sanatan Dharma) while being escorted out. The Chief Justice later instructed authorities to

release him with a warning. Delhi Police questioned Kishore for three hours but did not register a formal complaint, returning his belongings afterward. The Bar Council of India responded swiftly, suspending Kishore's license for behavior "inconsistent with the dignity of the court." The Council issued a show-cause notice requiring him to explain within 15 days why the suspension should not be made permanent. Kishore has been barred from appearing or practicing before any court or tribunal in India.

Supreme Court premises has toward the Chief Justice during court proceedings. The shoe did

## India Seeks to Bring Back Top Talent After H-1B Visa Turmoil, But Faces Major Hurdles



signs of this shift are already visible. Nithin Hassan, a former Meta executive who earned over \$1 million annually in the U.S., left Silicon Valley to move to Bengaluru last year. He

launched two startups, including "Back to India" (B2I), a platform that helps returning Indians manage the emotional, financial, and professional challenges of relocation.

Hassan said that since Trump's second term began, inquiries from Indians abroad have nearly tripled, with more than 200 non-resident Indians contacting his company in the past six months alone.

## India Launches Criminal Case Against Cough Syrup Maker After Deaths of 14 Children

Indian authorities have initiated criminal proceedings against pharmaceutical company Sresan Pharma after toxic cough syrup produced by the firm was linked to the deaths of 14 children in Madhya Pradesh. The incident has reignited global concerns over the safety of India's drug manufacturing industry, often referred to as the "pharmacy of the world." According to a state drug laboratory report reviewed by Reuters, a sample of the cough syrup, branded Coldrif, contained 46.28% diethylene glycol — a toxic chemical commonly used in antifreeze and industrial products. The permitted limit is just 0.1%. The substance is known to cause severe kidney damage, vomiting, and abdominal pain, and has been linked to fatal poisoning outbreaks in the past. Police filed criminal charges on Sunday against both the prescribing doctor and Sresan Pharma, whose manufacturing facility is located in Tamil Nadu. Madhya Pradesh's Deputy Chief

Minister Rajendra Shukla confirmed that the doctor involved had been arrested. The company faces multiple charges, including culpable homicide not amounting to murder, drug adulteration, and violations under India's Drugs and Cosmetics Act. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has recommended revoking Sresan Pharma's manufacturing license, while the Health Ministry said regulatory action has already been taken against one of its units. Neighboring states including Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have banned Coldrif as a precaution. The contaminated batch was distributed only within India, and thus did not fall under export testing requirements introduced in 2023 after similar international incidents. India's pharmaceutical exports have been under growing scrutiny following reports that contaminated cough syrups from Indian manufacturers were tied to child deaths in Gambia, Uzbekistan, and Cameroon in recent years.

(News Agency) India is looking to capitalize on growing discontent among skilled professionals in the United States following President Donald Trump's decision to raise H-1B visa fees to \$100,000, a move that has rattled thousands of Indian tech workers. Policymakers in New Delhi are now exploring ways to lure some of these expatriates back home, hoping to trigger a "reverse brain drain" that would strengthen India's innovation economy. Officials close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi have hinted that the government is actively encouraging overseas Indians to return and "contribute to nation-building." Members of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council say the sharp rise in H-1B fees, which they view as favoring the U.S. over foreign workers, could actually benefit India by attracting top-tier professionals back to its expanding technology and research sectors. Some early

## Search Efforts Continue After Deadly Landslides Kill 24 in Darjeeling, India

(News Agency) Teams from the Indian Army and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are combing through debris in the tea-growing region, working in difficult conditions made worse by damaged roads and ongoing heavy rains. "We are still searching for those who may be trapped under the rubble," said Udayan Guha, West Bengal's state development minister. Television footage showed rescue workers using excavators to clear mud and fallen trees from narrow mountain roads. The landslides, which struck over the weekend, destroyed homes and

infrastructure, leaving hundreds of tourists stranded across the scenic hills of Darjeeling. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee confirmed on X that two iron bridges had collapsed due to the torrential downpour, warning that continued rain could complicate rescue and relief efforts. India's Meteorological Department has forecast more heavy rainfall through Tuesday. The region's tragedy follows a similar disaster in neighboring Nepal, where at least 44 people were killed over the weekend as mudslides and floods swept through the eastern district of Illam.





# Modi Congratulates Trump on Gaza Peace Deal, Highlights Progress in India-US Trade Talks

(News Agency) Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his congratulations to U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for achieving the first phase of the Gaza peace plan, calling it a significant step toward ending a war that has claimed tens of thousands of lives. Modi also confirmed that he spoke with Trump about India-U.S. trade negotiations, signaling that further developments are expected in the coming weeks. In a post on X, Modi wrote that he had spoken with "my friend, President Trump," praising the success of the "historic Gaza peace plan" while acknowledging progress made in bilateral trade talks. The Prime Minister added that both leaders agreed to "stay in close touch" in the near future. In a separate message, Modi reiterated India's stance against terrorism in all



forms, commending the agreement's provisions for hostage releases and increased humanitarian aid for Gaza. The Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal, announced earlier in the day, marks the first phase

of a 20-point plan proposed by Trump last month. The plan follows over two years of conflict that began with Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israel. According to Israeli officials, the agreement was finalized in Egypt and

ensures the release of all hostages within 72 hours, alongside the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. The accord also paves the way for a large-scale

humanitarian aid operation in Gaza, where the United Nations has declared famine conditions. Trump's peace framework further envisions the disarmament of Hamas and the establishment of a transitional governing authority for Gaza under his oversight, though these aspects remain under discussion. The U.S. president is expected to visit Jerusalem on Sunday and may extend his trip to include stops in Egypt and Gaza. Israeli military spokespersons confirmed that preparations are underway to align troop movements with the terms of the deal. On the economic front, Modi's remarks come amid growing optimism about a new trade pact between India and the United States. Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal recently stated that both sides remain in "constant dialogue," with multiple rounds of negotiations underway.

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# PM Modi, Mamata Banerjee spar over India's Durga Puja Transforms Worship Into a Celebration of Art, Inclusion, and Social Change

(News Agency) Tensions escalated on Monday between the Centre and the West Bengal government after two BJP leaders were assaulted in landslide-hit north Bengal. Prime Minister Narendra

Modi dismissed the incident as a fallout of the opposition's "photo-op politics." PM Modi condemned the attack, urging the state government to prioritise relief efforts over political conflict.



Modi criticised the ruling TMC over law and order failures, while Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accused him of politicising a natural disaster. The confrontation followed torrential rains that triggered landslides and floods across north Bengal, leaving at least 30 people dead and several missing. BJP MP Khagen Murmu and Siliguri MLA Sankar Ghosh were assaulted by a mob in Jalpaiguri's Nagrakata, with videos showing Murmu bleeding from his face and nose. The BJP alleged that the attack was carried out by locals "aligned

with the ruling TMC," while the TMC dismissed the incident as a fallout of the opposition's "photo-op politics." PM Modi condemned the attack, urging the state government to prioritise relief efforts over political conflict. "The manner in which our party colleagues, including a sitting MP and MLA, were attacked in West Bengal for serving the people affected by floods and landslides is outright appalling. It highlights the insensitivity of the TMC as well as the absolutely pathetic law and order situation in the state," Modi wrote on X. He called on BJP workers to continue assisting with rescue operations, saying, "I call upon BJP karyakartas to continue working among the people and assist the ongoing rescue operations." Banerjee, who is overseeing relief operations in north Bengal, responded late at night, criticising the PM for what she called a breach of the "constitutional ethos."

The Indian state of West Bengal came alive this week as millions celebrated Durga Puja, an awe-inspiring festival where devotion, creativity, and social consciousness come together on a grand scale. Recognized by UNESCO in 2021 as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the event turns cities like Kolkata into sprawling open-air art galleries filled with light, color, music, and meaning. For a few magical days each autumn, artisans, musicians, and volunteers transform neighborhoods into immersive worlds known as pandals—temporary temples that showcase both traditional artistry and modern themes. Sculptors from Kumartoli mold idols of Goddess Durga from river clay, dhaakis beat drums that echo through the streets, and families set out on night-long journeys of "pandal-hopping" amid dazzling light displays. What appears as spectacle is, in truth, a massive act of community collaboration that cuts across social, economic, and religious boundaries. UNESCO describes Durga Puja as "the best instance of the public performance of religion and art," embodying the Sarbojonin spirit—"for



all people"—that has defined it for nearly a century. Beyond its cultural richness, the festival has become an economic powerhouse, generating nearly \$4.5 billion annually, or about 2.6% of West Bengal's GDP. Yet what makes Durga Puja extraordinary is not just its scale, but how it uses art to confront pressing social issues. This year's themes ranged from environmental conservation to technological responsibility. One pandal depicted Goddess Durga combating the "evil" of pesticide use, surrounded by displays of 280 rice varieties to promote organic farming and biodiversity. Another embraced artificial intelligence, blending spirituality with digital design—Durga amid circuits and neon data streams—symbolizing faith's coexistence with technology.



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# Trump proposes ban on Chinese airlines using Russian airspace on US routes



(News Agency) The Trump administration on Thursday proposed banning Chinese airlines from flying over Russian airspace on routes to and from the United States, arguing the practice gives Chinese carriers an unfair competitive edge. The US Transportation Department (DOT) said the move aims to "level this competitive disparity," noting that Chinese airlines benefit from shorter flight times and lower fuel costs by continuing to use Russian routes, while US carriers are barred from doing so. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Washington prohibited Russian aircraft from entering US airspace, prompting Moscow to retaliate by banning American and other Western airlines from flying over Russia. As a result, US carriers must take longer, more costly routes to Asia, while Chinese airlines—still permitted to use Russian airspace—avoid those limitations. The DOT said this "imbalance"

has caused "substantial adverse competitive effects" on US airlines. The proposed order, which could take effect as early as November, gives Chinese airlines two days to respond. It could affect operations of Air China, China Eastern, China Southern, and Xiamen Airlines. Neither the Chinese embassy in Washington nor Airlines for America, which represents major US carriers such as American, Delta, and United, immediately commented on the proposal. The plan comes amid escalating US-China economic tensions. Boeing is reportedly in talks to sell up to 500 aircraft to China, a potential breakthrough after years of stalled deals. Meanwhile, Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping are expected to meet in South Korea at the end of October. In May 2023, US regulators approved additional flights for Chinese carriers only if they avoided Russian airspace.

## Trump deploys National Guard to Chicago after woman shot in immigration clash



(News Agency) United States President Donald Trump on Sunday ordered 300 National Guard troops to Chicago, overriding Illinois Governor JB Pritzker's objections, after a woman was shot during a heated confrontation between federal immigration agents and protesters, according to The Washington Post. The incident erupted in the Brighton Park neighbourhood, where US Border Patrol agents said they were "boxed in" by about 10 vehicles and

responded with pepper spray and rubber bullets. Governor Pritzker condemned Trump's deployment of the National Guard. "It is absolutely outrageous and un-American to demand that a governor deploy military forces within our own borders and against our will," he said in a statement. Saturday's government of using excessive force followed a week of escalating confrontations between protesters and federal agents in Chicago and other major cities, including New York, Los Angeles, and Portland, where demonstrators have accused the federal other US cities.

## Move quickly or else...: Trump's fresh warning to Hamas to accept Gaza peace plan

(News Agency) US President Donald Trump on Saturday urged Palestinian terror group Hamas to "move quickly" to accept his peace plan for war-torn Gaza and thanked Israel for "temporarily stopping the bombing" that killed 10 people in Gaza City. Asserting that he wouldn't tolerate "any delay", he warned Hamas to cease fighting and lay down its arms or else "all bets will be off". He also assured again that Israel and Hamas will be kept on board with the fragile agreement. "I appreciate that Israel

has temporarily stopped the bombing in order to give the hostage release and peace deal a chance to be completed. Hamas must move quickly, or else all bets will be off. I will not tolerate delay, which many think will happen, or any outcome where Gaza poses a threat again. Let's get this done, fast. Everyone will be treated fairly!" he wrote on Truth Social. On Friday, Trump asked Hamas to reach a peace deal with Israel by 6 pm on Sunday, warning that "otherwise all hell will break out".

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# The Nobel Peace Prize 2025 awarded to Maria Corina Machado

# Trump's grand peace strategy is bearing fruit, in Middle East and around the world



\*The Global Shield of Courage: Why Machado's Nobel is More Than an Award. Maria praised the US President on Friday for supporting the "decisive cause" of standing with the 'suffering' people of Venezuela. There was calls that Trump should, and hopes that President Trump will receive the award. Trump could still be eligible for next year's prize

The awarding of the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize to Maria Corina Machado is less a recognition of a historical achievement and more an urgent statement of solidarity with a present-day struggle. In choosing the Venezuelan opposition leader, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has thrown the world's most powerful moral spotlight onto a conflict where democratic norms have been systematically dismantled, and political opposition means risking life and liberty. This is not merely an accolade for a brave woman; it is an attempt to create a global shield around her and the millions of Venezuelans who still dare to believe in the ballot box. Machado's victory is significant because it redefines the very criteria for modern peace efforts. The Nobel Committee specifically praised her "tireless work promoting democratic rights" and her "struggle to achieve a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy." In an era where global democracy is in retreat, this award explicitly links the defense of free expression, fair elections, and rule of law to the precondition for lasting peace. By honoring a figure who has been harassed, disqualified from running for office, and forced into hiding while remaining on Venezuelan soil, the committee underscores the notion that civilian courage against entrenched authoritarianism is the most fundamental form of peace work today. For the Venezuelan opposition, the Nobel

Peace Prize is a critical unifying force. The struggle against the Maduro regime has been historically fractured, yet Machado's leadership during the lead-up to the 2024 election succeeded in mobilizing a massive, cross-partisan volunteer movement dedicated to overseeing polling stations. The prize validates this non-violent, grassroots methodology. It sends a clear message to the international community: the desire for democratic change is legitimate, unified, and driven by a commitment to "ballots over bullets," as Machado herself once stated. This international recognition solidifies her, and the movement she represents, as the undeniable voice of the democratic opposition, making it exponentially harder for the regime to suppress her without severe global consequence. Beyond Venezuela, the award serves as a powerful moral injunction against autocrats worldwide. It highlights the disturbing global trend where governments abuse the rule of law to neutralize political rivals, silence free media, and cling to power despite the clear will of the people. Machado's story becomes a universal template: the brave individual who refuses to be silenced, who embodies the hope for a future where fundamental rights are protected. The Nobel Prize does not solve Venezuela's crisis, but it transforms Machado's personal struggle into a global diplomatic priority. Ultimately, the Nobel Peace Prize is a moral weapon. It provides Maria Corina Machado with unprecedented political oxygen and international protection precisely when she is most vulnerable. It reminds the world that peace is not merely the absence of war, but the constant, courageous effort to establish a democratic system where conflict can be resolved through representation and dialogue, rather than repression and exile.

President Donald Trump turned heads when he signed a recent executive order promising to defend the state of Qatar from attack and – in so doing – protect U.S. interests. The language of the order is clear: if Qatar is attacked, "the United States shall take all lawful and appropriate measures – including diplomatic, economic, and, if necessary, military." This move comes after Israel, another close American ally, hit Qatar with airstrikes targeting Hamas officials. Some people who don't understand the full context of the president's Middle East peace strategy have questioned this order, even though Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has since apologized for the strikes and promised no further action in Qatar. The truth is that Trump's executive order is yet another example of his abiding commitment to protecting American interests in the Middle East. During his first term, he declared that "The nation of Qatar, unfortunately, has historically been a funder of terrorism at a very high level." The Biden administration rewarded Qatar's support during its withdrawal from Afghanistan by designating the nation a major non-NATO ally in 2022. We are in a new strategic calculus surrounding Qatar, and this is the context in which Trump has taken such a bold move. President Trump is interpreting the strategic moment unlike any United States president before him. The Qatar announcement puts all parties in the region on notice: Israel conducted military strikes against Doha. It won't do that again any time soon. Iran struck Qatar. It will think long and hard about doing anything close. The Saudis have paired up with the Pakistanis for mutual defense. Trump has done a checkmate. The political office of Hamas in Qatar is just less relevant

now. Trump is forcing peace by clarifying options and the game for long-standing divisions from the Levant to the Gulf. This is bringing the broader Middle East closer to peace than it has been in years. Who else could staunchly support Israel's right to defend itself from Hamas and Iran's nuclear program while simultaneously being tough on Netanyahu to actively pursue peace? There's a tremendous amount of nuance in this approach. Here is the president's goal: A durable peace deal, not just between Israel and Hamas, but one that brings all parties in the Middle East to the table. This is why the United States has been so involved in brokering a deal in the Middle East and has relied on the positive relationships that Trump has built through trade and diplomacy. America has been clear that there is some room for negotiation, but some things won't change. Primary among them is that Hamas must disarm. This is a prerequisite to any lasting peace and Trump knows it. That's why the 20-part plan is take it or leave it on the condition of disarmament. Further evidence of the genius of this approach is the broad support the plan has received from disparate countries, both in the Middle East and in Europe. It has garnered support from countries that are both for and against Palestinian statehood. The plan has served as a unifying beacon to a region (and a world) that has long wanted peace but has never had a leader courageous and tenacious enough to make that dream a reality. Another outcome of this broad support is the true isolation of Hamas. They're the only ones who are for their continued militarization. In effect, by their protracted resistance to peace, they have alienated almost everyone who may be sympathetic to some of their nonviolent goals.

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**Editor in Chief**  
Sharanjit Singh Thind  
Tel: 646 875 8495  
**Managing Editor:**  
Amaninder Singh Thind  
Email: editor@thesouthasianinsider.com  
Aruna Singh  
**Resident Editor (New Delhi)**  
**Mailing Address:**  
NuWay Media Group Inc.  
223 W, 38th Street, Suite 4  
Manhattan, New York 10018  
**For General and Advertising Inquiries:**  
thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com  
www.thesouthasianinsider.com  
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# The Road from Patna to Pennsylvania Avenue: How Bihar's Verdict Will Shape Modi's Hand in US Trade Talks

The upcoming Assembly elections in Bihar, one of India's largest and most politically crucial states, may seem like a purely domestic affair, a battle fought on the dusty plains of the Hindi heartland. Yet, the final tally on November 14 will send ripples far beyond the state capital of Patna, potentially influencing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's negotiation leverage in securing a long-sought, comprehensive business treaty with the United States.

A state election, by its very nature, is a referendum on local issues, caste dynamics, and the performance of the incumbent Chief Minister. However, in India's hyper-nationalized political landscape, it is inevitably interpreted as a mid-term report card on the central government. For the Modi administration and its ambitious economic agenda, the results from Bihar will either reinforce its national mandate and decisiveness—or expose a vulnerability that the

U.S. negotiating table will surely exploit.

## **The Strong Mandate: A Negotiator's Best Friend**

If the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) secures a strong, decisive victory in Bihar, the message to Washington will be clear: Modi's government is politically unassailable and has the mandate to make tough economic decisions.

A commanding win in a state as electorally significant as Bihar translates directly into enhanced central authority and policy confidence. In the context of a potential India-US trade treaty, this confidence is currency. It signals to US negotiators that the Indian government has the political capital to push through sensitive, domestic-facing reforms—such as in agriculture, labor laws, or tariff adjustments—that a comprehensive treaty would require.

The US, which seeks greater market access and clarity on intellectual property rights,

prefers to negotiate with a strong, stable, and decisive government. A massive Bihar victory would provide exactly this impression, forcing the US to offer more concessions to secure a deal from a partner who appears politically invulnerable at home. It allows the Modi government to enter the room not as a supplicant, but as an indispensable partner with an iron grip on domestic policy.

## **A Narrow Win or Defeat: The Chinks in the Armor**

Conversely, should the NDA suffer a significant setback—either a narrow victory or, more consequentially, a defeat—the impact on the US-India negotiations will be immediately felt, leading to a noticeable erosion of the government's bargaining power.

A poor performance would be interpreted internationally as a weakening of the central government's mandate. In the immediate aftermath, this signals domestic pressure, potentially forcing the Modi government to turn its focus inward to manage coalition

politics and internal party dissent.

The US negotiating team, recognizing this political fragility, would likely seize the opportunity to push for harder terms. They would operate under the assumption that a politically weakened Modi government would be less willing, or less able, to risk the further domestic pushback by making politically unpopular compromises on trade. A central government seen as struggling at the state level is less likely to liberalize sensitive sectors or lower tariffs for fear of a populist backlash. The outcome is often a protracted, less ambitious, and more difficult treaty negotiation, as both sides become more cautious.

## **Beyond Trade: The Geopolitical Perception**

The effects are not purely economic; they are profoundly geopolitical. The US values India as a crucial strategic counterweight in the Indo-Pacific. A strong showing in Bihar reinforces the image of a

robust, stable democracy capable of being a reliable long-term ally—a narrative that encourages deeper security and business ties.

A fractured mandate, however, can breed uncertainty. It can slow the pace of economic engagement by suggesting a potential for future policy U-turns or a shift in the central government's focus. In the race to diversify supply chains away from other geopolitical rivals, the perception of political stability in key democratic partners is paramount.

In essence, the ballot boxes of Bihar are about more than just state governance; they are about political momentum. If the momentum remains with the Modi government, its negotiators will speak with a firm voice in Washington. If that momentum is lost, the US side will hear the whispers of domestic fragility and use it to their distinct advantage. The road to a lasting India-US business treaty, it turns out, runs directly through Patna.



# 'Pasni' Offer Proves Pak Can Betray Anyone - Even China - For A Deal

Pakistan's reported proposal to grant the United States a development and management role at Pasni Port, as revealed by the Financial Times, marks one of the most consequential geopolitical developments in recent years. Situated along the Arabian Sea, just 70 miles from China-operated Gwadar Port, 100 miles from Iran, and approximately 178 miles from India's Chabahar Port, Pasni's geostrategic position places it at the intersection of major regional rivalries involving China, India, Iran, the United States, and other key actors such as Saudi Arabia and Gulf investors.

The port's location also has implications for Afghanistan, Central Asia, and broader maritime security in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean.

The development follows the meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Army Chief General Asim Munir, and US President Donald Trump on September 25, 2025, signaling a potential new phase in US-Pakistan geostrategic engagement. The proposal, which had already been floated and discussed with US officials prior to the meeting, is part of Islamabad's broader attempt to diversify its foreign partnerships, move beyond exclusive dependence on Beijing, and attract US, Iranian, and Saudi investments amid its deepening economic challenges. While the plan is significant, it remains exploratory, with no formal agreement yet confirmed by either Pakistan or the US. However, if this proposal were to materialise, it would constitute a geopolitical earthquake, reshaping power dynamics in this region and carrying implications beyond it.

## The New Strategic Pivot

The blueprint envisions transforming Pasni - currently a modest fishing town - into a strategic logistics and mineral export hub. The project will link the port to Balochistan's vast mineral reserves, including the Reko Diq copper and gold mines, through a new railway network.

Estimated to cost \$1.2 billion, the project is expected to be financed through a combination of Pakistani federal funds and US-backed development finance.

The US interest in Pasni is

and mineral supply chains. Over the years, China has invested over \$60 billion in CPEC, deploying personnel, technology, and capital to secure a reliable trade and energy corridor to the Arabian Sea.

guided more by short-term economic gain than by enduring partnership.

## Regional Implications

The implications of the Pasni deal extend far beyond Pakistan

and China. For India, this development could complicate strategic connectivity projects such as Chabahar Port in Iran, which lies just across the border from Pasni. Notably, the US recently revoked sanctions waivers for Chabahar, signalling waning American support for India's westward connectivity efforts and its broader strategic interests in the region. At the same

engagement. Reports suggesting that Washington is considering re-establishing access to the Bagram Air Base indicate a broader military recalibration. A US logistical node at Pasni would significantly improve its ability to project power across Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf - while using Pakistan's geography as a strategic launchpad.

Islamabad has framed its Pasni initiative as an exercise in "strategic diversification". However, it appears more as a calculated geopolitical gamble. Historically, Pakistan has aligned with whichever power offers the most financial or military benefits - from being a US Cold War ally to joining China's Belt and Road Initiative, and now seemingly swinging back toward Washington.

## Whither The 'Iron Brotherhood'?

While such balancing may bring short-term rewards, it often results in long-term instability. China has consistently supported Pakistan - diplomatically, economically, and militarily - even during Islamabad's periods of isolation. Beijing provided critical aid, defended Pakistan at multilateral fora, and backed its security interests vis-à-vis India. Yet, despite this "iron brotherhood", Pakistan's recent moves show that geopolitical loyalty in Islamabad is negotiable. The US entry into Pasni marks a decisive moment in Asia's geopolitics. It represents not just an economic collaboration but a strategic realignment with the potential to reshape power dynamics across the Arabian Sea, Central Asia, the Gulf, and beyond. For the US, Pasni offers a dual advantage - access to critical minerals and a strategic maritime presence near Iran, the Gulf, and Chinese infrastructure.

For Pakistan, it provides short-term relief and renewed American attention. For China, however, it is a strategic nightmare - a symbol of betrayal that undermines years of investment and trust. In the final analysis, the Pasni development underscores a fundamental truth of geopolitics: in an age of great-power rivalry, alliances built on interest rather than trust seldom endure.



Image credit: x.com/SidraAlamOff

both economic and strategic. According to the Financial Times report, the port will serve as a gateway for exporting critical minerals such as copper, antimony, and neodymium - key inputs in battery technology, missile production, and advanced electronics. On September 8, 2025, Pakistan exported a small trial shipment of these minerals to Missouri-based US Strategic Metals (USSM), following the signing of a \$500 million memorandum of understanding with Pakistan's Military Engineering Corps. The partnership, aimed at developing and refining Balochistan's critical mineral resources, marks a major step in expanding US-Pakistan economic engagement. USSM's commercial director, Mike Hollomon, described the collaboration as an effort to "rekindle a dormant friendship" between Washington and Islamabad.

## Strategic Blow to China's CPEC Vision

For China, the Pasni development represents a strategic setback. The port's proximity to Gwadar - the flagship of Beijing's China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - directly undermines China's long-term strategic objectives in the Arabian Sea. The US presence in Pasni would not only counterbalance Gwadar but could also reduce Beijing's leverage over Pakistan's critical infrastructure

Many Chinese workers have lost their lives in Balochistan to terrorist attacks while working on these projects. Pakistan's move to invite American strategic and commercial involvement so close to Gwadar amounts to a significant betrayal of Beijing's trust. Earlier, the US and Pakistan signed a mineral deal in Balochistan - a region where China already has substantial investments and stakes, including the Saindak Copper-Gold Mine and the Reko Diq copper and gold project. This demonstrates Islamabad's willingness to prioritise immediate financial incentives from Washington over long-term commitments to Beijing, particularly after China indicated it could not fund certain sections of CPEC, after which Pakistan turned to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for funding.

The reality is stark: the United States and China remain geostrategic rivals in the region, and it is inherently unnatural for two competing powers to coexist within the same strategic space.

By aligning with the US in Pasni, Pakistan not only undermines Chinese interests in Balochistan and the Arabian Sea but also signals a transactional approach to its alliances, leveraging dollars from Washington when Beijing cannot meet Islamabad's immediate needs. For China, this should be a moment of strategic reckoning: a reminder that Islamabad's loyalty is contingent,

time, a US presence at Pasni advances American interests in the Arabian Sea and indirectly strengthens Pakistan by providing Islamabad with enhanced strategic confidence and leverage. While India and the US are strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific, strategic cooperation between the US and Pakistan carries fundamentally different implications. A US foothold at Pasni may allow Washington to reassert its influence in the region, but it could also institutionalise US-Pakistan defence engagement and boost Pakistan's geopolitical confidence, strengthening its position vis-à-vis India.

Moreover, an American presence at such a strategic location at the mouth of the Arabian Sea - where India has vital maritime and energy interests - carries significant implications for regional power dynamics, simultaneously undermining India's connectivity initiatives while advancing US and Pakistani interests, thereby posing new challenges for New Delhi.

## Pressure Builds On Iran

For Iran, the move is alarming. Pasni provides Washington with a potential maritime platform to monitor or pressure Tehran's coastal infrastructure and shipping lanes. The port's location would also enhance US operational flexibility in the event of any regional conflict involving Iran. For Afghanistan, the development may herald a new era of US re-



# I nominated President Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize — here's why he deserves it



When I wrote to the Norwegian Nobel Committee on Jan. 29, 2025, it was with urgency. I did it just days after President Donald J. Trump's inauguration and ahead of the committee's Jan. 31 deadline.

Some called it premature, but they clearly missed the fine print. My nomination was tied to the actual release of the hostages. I wanted to honor his unwavering commitment to secure the release of hostages from one of the most complex and volatile regions in the world.

I wrote to the committee not only as a law professor, one of the categories eligible to nominate, but also as an American Israeli who has witnessed firsthand the devastating rise of antisemitism and the growing attacks on myself and my community. Against this backdrop, the return of the hostages, my brothers and sisters, is a deeply personal victory. These innocent individuals were abducted from their homes and families, held in captivity under brutal conditions, and used as bargaining chips in a war against civilization itself. Their return is an act of justice and humanity, and President Trump plays a decisive role in releasing them.

President Trump's diplomatic impact is already cemented in history, from the Abraham

Accords, which reshaped the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East, to his relentless efforts to continue to secure peace through strength. His ability to broker peace, hold adversaries accountable and foster alliances has positioned him as one of the most consequential leaders of our time. His leadership is so consequential that even Iran, long the chief sponsor of terror and resistance to peace, was forced to recalibrate its rhetoric and behavior in the face of the new regional reality his policies created.

Should President Trump succeed, he will do what no president before him has achieved: turn the dream of lasting peace in the Middle East into reality, extending the promise of the Abraham Accords even further. At the heart of these achievements lies his unmatched ability to negotiate, the same mastery of leverage, timing and persuasion that once defined "The Art of the Deal." President Trump understands that diplomacy, like business, requires clarity of purpose, the courage to walk away and the instinct to seize opportunity when it appears. He brought that rare combination of toughness and vision to the global stage, turning what others deemed impossible into historic breakthroughs for peace. I submitted my nomination out of hope: hope that his leadership could save lives; hope that his

administration will continue to and hope that the safe return of of a lasting peace in the Middle East. Amen to that.

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# The Path of Pragmatism: Why Hamas Must Embrace the Egypt Talks



The world watches with bated breath as indirect talks between delegations from Israel and Hamas commence in Egypt. Mediated by Egyptian and Qatari officials, and backed by a comprehensive U.S. peace plan, this round of negotiations represents a fragile but perhaps final window to halt the ruinous conflict in Gaza. For Hamas, the group currently negotiating its future and the future of the enclave, accepting the core principles of this deal is not merely a diplomatic choice—it is a moral and pragmatic imperative. The current peace proposal, which centers on a multi-phase approach, offers a clear trade-off: an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, a phased Israeli troop withdrawal, and a massive infusion of humanitarian aid and reconstruction funds for the devastated Gaza Strip. The alternative is a continuation of a war that has cost countless lives and driven the civilian population of Gaza to the brink of famine and total societal collapse.

The primary, unassailable reason for Hamas to accept this path is humanitarian necessity. The two-year conflict, sparked by the horrific October 7, 2023 attacks, has resulted in an unimaginable death toll and the near-total destruction of Gaza's infrastructure. The Palestinian

people, for whom Hamas claims to fight, are the primary victims of the ongoing violence. Prolonging the war only deepens their suffering, makes long-term recovery impossible, and further isolates the strip from the international community. A ceasefire is the non-negotiable first step to allowing aid to flow, the wounded to be treated, and the sheer survival of a population to be secured.

Furthermore, the talks offer Hamas a crucial, if painful, opportunity for political and strategic pragmatism. The current proposal lays out a path for Gazan governance to transition to a technocratic Palestinian body, supervised by an international coalition. While this necessitates Hamas surrendering its ruling power and eventually disarming—a central, contentious point—it simultaneously secures an end to the Israeli military campaign and the withdrawal of Israeli forces. Continuing the fighting means accepting a high probability of complete obliteration, as warned by the U.S. President. By accepting the deal, Hamas trades immediate military control for an end to the devastation and the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners—a key symbolic and political victory for the group among its supporters. Thirdly, this is an opportunity to re-center the Palestinian cause on a political, not

purely military, track. The talks, if successful, could lay the groundwork for broader peace efforts. By engaging in serious diplomacy, Hamas signals a willingness to prioritize the immediate needs of its people and demonstrates to regional and international mediators, including key Arab states like Egypt and Qatar, that it is a party capable of making difficult, life-saving decisions. Rejecting the deal, particularly after Israel has signaled initial acceptance of its first phase, would place the blame for the continued bloodshed squarely on Hamas, potentially eroding its regional support and legitimacy. Yes, significant gaps remain. Hamas seeks a concrete timeline for a full Israeli withdrawal, and the issue of disarmament remains a massive hurdle. However, the first phase—the ceasefire and hostage/prisoner exchange—is a foot in the door. It is a chance to build confidence, to demonstrate good faith, and to establish the necessary conditions to negotiate the more complex, long-term issues from a position of relative stability. For the people of Gaza, for the Israeli hostages and their families, and for the possibility of breaking a devastating, two-year cycle of violence, the moment demands courage and a calculated retreat from maximalist demands. Hamas must look beyond short-term

political posturing and choose for fighting is over; the time for the path of pragmatism. The time making peace is now.



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# The Digital Ledger Revolution

Why Blockchain and Crypto are Poised for Mainstream Success. The chatter around Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) often focuses on price volatility and speculative bubbles. Yet, to dismiss this digital revolution as mere hype is to miss the forest for the trees. The true long-term success of the crypto and alike concepts lies not in their use as investment vehicles, but in the underlying blockchain technology—the distributed, immutable ledger that promises to fundamentally rewire how we conduct commerce, manage data, and organize society. After years of development, blockchain has matured beyond its initial, clunky cryptocurrency phase.

Today, it's proving its worth as a genuine tool for efficiency and trust across a multitude of industries, a trend that is now being embraced—and accelerated—by forward-thinking government policy in the United States.

Beyond the Buzz: Real-World

Blockchain Success Blockchains core value proposition is simple: establishing trust without the need for a central, fallible intermediary. This trust-protocol is transforming business processes globally.

1. Supply Chain and Logistics:

their supply chains. This drastically reduces the time it takes to trace the origin of a food product from days to mere seconds, ensuring safety and reducing waste.

2. Financial Services and Cross-Border Payments: Tradi-

and cutting down on delays and high fees. Stable coins, like USDC, are also seeing significant growth, acting as a crucial bridge between traditional and digital financial systems by offering digital dollar-backed value.

3. Digital Ownership and Intellectual Property: The rise of NFTs has fundamentally redefined digital ownership. While often associated with digital art, the core concept—a unique, verified deed recorded on a blockchain—is a powerful tool for intellectual property. Musicians, artists, and creators can use NFTs and decentralized platforms to track royalties and ownership rights, ensuring they are fairly compensated without needing traditional gatekeepers. The Clear Regulatory Signal For the nascent digital asset industry to truly flourish, it needs one thing above all else: regulatory clarity. Uncertainty has long been the greatest inhibitor to institutional adoption and growth in the US, pushing innovation offshore. This is precisely where the Trump

administrations pivot toward a pro-crypto stance marks a significant positive turning point. The policy shift is moving away from the previous regulation by enforcement approach to one focused on establishing a structured, comprehensive framework. This is being driven by concrete actions: A Focus on Clear Regulation: The establishment of new task forces within agencies like the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is designed to create a Crypto 2.0 framework. The stated goal is to provide clear boundaries for registration and sensible disclosure requirements, transitioning to a more structured regulatory environment. The Crypto Capital Mandate: The administration has made its goal explicit: to make the United States the crypto capital of the planet. This pledge, backed by executive orders, supports the responsible growth of the digital asset industry.



The ability to track an item's journey from raw material to consumer is a monumental task in global trade. Companies like Maersk and Walmart have implemented blockchain systems (such as IBM's Food Trust) to create transparent, tamper-proof records for

tional cross-border payments are slow, expensive, and opaque. Blockchain solutions are changing this. For instance, JPMorgan Chase's Onyx platform uses a blockchain for instant settlement of interbank transactions, processing billions of dollars daily

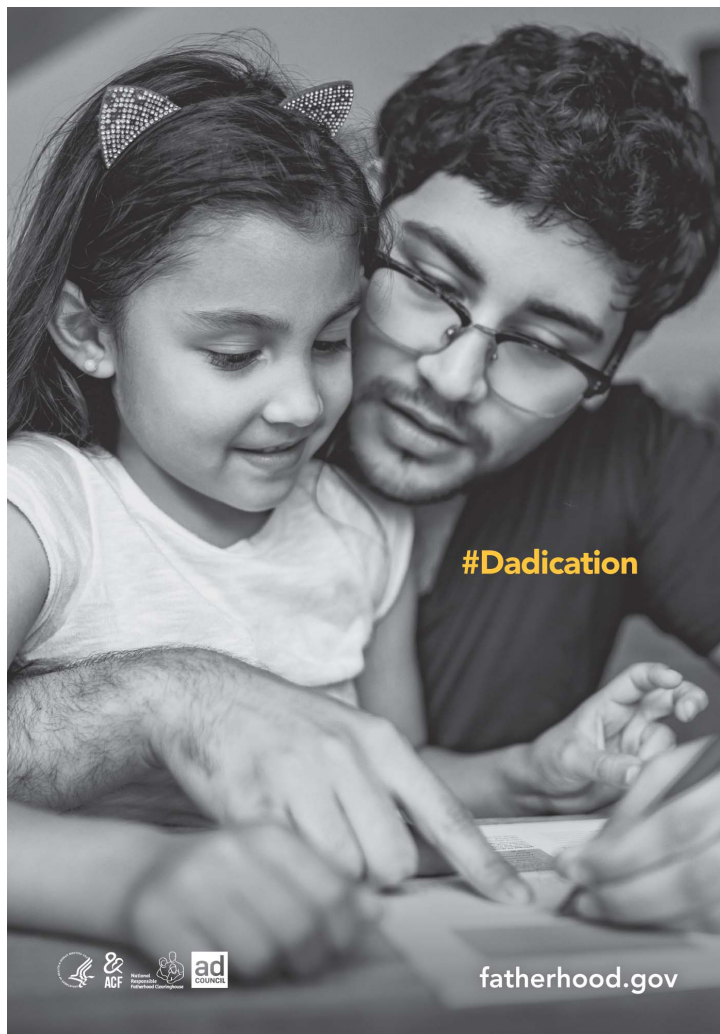


## AMERICA'S DEADLIEST SHOOTINGS ARE ONES WE DON'T TALK ABOUT

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# Why India's Approach Differs Between Afghanistan's Two Taliban Regimes

When Afghanistan's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi visits India, it will mark a historic shift in the nature of India-Afghanistan engagement under the Taliban regime. This is the second Taliban government since 1996, and though India has not recognised either regime, its approach and diplomatic engagement today are vastly different from the stance it adopted during the first Taliban rule between 1996-2001.

During the first Taliban regime, India's relationship with Kabul was virtually non-existent. New Delhi's policy was openly anti-Taliban: it refused to recognise the Taliban government, which had formal recognition only from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. India feared that the Taliban's rise would turn Afghanistan into a hub of terrorism and that, in coordination with Pakistan's ISI, it would escalate militancy in Kashmir. At that time, India backed the Northern Alliance, led by Ahmad Shah Massoud, providing political, economic, and military assistance in coordination with Russia and Iran.

The IC-814 hijacking in December 1999 further hardened India's position. The Indian Airlines flight, hijacked from Kathmandu to Delhi, was taken to Kandahar, then under Taliban control. Although the Taliban didn't directly assist the hijackers, they gave them safe shelter, forcing India to release three dreaded terrorists—Maulana Masood Azhar, Omar Sheikh, and Mushtaq Zargar. This incident cemented New Delhi's distrust of the Taliban.

Diplomatically, India closed its embassy in Kabul and pursued a clear policy of 'No Recognition, No Dialogue'. Globally too, the Taliban regime was viewed with suspicion for harbouring Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, and India continued to raise its voice against the Taliban at international forums. In short, between 1996 and 2001, India-Taliban relations were effectively zero.

After 20 years, when the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, India once again evacuated and shut down its embassy in Kabul. However, within 10 months, New Delhi re-established a limited diplomatic presence by sending a technical team to Kabul, signaling a major shift in approach.

Despite not recognising the Taliban government, India's political and diplomatic engagement with the regime has reached its highest level ever. Muttaqi's visit to India marks the first political-level contact between the two sides under Taliban rule. Previously, India's external affairs minister S Jaishankar had spoken with Muttaqi over phone, and foreign secretary Vikram Misri met him in



Dubai. Several other senior Indian diplomats have also interacted with Taliban officials on issues of mutual concern.

## But the question is, why has India's policy changed?

First, security and counter-terrorism. Unlike the first Taliban regime, the current Taliban government has not openly sheltered anti-India terror groups. Groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba have minimal activity inside Afghanistan, largely due to strained relations between Kabul and Islamabad.

Maintaining dialogue allows India to monitor and manage potential terror threats originating from Afghan soil.

Second, balancing Chinese and Pakistani influence. China's growing engagement with the Taliban and Pakistan's historical ties with them are a strategic concern for India. By engaging with the Taliban, New Delhi aims to preserve its influence in Afghanistan and prevent the region from falling completely under the China-Pakistan axis. Third, protecting India's investments. Over the past two decades, India has invested around \$3 billion or Rs 25,000 crore in Afghanistan, building the Salma Dam, the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, the Afghan Parliament, and various power, health, and education projects. Severing all ties with Kabul would risk losing these investments and goodwill among the Afghan people.

Fourth, future political relevance. Afghanistan remains politically unstable, and India doesn't want to be left out of any future political settle-

ment. Maintaining contact ensures Afghanistan's future and in broader regional geopolitics.

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# How India's Steady Hand Manages US, China And Corners Pakistan

As global powers edge toward confrontation, India maintains a careful equilibrium, firm with adversaries, pragmatic with partners, and steady in a volatile neighbourhood.

The global order is increasingly defined by confrontation, not cooperation. The United States and China are locked in a prolonged contest for supremacy, a "cold confrontation" where technology, trade, and territory form the new battlegrounds.

For India, this shifting landscape is both opportunity and challenge. It finds itself between two great power rivalries and two volatile neighbours, navigating the turbulence of a nascent India-U.S. trade war, an emboldened China on its borders, and a desperate Pakistan lashing out after the setbacks of Operation Sindoor.

## A Tightrope Between Washington And Beijing

India's strategic posture today rests on calibrated balance. On one hand, its partnership with the United States has deepened more in the last decade than in the previous fifty years, marked by foundational defence agreements, joint production initiatives under ICET, and growing technology collaboration. Yet, the honeymoon is not without irritants.

Washington's new protectionist instincts, particularly in trade and digital services, have begun to affect New Delhi's economic calculus. The U.S. tariffs on key Indian exports, the curbs on technology transfer, and tightening visa regulations have opened an unexpected rift just as the two nations celebrate unprecedented strategic convergence. The emerging trade friction underscores a critical reality: defence cooperation cannot indefinitely compensate for economic imbalances. For India, the task is to ensure that a security partnership does not evolve into a trade dependency.

New Delhi's response has been measured. Instead of public confrontation, it has sought to widen its economic outreach by negotiating free trade agreements with the EU, deepening connectivity with ASEAN, and pursuing south-south supply chains through Africa and the Indian Ocean. This quiet diversification reflects India's determination to remain indispensable yet independent in the global economy.

## The China Challenge: Cold Borders And Hot Competition

Even as India manages a complicated friendship with Washington, its equation with Beijing remains cold and brittle. Five years after the Galwan clash, the Line of Actual Control continues to witness tension and militarisation. China's incremental expansionism, combining infra-

structure build-up, cartographic aggression, and strategic ambiguity, has created a "no-war, no-peace" frontier.

Beijing's playbook is familiar: deny space for de-escalation while distracting India through economic overtures. Chinese exports to India continue to grow despite political frostiness, reveal-

mired in political chaos, Pakistan has turned to its old habits: cross-border propaganda, proxy agitation, and disinformation warfare. After the setback in Operation Sindoor, Pakistan is in a quiet scramble to regain its footing. The operation dealt a blow not just to its military assets but to its

In Riyadh, the approach is more urgent and transactional. Saudi Arabia remains Pakistan's financial first responder, supplying loans, deferred oil payments, and political reassurance. Islamabad is banking on this partnership not only for fiscal breathing space but also to project that it is not diplo-



ing the paradox of competition and dependence. India's counter has been multi-dimensional through the Quad's maritime collaboration, the SAGAR initiative in the Indian Ocean, and strategic partnerships with France, Japan, and Australia.

The quiet contest in the Indian Ocean is perhaps more consequential than the Himalayan standoff. China's naval presence from Djibouti to Hambantota to Gwadar represents a slow squeeze on India's maritime periphery. In response, India has ramped up its partnerships with the littoral states and strengthened its role as a net security provider in the region. The message is unmistakable: India will neither provoke nor yield.

## Pakistan's Desperation After Operation Sindoor

If China tests India's patience, Pakistan tests its restraint. The aftermath of Operation Sindoor, which exposed and neutralised terror networks with precision, has left Rawalpindi's establishment rattled and reactive. Bereft of strategic coherence and

image of deterrence. The silence from traditional partners deepened the sense of isolation in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Now, Pakistan is urgently courting Washington and Riyadh in a bid to recover leverage and legitimacy. In Washington, Islamabad is attempting to reframe the relationship around economics and logistics rather than aid and security. It has reportedly offered the U.S. access to a port along the Makran coast, likely Pasni or Jiwani. The offer is significant: it places an American foothold within sight of Gwadar, China's flagship project, and not far from Chabahar, India's investment with Iran.

For Pakistan, this is a calculated move, a way to remind Washington that its geography still matters. It gives the U.S. a potential counterweight to both Chinese and Iranian influence on the Arabian Sea while allowing Islamabad to hedge between Beijing and Washington. It also sends a quiet message to Tehran: Pakistan can still tilt the balance of regional access if relations with Iran sour.

matically isolated after Sindoor. The new Saudi-Pakistan defence pact gives Rawalpindi a talking point, if not a real guarantee.

Taken together, the U.S. port offer and Saudi overtures reflect a strategy born of weakness, not confidence. Islamabad is trying to rebuild deterrence and credibility through diplomacy, geography, and symbolism rather than through hard power. After Operation Sindoor, Pakistan is learning that when firepower fails to command respect, strategic location becomes its last usable asset. The question is how long that geography can keep buying relevance in a region that is rapidly tilting away from it.

For India, the danger lies not in Pakistan's capacity but in its instability. A neighbour with collapsing institutions and unaccountable weapons poses unpredictable risks. New Delhi's approach, calibrated firmness without escalation, has so far kept the western front quiet while maintaining focus on the larger strategic theatre to the north and east.

# The bigger games behind Munir's Pasni offer



Pakistani army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir is playing the field again. Reports suggest that Pakistan wants the US to invest \$1.2 billion to build and operate a terminal at Pasni Port in Balochistan province. Pakistan also wants the US to build and operate a railway line linking Pasni to its western provinces.

The port town in Gwadar district on Pakistan's rugged Maran coast is over 140 kilometres east of the Chinese-run Gwadar port and 300 kilometres east of Chabahar Port, where India operates a terminal.

A meme reposted on X by US-based Pakistani journalist Moeed Pirzada depicts Munir as an OLX salesman hocking ports and rare earths, a reference to the viral image of the army chief showing President Donald Trump a box of rocks in the White House.

Munir's machinations are closer to another meme, of actor Ajay Devgn, doing a split between two motorcycles in his 1991 Bollywood debut *Phool Aur Kaante*. This is not a unique state of play for a Pakistani dictator.

Since the early 1960s, Pakistan has ridden two boats driving deals with both to extract arms and geopolitical

concessions. Its first dictator, Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, transferred 5,180 square kilometres of the Shaksgam Valley to China in 1963. In 1971, Ayub's protegee, General Yahya Khan, facilitated the US-China rapprochement which culminated in President Richard Nixon's historic 1972 visit to Beijing. In the 2000s, General Pervez Musharraf claimed million dollar bounties on Pakistani citizens handed over to the US.

Cut to 2025, Munir believes he is killing several birds with one stone.

There is a bigger game at play. During Operation Sindoor, Indian Navy warships, including the carrier strike group INS Vikrant, stood ready to launch attacks on Pakistan. The Pakistan Navy, as India Today's OSINT team revealed, was nowhere in sight. Many of its warships were either in refit or moored in civilian berths, away from the Indian Navy's possible missile attacks. Pakistan is critically dependent on the Karachi port for imports and exports, including a daily import of 1,35,000 barrels of oil. An Indian naval blockade could imperil its fragile economy, and it has no way of protecting itself.

US investment on the ground will

hopefully keep India at bay

There are, however, bigger games at play. And this is where the US-funded rail link becomes vital. On July 18, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement to link Pakistan with Uzbekistan by train. The 760-km Trans-Afghan railway is designed to run from Termez in Uzbekistan through Mazar-i-Sharif and Logar in Afghanistan and into Pakistan, crossing into the Kurram district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa district. The corridor will reduce cargo delivery times by up to five days and lower transport costs by 40 %. The project is estimated to cost \$4.8 billion and will be completed by 2027.

Kurram, of course, is 1700 kilometres north of Pasni and there is no rail connectivity between the two districts. US involvement in the region could brighten the prospects of a \$2.3 billion railway corridor between Gwadar and Jacobabad. This railway corridor has been in cold storage since 2022 after an Omani firm briefly evinced keen interest in it.

Two recent decisions by the Trump administration point to a new Great Game unfolding in Central Asia and Pakistan's attempts to play a greater role in it. On August 23, Trump ap-

pointed a Russian-speaking ethnic ambassador, Sergio Gor, as its new Ambassador to New Delhi. Gor is also special envoy to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, signaling greater US interest in the oil, gas and minerals-rich region. Less than a month later, on September 19, Trump ended the waiver given to India to operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal in Chabahar. India used the port through the Zaranj-Delaram road corridor into eastern Afghanistan. US sanctions on this port now virtually seal India's only route to Afghanistan and Central Asia through Iran, bypassing Pakistan.

Pakistan's rail routes, however, face hurdles like differing rail gauges and insurgent attacks in both Balochistan and KP. Pakistan's Pasni offer gives the US not just the shortest route to ship minerals out of Pakistan but also another corridor to Central Asia through Pakistan bypassing Iran and China. A US-funded infrastructure corridor into Central Asia, in parallel with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. It also allows GHQ Rawalpindi to continue to do the Ajay Devgn stunt between the US and China. Will Trump buy the pitch from the salesman of Rawalpindi is of course the biggest question.



# America And The Deal: Why India Must Prepare For The Worst



It is finally clear what the 50 per cent tariffs on India were meant to do. They were leveraged to extract a favourable treaty from India. That is why even during the talks that have resumed recently, the sudden bad-mouthing of India turned back to bromance, and the increased tariffs were not discontinued. A gun was placed at India's head, and "saam-daam-danda-bheda" was adroitly used to force it to give in. Except that it did not. And the US lost its partnership of the century.

Now the \$100,000 fee for H-1B visas effectively means they are not going to be availed by most companies. They are meant to cock the gun that has been placed at India's head. And the gun will stay until a better deal is concluded. Except that it will not. And Prime Minister Narendra Modi will now dig in his heels.

The bromance may continue verbally, superficially, but I am afraid that an incurable fracture of goodwill has been induced. The reason for this belief is the way it was sprung. The surprise announcement of the fee on H-1Bs was meant to be cute and for the sake of enthusing the MAGA crowd. Except that right after the trade talks and positive vibes coming from DC, it feels like a slap in the face. How will

India trust any more expressions of goodwill from the US going forward?

India knows this well from its past dealings with the West. Greet the enemy with a smile, and as they open their arms to embrace you, stab them in the back. Then mock them while they bleed and reel from the shock of the betrayal. This seems to be the modus operandi, and it brings back a lot of bad memories. The 1971 war and Nixon and Kissinger, who openly trashed India and Indians, might as well serve as role models here.

Except they did not greet India with a fake smile and call the Prime Minister a great friend. Except that they did not call India a strategic partner, and the defining relationship of this century, with shared ideals of democracy and open societies.

Let us face it. India did not see this coming. Now it needs to prepare for worse. What more injury can possibly be inflicted? The US may arm Pakistan to the hilt and covertly support its nuclear programmes, like in the 1970s? It can body-slam the great desi friend a little more by declaring taxes on outsourced services too? Well, that will hurt, won't it? India must expect it and prepare for it.

Recently, I was watching the Senate confirmation of the new ambas-

sador to India, and I was surprised to hear not one dissenting voice on how India has been treated and how it might be irretrievably lost. It is surprising to see that not one senator has a clue about how Indians think and respond. They are still parroting the cliché that the US and India are great strategic allies while doing everything to kill their relationship.

Let me be the bearer of bad news here for both sides. The friendship is dead. I am afraid the die has been cast. It does not look pretty.

## What can India do?

India needs to move and move fast. It cannot remain complacent with the fact that it is the fastest-growing large economy in the world. It must accept that it has very few friends it can trust.

There is much work to be done. The ease of doing business is still only a buzzword and not a ground reality. On a recent visit to India, it took me nearly three weeks to cash in on a life insurance policy. One year to get permits for a hospital I wish to build. More than 6 months to sell shares in a company that I own. It takes me one to two days to accomplish the same in the US. Yes, much has improved. The attitude is more "rajasik", full of the can-do spirit. But

that will not be enough. If India wishes to take on the best, it needs to be the best.

Its healthcare and education are still third-world in many ways. Its ability to innovate and disrupt is yet unharnessed.

There are too many hyenas swirling around. Waiting for India to make a mistake. And they surround it from all sides, and some rear their heads from within at the slightest provocation.

Most of its politics and politicians are crassly corrupt. And inefficient, which might be worse.

India's professionals and techies are not yet the best in class. Its startup culture has barely started up. There was never a better time to rocket itself into the stratosphere. Or the best opportunity in centuries for it to rise in greatness. Nations do not become great by building great alliances. Nor do they achieve heights of success by looking at others. They do so by giving themselves a kick in the pants. By pulling no punches and taking no prisoners. By awakening from "tamas" with a fierce will to be the best. This is divine intervention, in my opinion. Is India up for it? It is a question each of us must answer. Individually. And then collectively.

## Israeli cabinet ratifies Gaza ceasefire and hostage deal with Hamas



(News Agency) JERUSALEM/CAIRO, Oct 10 (Reuters) - Israel's government ratified a ceasefire with the Palestinian militant group Hamas on Friday, clearing the way to suspend hostilities in Gaza within 24 hours and free Israeli hostages held there within 72 hours after that. The Israeli cabinet approved the deal early Friday morning, roughly 24 hours after mediators announced the agreement, which calls for the release of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners and the

Yemen and Lebanon. It also tested the U.S.-Israeli relationship, with Trump seeming to lose patience with Netanyahu and pressuring him to reach a deal.

Israelis and Palestinians alike rejoiced after the deal was announced, the biggest step yet to end two years of war in which over 67,000 Palestinians have been killed, and return the last hostages seized by Hamas in the deadly attacks that started the assault. Hamas' exiled Gaza chief Khalil Al-Hayya said he had received guarantees from the United States and other mediators that the war was over. An Israeli government spokesperson said the ceasefire would go into force within 24 hours of government approval of the deal. After that 24-hour period, the hostages held in Gaza would be freed within 72 hours.

Twenty Israeli hostages are still believed to be alive in Gaza, while 26 are presumed dead, and the fate of two is unknown. Hamas has indicated that recovering the bodies of the dead may take longer than releasing those who are alive.

## Stefanik Voted to Fund the Government and Opposes Shutdown



(News Agency) Stefanik got votes for a bipartisan bill to fund the government, opposing shutdowns and criticizing Democrats for voting against it. In a press release shared on her website, US Rep Elise Stefanik said that, Throughout my time in Congress, I have consistently voted to fund the government and opposed government shutdowns. At the end of this month, I voted for a clean, bipartisan bill to keep the government open, continue our appropriations work, protect pay for our troops, and ensure essential services for the American people continue. In fact, it's the same bill that Democrats previously voted for just months ago! The disgraceful reality is that Democrats are forcing a shutdown by voting NO on government funding because

Chuck Schumer got absolutely walloped earlier this year by the radical Far Left because he voted to fund the government. Once again, New York Democrats, cheered on by Kathy Hochul, are putting hardworking New Yorkers and Americans LAST because they are forcing a government shutdown by concocting an unrelated policy issue that doesn't even come up legislatively until the end of the year. Until Democrats end their hypocritical and damaging shutdown hurting American families and workers, I have directed that my pay be withheld and have cosponsored legislation to ensure our servicemembers and law enforcement receive their pay. Democrats own this shutdown lock, stock, and barrel.

## No Nobel for Trump? Norway braces for diplomatic drama

(News Agency) As the world awaits the announcement of this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, Norway, the nation that hosts the ceremony, finds itself in an unusual predicament. Officials in Oslo are reportedly bracing for the possibility of an outburst from U.S. President Donald Trump if he does not win the prestigious award, fearing a potential diplomatic flare-up. While Norway's government plays no role in deciding Nobel laureates, the anxiety stems from a belief that Trump might not fully appreciate the independence of the Nobel Committee. Kirsti Bergst., leader of Norway's Socialist Left Party, expressed concern that Trump's volatile nature could lead to unpredictable consequences. Speaking to The Guardian, she said, "The Nobel Committee is an independent body and the Norwegian government has no involvement in determining the prizes. But I'm not sure Trump knows that. We have to be prepared for anything." Trump's fascination with the Nobel Peace



Prize has long been evident. His irritation stems in part from the fact that his predecessor, Barack Obama, received the award in 2009 for his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples." Trump, meanwhile, has repeatedly argued that his own actions,



including the Abraham Accords between Israel and several Arab states, were far more deserving of global recognition. In recent months, Trump has claimed to have "ended eight wars," naming conflicts between countries such as India and Pakistan, Israel and Iran, and Egypt and Ethiopia —

none of which were actually at war. Fact-checkers and commentators have dismissed his statements as baseless, yet they illustrate how deeply he craves the international validation the Nobel Prize symbolises. According to The Guardian, the Nobel Committee had already chosen this year's

laureate before Trump's administration announced the Israel-Gaza ceasefire arrangement, a move that many of his supporters hoped might strengthen his candidacy. Experts, however, believe it remains "highly unlikely" that Trump will receive the prize. Reports have also emerged that Trump once phoned Norway's then-Finance Minister Jens Stoltenberg "out of the blue," ostensibly to discuss tariffs, but later turned the conversation towards the Nobel Prize. The call, which baffled Norwegian officials, underscored the president's peculiar preoccupation with the award. Norwegian politicians, meanwhile, are wary of Trump's potential response. His tendency to lash out at perceived slights, both domestic and international, has left many in Oslo uneasy. Given his history of threatening allies with tariffs and sanctions, a post-announcement outburst could create a minor diplomatic headache for Norway, even though it has no control over the Nobel process.



# Trump open to healthcare deal, says government must reopen as shutdown enters day 6



(News Agency) US President Donald Trump cracked the door slightly to negotiations with Democrats on the health care subsidies they've made central to the shutdown fight, then abruptly

closed it Monday, leaving the two sides once again at a seemingly intractable impasse. Democrats are conditioning their support for a short-term funding patch on extending the health subsidies that lessen the cost of plans offered under the Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as Obamacare. "We have a negotiation going on right now with the Democrats that could lead to very good things," Trump told reporters. "And I'm talking about good things with regard to health care." The comments were one of the few hopeful signs Monday

as the government shutdown hit its sixth day. Negotiations between the two parties have been virtually nonexistent since the start of the shutdown despite the impact on federal services. But Trump later followed up those comments on his social media site to reinforce what GOP leaders in Congress have been saying: The shutdown must end. And work on extending the enhanced tax credits for health insurance would take place separately. "I am happy to work with the Democrats on their Failed Healthcare Policies, or anything

else, but first they must allow our Government to re-open. In fact, they should open our Government tonight!" Trump wrote. Before Trump walked back his remarks, the two Democratic leaders in Congress, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, has both denied there were any negotiations with Trump. Jeffries said the White House "has gone radio silent" since a meeting in the Oval Office last week. "Trump's claim isn't true, but if he's finally ready to work with Democrats, we'll be at the table," Schumer said.

# Country that sanctioned mass rape...: India blasts Pak over Kashmiri women remark



(News Agency) India blasted Pakistan at the United Nations over its dismal record on women's rights and called out the country over its campaign of genocidal mass rape of 400,000 women during Operation Searchlight in 1971 as Islamabad attempted to highlight the "plight" of Kashmiri women at the forum. In a fiery speech during the UN Security Council debate on women and security, India's permanent representative Parvathaneni Harish slammed Pakistan of continuing its "delusional tirades", particularly regarding Jammu and Kashmir. "Our pioneering record on women, peace and security agenda is unblemished and unscathed. A country that bombs its own people, conducts systematic genocide can only attempt to distract the world with misdirection and hyperbole," Harish said. The "bombing its own people" remark was in reference to the Pakistani air force killing over 30 people, including children, in an overnight air strike in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

last month.

## OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT

Significantly, the Indian representative at the UN raked up 1971's Operation Searchlight, during which the Pakistani army began a brutal crackdown against Bengalis in what was then East Pakistan. During the operation, hundreds of thousands of women were detained and repeatedly brutalised. The operation was overseen by Pakistan's notorious military commander, General Tikka Khan, who was nicknamed the 'Butcher of Bengal'. The brutalities happened during the 1971 Liberation War, which eventually led to the formation of Bangladesh as Pakistan conceded defeat and unconditionally surrendered in Dhaka. Highlighting such historical violations, Harish asserted that the international community saw through Pakistan's propaganda. "This is a country that conducted Operation Searchlight in 1971 and sanctioned a systematic campaign of genocidal mass rape of 400,000 women

citizens by its own army. The world sees through Pakistan's propaganda," he said. India's firm response came as

Pakistan's representative Saima Saleem, during her speech, alleged that women in Kashmir have "endured sexual

violence deployed as a weapon of war" for decades. However, as usual, Pakistan's claims were not backed by any evidence.

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# Republican State Senator Peter Oberacker announces candidacy for New York's 19th Congressional District:

(News Agency) The Otsego County Republican announced in a campaign video late Sunday that he is making a bid for New York's 19th Congressional District, currently held by Democratic Rep. Josh Riley.

Oberacker released a campaign video titled "Soil" that shares his personal journey from working in his family's meat market to building a successful business. The video highlights his faith and values, reminding viewers "we are all rooted in the same soil." Link that video has been in the comments section of this news.

New York's 19th Congressional District covers all of Tompkins County, Broome, Chenango, Otsego, Delaware, Green, Sullivan, and Columbia Counties. It also includes a portion of Ulster, Rensselaer, and Cortland Counties. Including in Cortland County the towns/villages of Solon, Taylor, Virgil, Marathon, Harford, and Willet.



## AIPAC welcomes the announcement of a plan to end the conflict in Gaza

(By our staff reporter) New York-AIPAC (America Israel Political Action Committee) in a press release said that, "We welcome the announcement today of a plan to end the conflict in Gaza, disarm Hamas, and free the hostages. We appreciate the determined efforts of President Donald Trump and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff to help negotiate this plan together with Israel".

This peace plan has the wide support of the United States, Israel and several Arab countries. Now the onus is on Hamas to agree to the plan, disarm, and free the hostages who have been brutally held captive in violation of law and basic morality. If Hamas agrees to the implementation of this plan, aid will further surge to Gazan civilians to help ameliorate the humanitarian situation.

This plan is a direct byproduct of the tremendous progress of Israel's military

operation in Gaza to degrade Hamas' capabilities. Congressional support for our democratic ally has been instrumental throughout this war, including by passing the largest military aid package in Israel's history, and we applaud the Democrats and Republicans who have been consistent and unequivocal in their demands for Hamas to free the hostages and give up power in Gaza. Hamas started this war on October 7 with one of the most barbaric assaults imaginable. Since then, the Iranian-backed terror group has proceeded to use Palestinians in Gaza as human shields for its maniacal war against the Jewish state, bringing terrible death, destruction and humanitarian crises to Gaza. American and world leaders must now pressure Hamas to agree to the peace plan and adhere to its terms and implementation.

## ICE sweep in Minneapolis-St. Paul finds 50% of immigrants had committed immigration fraud:

(By our staff reporter) Nearly half of all immigrants in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Twin Cities were found to have committed some form of immigration fraud during a recent sweep by immigration authorities, officials revealed Tuesday. "Officers encountered blatant marriage fraud, visa overstay, people claiming to work as businesses that can't be found, forged documents, abuse of the H1B visa system, abuse of the F1 visa, and many other discrepancies," US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) director Joseph B. Edlow told reporters Tuesday. Officials didn't point to a specific group, but the Twin Cities has seen a massive uptick in Somali refugees and immigrants in recent years — with more than 82,000 from the East African country living in Minnesota. USCIS visited 1,000 homes across Minneapolis and St. Paul in the last two

weeks and found "nearly 50%" of inhabitants were engaged in some form of immigration fraud. "Our officers found indications of fraud, non-compliance or public safety and national security



concerns," Edlow said. "What they found should shock all of America." The operation — dubbed Twin Shield, and carried out with the help of ICE — began on Sept. 13 and concluded this week, with Edlow calling it a "success" that could soon be repeated in cities across the country.

# Curtis Sliwa reports his best fundraising period yet

(By our staff reporter) New York City Republican mayoral nominee Curtis Sliwa is projecting his strongest fundraising stretch so far, reporting more than \$421,000 raised in the last filing period.

The Republican previously had raised about \$4.2 million for his campaign, including city matching funds, and a spokesperson said they hope to reach the \$8 million general election fundraising limit by the end of the month. The latest filing is set to bring his total private contributions to just over \$1.3 million from a little more than 14,300 contributors, according to numbers shared with City & State ahead of Friday's filing



deadline. The fundraising period spanned from Aug. 19 to Sept. 29, the day after incumbent Mayor Eric Adams announced he would no longer seek reelection.

With three main candidates in the race — Democratic nominee Zohran Mamdani, independent candidate Andrew Cuomo and Sliwa — the Republican

nominee's campaign is hoping this fundraising haul will help shift the narrative from "Mamdani vs. Cuomo" (who are polling in that order) to "Mamdani vs. Sliwa." Mamdani has maintained a dominant fundraising lead throughout the race. He raised more than a million dollars in the last reporting period, and his campaign "maxed out" and stopped fundraising in early September, a full two months before Election Day. "Everyone is pegging Cuomo as second. We all know he isn't placing second in this race," Sliwa campaign spokesperson Daniel Kurzyna wrote in a text to City & State.

"This is Curtis vs Mamdani. And the press will finally realize that soon." Neither Mamdani's nor Cuomo's campaign shared fundraising numbers ahead of Friday's deadline. Mamdani had \$6.8 million on hand as of the last filing period in August. Cuomo has trailed far behind Mamdani in public matching funds, but had nearly \$1.6 million in his campaign account and is expected to benefit from spending by independent expenditure committees. As of the last filing period, Sliwa had 3.4 million cash on hand. Record spending by one IE to boost Cuomo in the Democratic primary, however, proved ineffective.



# Bangladesh calls Indian foreign secretary's remark on elections 'unwarranted'

**Bangladesh's interim government has dismissed Indian foreign secretary Vikram Misri's comments on its general election as unwarranted. Dhaka-New Delhi ties were strained after the interim government assumed power following the ouster of Sheikh Hasina.**

(By our staff reporter) Bangladesh's interim government on Wednesday described Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's comments on the general election as "completely unwarranted", saying it is entirely an internal affair of the country. "I see that statement as not their matter; it is entirely an internal issue for Bangladesh, and such comments are completely unwarranted," Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain told reporters. Hossain made the remarks when asked to comment on Misri's statement that India is firmly in favour of holding free, fair and inclusive elections in Bangladesh at the earliest, and it is ready to work with any government chosen by the people in the polls. Dhaka-

New Delhi ties were strained after the interim government assumed power following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League regime in a violent student-led movement dubbed the "July Uprising" in August 2024, when she left for India. The interim government in May disbanded Awami League's activities until the trial of Hasina and leaders of her government were completed on charges of brutal attempts to tame the July protestors and other alleged misdeeds carried out during her protracted regime from 2009. Analysts said Misri's call for "inclusive and participatory" elections in Bangladesh carried a political significance, while most of the Awami League leaders were imprisoned or on



the run at home and abroad. The interim government earlier

sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi seeking Hasina's extradition to stand trial, as she is being tried in absentia.

## Is thaw emerging in India-Pakistan relations? Maulana Fazlur Rehman to visit India with 'message of peace'

## Thousands arrested in Bangladesh, many on dubious murder allegations: HRW



recently slammed the Shehbaz Sharif-led Pakistan government and wants to establish himself as an indomitable leader of Pashtuns.

As he is not a part of the government or the ruling alliance, the maulana's visit to India may be treated as an independent endeavor. The Pakistan establishment wants to send him to gauge India's mood and its diplomatic response. If his mission fails to get any positive response from New Delhi, it may be rejected as his personal idea with no role of the government. If something positive comes out, Islamabad may build its further plan on it. It will not be the first India visit of Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Earlier in 2002 and 2003, he visited the country when bilateral relations were equally strained. This was also the time when tension had escalated over the Babri Mosque-Ram Janmabhoomi controversy. He met senior political leaders, including Bal Thackeray and members of the NDA government.

(By our staff reporter) Human Rights Watch has said Bangladesh's interim government is "increasingly using the recently amended counterterrorism law to arrest alleged supporters of the deposed Awami League government". In a statement released on October 8, HRW said the United Nations human rights team in Bangladesh should immediately seek the release of those arbitrarily detained and encourage the authorities to uphold rights and prosecute all those who use unlawful political violence. The interim government took office in August 2024 after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government was toppled following three weeks of protests in which 1,400 people were killed, the rights body said. On May 12, 2025, the interim government ordered a ban on the Awami League's political activities, using new authority under amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act, it said. The ban includes prohibitions on meetings, publications, and online speech supporting the party and is being used to

"arrest Awami League members and peaceful activists". "The interim government should not be engaging in the same partisan behaviour that Bangladeshis had to endure under Sheikh Hasina, whether it is stuffing the prisons with political opponents or shutting down peaceful dissent," said Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The UN's human rights office has been invited by the government to support the protection of human rights in Bangladesh, and it should monitor developments and urgently intervene to discourage politically motivated arrests," she added. "Thousands have been arrested under the interim government, many on dubious murder allegations, while scores are being held under the Anti-Terrorism Act. Several have alleged mistreatment in custody, including lack of access to medical care, a chilling reminder of similar allegations under the Sheikh Hasina government," the HRW statement said.

Is there a thaw in India-Pakistan relations? Are the two countries opening the track-two diplomacy weeks after the military skirmishes taking place in May? Are the two sides once again trying to bring the ties to normalcy after the devastating Cricket Asia Cup, when tension escalated to a new height? These questions have surfaced after Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman of Pakistan expressed his desire to visit India with what he calls a "message of peace".

Maulana's close aide, Senator Kamran Murtaza, set the ball rolling recently by announcing that he had conveyed Maulana's message of peace to an Indian diplomat.

Will it be Maulana Fazlur Rehman's personal visit?

Analysts believe the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief wants to project himself as a regional peacemaker at a time when India and Pakistan have attacked each other and both claim to have downed the fighter jets of the other. Maulana Fazlur Rehman has

# Widely circulated image of US, Sri Lanka leaders is doctored

(By our staff reporter) Sri Lankan leader Anura Kumara Disanayake met President Donald Trump on his first official visit to the United States in September 2025, where the two had a "cordial exchange". But a widely shared image of the two supposedly shaking hands is digitally manipulated from a genuine photo of Disanayake with Trump's special envoy for South and Central Asia. "Special meeting with president Anura Kumara Disanayake and American president Donald Trump," reads part of a Sinhala-language Facebook post that has been shared more than 1,600 times since it was published September 25, 2025. It features an image

apparently showing Disanayake shaking hands with Trump in front of Sri Lanka's national flag. The doctored image surfaced elsewhere on Facebook after Disanayake took part in a dinner hosted by Trump in New York for foreign leaders who attended the United Nations General Assembly on September 24 (archived here and here). A reverse image search on Google found the original picture on the website of Sri Lankan President's Media Division. It shows Disanayake not with Trump but with Sergio Gor, Trump's Special Envoy for South and Central Asia (archived link). According to the article, Disanayake and Gor met at the Office of Sri Lanka's Permanent

Representative to the United Nations on September 23. "During the meeting, attention was drawn to areas of significance to both countries, including trade, commerce, tourism and investment, with discussions focusing on further strengthening cooperation in these sectors," it reads. Other pictures from the meeting with Gor were also posted on the Facebook account of Disanayake's media office (archived link). A subsequent Facebook post on September 27 from Disanayake's media office said he had a "cordial exchange" with Trump before posing together for a photo (archived link). The post includes a picture of the two leaders alongside US First Lady Melania Trump.



## IMF, Sri Lanka reach staff-level agreement for \$347 million in financing

(By our staff reporter) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reached a staff-level agreement with Sri Lanka to complete the fifth review of its reform program, paving the way for access to about \$347 million in financing, the organisation said on Thursday.

The country will have access to the financing once the review is approved by the IMF Executive Board, bringing the total money unlocked under its nearly \$3 billion support programme to the island nation to about \$2.04 billion.

Sri Lanka is gradually recovering from its worst financial crisis in decades, triggered by a record dollar shortage three

years ago.

The country's 2026 budget should be in line with the IMF programme parameters to keep improving its finances on the back of strong revenue measures and prudent spending execution, the IMF said after its staff concluded a visit to the island nation.

The country requires sustained efforts to improve tax compliance, broaden the tax base, strengthen tax exemption frameworks and enhance public financial management among other measures, the IMF added. Reporting by Bipasha Dey and Abinaya Vijayaraghavan in Bengaluru; Editing by Christian Schmollinger and Harikrishnan Nair



## Pak panics? Strikes in Afghanistan as Taliban minister makes maiden India trip



(By our staff reporter) Afghanistan was rocked by explosions on Thursday night, with reports saying that Pakistani jets carried out airstrikes targeting Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) camps in Kabul as tensions flared between the countries. The timing of the attack coincided with Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi's maiden visit to India – a visit that seems to have rattled Pakistan as New Delhi ramps up its Afghan outreach. The development comes amid a dramatic deterioration in Taliban's ties with Pakistan, which has for long accused Afghanistan of funding and arming the Pakistan Taliban or Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

### PAKISTAN'S AIR STRIKES IN KABUL

Local reports said the aerial strike near Shahid Abdul Haq Square was aimed to snuff out TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud, who took over the command of the outfit in 2018. However, an

audio message from Mehsud claimed that he was safe, denying reports of his death or disappearance. The clarification came after several Pakistani media outlets claimed he was killed in the strike. Mehsud, who saw Pakistan's alliance with the US after the 9/11 attacks as a betrayal, has been a constant headache for Islamabad. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has carried out several attacks targeting Pakistani military personnel in recent years, with the latest being on October 8. A deadly ambush by the TTP on Wednesday near the Afghan border left 11 Pakistani soldiers, including two senior officers, dead. Expressing concern over the Pakistani air strikes, former US envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad termed it as a "huge escalation" that posed dangerous risks. Khalilzad called for negotiations between Pakistan and Taliban.



# Big Crackdown Coming: India To Audit All Cough Syrup Makers After DEG Contamination Scare

In the wake of recurring cases of contaminated cough syrups and mounting international scrutiny, India's top drug regulator is launching a nationwide audit of all cough syrup manufacturers to ensure product safety and quality compliance. News18 has learnt. A senior official told News18 that the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has sought a complete list of all manufacturers of cough syrups from every state and is setting up a "robust and proper system" for regular audits and surveillance. "We have asked for the list of all manufacturers of cough syrup from the states and union territories. We will begin doing audits of all manufacturers of cough syrup across the country. We are coming up with a proper robust system for that," the official said while adding that an official announcement is expected to come up in next ten days. The move comes after recent detections of toxic Diethylene

Glycol (DEG) in samples from Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, which have reignited concerns about India's pharmaceutical oversight following earlier international incidents linked to Indian-made syrups. According to CDSCO sources, a joint inspection by central and state drug regulators in Madhya Pradesh found 19 syrup samples, out of which three failed DEG quality tests. "Respifresh, Relife, and Coldrif were found to contain DEG," the source said. "We divided the samples among ourselves. All six samples tested by us were clear of DEG, but the same evening Tamil Nadu FDA found DEG. Madhya Pradesh FDA later reported DEG in the same batch." The findings have triggered enforcement actions against multiple manufacturers, including Sresan Pharma, which has come under intense regulatory glare. Officials confirmed that the company's licence was issued by the state regulator in 2011 and renewed

in 2016, without CDSCO's involvement. "The licence to Sresan was given in 2011 by the state regulator. CDSCO didn't give the license or renewal. We didn't know this company existed. We did the audit of the company and found 364 violations, including 38 critical observations. This is an extreme case," the official said, adding that such a high number of violations has "never been found in any previous inspection." Following these findings, CDSCO had recommended that Tamil Nadu's FDA cancel Sresan's license and initiate criminal proceedings. Deaths in Rajasthan Not Related to Cough Syrups Officials clarified that the deaths reported in Rajasthan are not linked to cough syrups, countering speculation about contaminated products. "We tested the samples of cough syrups and other medicines but found no DEG. There's a lot of talk about Dextromethorphan syrup being responsible, but we

found that these were cases of acute respiratory disorder and encephalitis," the source added. "Dextromethorphan based syrups don't need solvents. Hence, chances of use of DEG can be straight away nullified. But we still checked all the syrups for DEG presence." Meanwhile, two Gujarat-based cough syrup manufacturers have halted production following CDSCO's recommendation to their respective state authorities.

Acknowledging the limits of federal oversight, the CDSCO official emphasized that drug

regulation in India operates under a federal structure, where health is a state subject. "It is a federal system. Health is a state subject. We can only recommend, but state regulators have to follow the right practices," the official said. As India moves to strengthen its pharmaceutical reputation amid global scrutiny, the mass audit of cough syrup manufacturers marks one of the most comprehensive regulatory clean-ups in recent years — a step that could redefine how India's billion-dollar drug industry ensures public safety.

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

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his British counterpart Keir Starmer on Thursday in talks meant to deepen cooperation on trade, defense and technology while promoting a trade deal between the countries.

The talks in India's financial capital of Mumbai marked Starmer's first official trip to India since taking office in July 2024. The two-day visit that began Wednesday comes as the Indian government increases efforts to attract global investment for the nation's rapidly expanding economy.

The prime ministers said Thursday's meeting focused on pushing forward a trade agreement signed during Modi's visit to London in July and boosting cooperation in digital infrastructure, technology, defense, critical minerals and education. The two countries also signed a defense deal that will allow Britain to supply missiles, launchers and electric-powered engines for naval ships to India, the British defense ministry said in a statement. The countries are natural partners and strengthening the partnership "is an example of stability in an uncertain world," Modi said.

"India-U.K. partnership is becoming crucial foundation for global stability and

economic progress," Modi said, announcing the countries have reached an agreement on military training cooperation, while nine U.K. universities plan to open campuses in India. Starmer is visiting India with a 125-member delegation that includes business, university and culture sector leaders. He said the trip was about "doubling down on the potential of the trade deal" that will drive growth and jobs in both countries. "We are creating a new, modern partnership focusing on future," Starmer said.

The trade agreement, which both nations said they aim to implement within the next year, will slash tariffs on products including Scotch whisky, English gin shipped to India, and Indian food and spices sent to the U.K. The British government said in a statement that the deal would raise bilateral trade by a further \$34 billion and increase exports to India by nearly 60%. Modi and Starmer also shared views on Indo-Pacific stability and discussed the war in Ukraine and developments in Gaza. Starmer hailed the first stage of a peace plan between Israel and Hamas, saying it brings "profound relief," especially for hostages, families and civilians who have suffered over the past two years.

## Watch viral shouting match between Mike Lawler, Hakeem Jeffries over gov't shutdown: 'Keep your mouth shut'

Hudson Valley Rep. Mike Lawler (R-NY) got into an epic war of words with House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) over his role in causing the partial government shutdown after catching him at the end of a Wednesday press conference. Lawler had walked up to and called out Jeffries for not engaging in bipartisan negotiations with him to extend the Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits. "Did your boss, Donald Trump, give you permission?" a smirking Jeffries snapped back as Lawler began confronting him in front of a group of reporters. The Hudson Valley rep, who held up a copy of legislation to extend the ACA credits, denied that President Trump is his boss and recounted how Jeffries has repeatedly voted for spending patches in the past to avert government shutdowns.

"You're making a show of this to make yourself relevant," the Brooklyn Democrat sniped. "You're embarrassing yourself right now." "It's sad, you could sign onto this right now," Lawler countered. "You have four Democrats on here. Why won't you sign on?" Democrats have repeatedly blocked a GOP-backed continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government funded through Nov. 21. They've demanded that the GOP reverse Medicaid reform and extend the enhanced Obamacare subsidies that are set to expire by the end of the year, in exchange for breaking the Senate filibuster and allowing the CR to reopen the government. Jeffries has dismissed calls for a temporary extension of those subsidies and called for it to be permanent as part of his demands to reopen the government. During their verbal tussle, the top House Democrat needled Lawler over the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (now known

as the Working Families Tax Cut Act). "I voted for a tax cut bill that gave the largest tax cut to Americans in history, including, by the way, the average New Yorker getting a \$4,000 tax cut," he said. Jeffries chided that the megabill slashed funding for Medicaid, but Lawler countered that the GOP-backed reforms were aimed at rooting out waste, fraud and abuse. "Listen, you're not going to talk to me ... and talk over me because you don't want to hear what I have to say. So why don't you just keep your mouth shut," the House minority leader swiped. He further accused Lawler of slashing taxes for his billionaire buddies, but the Republican rep explained that the megabill extended the standard deduction, which is regularly used by middle-class Americans, and increased the state and local tax (SALT) deduction cap. "Why are you here right now? Where are the rest of your Republican colleagues?" Jeffries sniped. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) has kept the lower chamber out of session as a pressure tactic to get Senate Democrats to back the clean CR his chamber passed last month. The idea is that the House is out of town and, therefore, unable to take up a modified CR despite Dem attempts to negotiate. The two exchanged insults, with Jeffries accusing Lawler of pulling off a stunt to boost his re-election prospects, while the Hudson Valley rep jabbed that the Brooklyn Democrat spent \$42 million last cycle and "didn't do that great." Lawler also poked at Jeffries over when he plans to endorse Democratic New York mayoral hopeful Zohran Mamdani, noting the latter's stunning attack on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the anniversary of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack.

# Venezuela's Maria Machado dedicates Nobel Prize to Trump. He shares her post

Donald Trump may have missed out on the Nobel Peace Prize 2025, but he got a special mention from Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, who won the coveted award. Machado praised the US President for supporting the "decisive cause" of the "suffering" Venezuelans, who are battling to oust authoritarian President Nicolas Maduro. In response, Trump endorsed Machado's remarks by sharing a screenshot of her post on his Truth Social platform. "This recognition of the struggle of all Venezuelans is a boost to conclude our task: to conquer freedom. We are on the threshold of victory and today, more than ever, we count on President Trump, the people of the United States, the peoples of Latin America, and the democratic nations of the world as our principal allies to achieve freedom and democracy," Machado wrote on X.

"I dedicate this prize to the suffering people of Venezuela and to President Trump for his decisive support of our

cause!" she said. Trump reciprocated by sharing a screenshot of Machado on his Truth Social platform. He is expected to speak on the Nobel Peace Prize snub later on Friday (local time).

The White House slammed the Nobel Committee for its decision to award the prestigious peace prize to Machado, saying it "placed politics over peace".

The Nobel Committee recognised Machado for her unwavering commitment to promoting democratic rights and advocating for a peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy in Venezuela.

Machado has been a unifying figure in Venezuela's opposition, despite facing threats and being forced into hiding following last year's election that was widely seen as having been rigged by Maduro.

## WHY TRUMP WON'T BE HURT FOR MISSING OUT NOBEL?

The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Machado defies a months-long public campaign by Trump, who would

have been hoping to etch his name alongside Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama - former US presidents who have won the coveted award.

While Trump has lost out on the Nobel Peace Prize after repeatedly arguing he deserved to win the prize for resolving "eight wars", the choice of Machado will not hurt the eccentric Republican. In recent months, Trump has opened a front against Maduro over drug trafficking operations in Venezuela and has halted all diplomatic efforts.

Trump's moves have fuelled speculation that the US might be pushing for regime change in the country.

In fact, Machado had thanked Trump in August, days after the US doubled its reward for Maduro's capture to USD 50 million.

"We, Venezuelans, thank President Trump and his administration for their firm and decisive action to dismantle the criminal and terrorist structure that is

illegitimately holding onto power in our country," she had tweeted.

The Trump administration calls Venezuelan President Maduro a "fugitive of American justice," while Trump describes him as a drug cartel leader and an illegitimate ruler. Trump's crackdown on Maduro has earned Machado's praise. Machado, also known as Venezuela's Iron Lady for her work in promoting democratic rights, found her name in Time Magazine's 'The 100 Most Influential People of 2025' list.

Over the years, Machado has been a key figure in Venezuela's pro-democracy movement, defying the authoritarian regime of Maduro. She has not only faced threats, but has also been arrested and faced travel bans and political persecution.

The Nobel Committee commended Machado as a "brave and committed champion of peace" who "keeps the flame of democracy burning during a growing darkness".

## Nobel Peace Prize goes to Maria Corina Machado, despite calls for Trump to receive the award

The Nobel Committee awarded this year's peace prize to Maria Corina Machado amid calls for President Donald Trump to receive the award in the wake of his brokering a historic deal between Israel and Hamas.

Machado, a Venezuelan opposition leader, was described as a "brave and committed champion of peace" by Joergen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

"She is receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for her tireless work promoting democratic rights for the people of Venezuela and for her struggle to achieve a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy," Frydnes said. White House communications director Steven Cheung said Trump "will continue making peace deals, ending wars, and saving lives." "He has the heart of a humanitarian, and there will never be anyone like him who can move mountains with the sheer force of his will. The Nobel Committee proved they place politics over peace," Cheung wrote on X.

Trump has received several high-profile nominations since returning to office. However, the committee's deadline for nominations was Jan. 31, meaning he could be eligible for next year's prize.

During a Cabinet meeting on Thursday, Trump was asked about the Nobel Peace Prize, but did not comment on the award in his response. Instead, he focused on the possibility of addressing Israel's Knesset. Earlier this week, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, a group



representing the families of hostages and terror victims formed after Oct. 7, appealed to the committee on Trump's behalf. "In this past year, no leader or organization has contributed more to peace around the world than President Trump. While many have spoken eloquently about peace, he has achieved it. While others have offered empty promises, he has delivered tangible results that have saved countless lives," the forum wrote in a letter to the committee dated Oct. 6. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Trump in July during a visit to Washington, D.C., that he had nominated the president for the Nobel Peace Prize. Netanyahu

handed the letter he sent the Weeks prior to that meeting, the U.S. and Israel carried out major operations that destroyed Iran's nuclear infrastructure, as both countries warned a nuclear Tehran would be a threat to the world. committee to Trump when he told him the news. "The president has already realized great opportunities. He forged the Abraham Accords. He's forging peace, as we speak, in one country and one region after the other," Netanyahu said. "So, I want to present to you, Mr. President, the letter I sent to the Nobel Prize committee. It's nominating you for the peace prize, which is well-deserved." Weeks prior to that meeting, the U.S. and Israel carried out

major operations that destroyed Iran's nuclear infrastructure, as both countries warned a nuclear Tehran would be a threat to the world. Trump was nominated for the award in the past but was not selected. Notably, U.S. Rep. Claudia Tenney, R-N.Y., nominated Trump for the prize in 2020 when he brokered the Abraham Accords, normalizing relations between Israel and Arab nations. Had he won, Trump would have become the fifth U.S. president to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Previous laureates include former President Barack Obama, former President Jimmy Carter, former President Woodrow Wilson and former President Theodore Roosevelt.



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

Afghanistan's UN-sanctioned Foreign Minister has landed in India for a week-long visit. Amir Khan Muttaqi's trip -- made possible after the UN Security Council granted him a travel waiver -- is the first visit by a top Taliban leader to India since they returned to power in 2021 following the withdrawal of US-led forces. During his trip, the Afghan minister is likely to call on External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval. The visit comes at a crucial time for regional diplomacy and is expected to

be closely watched by neighbours in Islamabad, as New Delhi looks to deepen its engagement with the Taliban government in Kabul. Delhi's Dilemma But as the South Block prepares for the bilateral engagements, officials have a flag dilemma. The diplomatic protocol dictates that the Indian flag be placed alongside the flag of the country of the visiting leader-- behind them and/or on the table-- for photo ops. Since India doesn't recognise the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, it also does not give official status to the Taliban flag. So far, New Delhi has not allowed

the Taliban to fly its flag -- a plain white cloth with the black words of the shahada, the Islamic declaration of faith -- at the Afghan Embassy in New Delhi. The embassy still flies the old flag of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which was official at the time of now-ousted President Ashraf Ghani. Afghanistan's UN-sanctioned Foreign Minister has landed in India for a week-long visit. Amir Khan Muttaqi's trip -- made possible after the UN Security Council granted him a travel waiver -- is the first visit by a top Taliban leader to India since they returned to power

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## Front-page ads hail Ratan Tata as guiding light amid internal feud

The striking irony was unmissable. On Thursday, as full-page advertisements across major national dailies celebrated the legacy of Ratan Tata -- hailing his humility and calling him the Tata Group's guiding light -- a storm continued to rage inside Tata Trusts. The contrast could not have been starker. On one hand, the ads by the Tata Group celebrate a man who exemplified humility and modesty throughout his life. On the other, infighting among trustees over board appointments and governance

matters has wracked an organisation that prides itself on those very ideals that Ratan Tata espoused. Notably, the internal turmoil within Tata Trusts, the majority shareholder in Tata Sons, has coincided with the first death anniversary of Ratan Tata. The veteran industrialist and noted philanthropist died on October 9, 2024, in Mumbai following a prolonged illness at 86. "A life of purpose. A legacy of impact. His legacy of transforming philanthropy into a force for national progress shall always be our guiding

light," the tribute by Tata Trusts said in its advertisement. Tata Sons also came out with an advertisement in another leading daily. "The lessons you taught us in humility, purpose and generosity will forever stay with us," the tribute said. However, behind the carefully crafted public homage to one of India's most loved industrialists, infighting among the trustees of Tata Trusts deepened. So much so that the government had to intervene and ask the top honchos of the Tata Group to restore stability as the crisis

threatened to impact the functioning of the USD 180 billion conglomerate.

### WHAT IS THE FEUD ALL ABOUT?

In fact, amid the factionalism, Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held a high-level meeting with Tata Trusts chief Noel Tata and Tata Sons chairperson N Chandrasekaran. At the centre of the row is a feud between a group aligned with Noel Tata and four trustees led by Mehli Mistry, tied to the Shapoorji Pallonji family, which holds

over 18% stake in Tata Sons. The four trustees - Darius Khambata, Jehangir HC Jehangir, Pramit Jhaveri, and Mehli Mistry - have been reportedly pushing for more control over key appointments and board oversight at Tata Sons.

This has not gone down well with Noel Tata. At stake is the control over the 156-year-old corporate giant and its 400 companies. While there has been no comment from the Tata Group yet, it remains to be seen how the crisis pans out in the next few days.

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

**The Brazilian influencer's death post 'fox eyes' surgery has reignited conversations around the risks of cosmetic enhancements and how easily social media trends can blur the line between self-expression and self-endangerment.**

When it comes to meeting and the beauty standards today, we can go up to any extent, even if it means putting our lives in danger. After going under the knife for a cosmetic procedure, 31-year-old Brazilian fashion influencer Adair Mendes Dutra Junior reportedly developed a serious infection and eventually died last week. The procedure in question is "fox eyes" surgery. The incident has reignited conversations around the risks of cosmetic enhancements and how easily social media trends can blur the line between self-expression

and self-endangerment. To understand what might have gone wrong, and what anyone considering such a procedure should know, we spoke to Dr Debraj Shome, co-founder and director of The Esthetic Clinics.

### What exactly is "fox-eyes" surgery?

"The fox-eye surgery," Dr. Shome explains, "is a cosmetic procedure that lifts and elongates the outer corners of the eyes, creating a subtle 'almond' or cat-like shape. It can be done through a lateral brow lift, small incisions, or thread lifts that pull the skin upward."

"The surgeon must tailor the method to a person's facial anatomy and preserve eye health and function," he adds. What happens during the procedure? The surgery typically involves marking the brow and eye area, then lifting the tissue with threads or sutures under local anaesthesia. "Swelling and bruising are common immediately after," says Dr. Shome. "Over a few weeks, the skin settles into its final contour. The key is to follow strict aftercare, no strain, no shortcuts."

### What can go wrong?

Although often marketed as "minimally invasive," the fox-eye lift carries serious risks. "You can get eyelid misalignment, nerve injury, or corneal irritation," Dr. Shome cautions. "Thread lifts may cause inflammation or infection, while surgical lifts risk hematoma or tissue damage. In rare cases, untreated infections can spread through the bloodstream -- leading to sepsis or death." He adds that even a minor lapse in hygiene or delayed medical attention can turn a routine procedure into a life-threatening

emergency.

### What might have happened in Junior Dutra's case?

"From reports, it appears that he developed swelling, infection, and later, breathing difficulties," Dr. Shome says. "This could indicate a severe infection that progressed to sepsis or airway obstruction due to swelling." Such cases, he adds, "highlight how critical it is to have these procedures done by qualified surgeons under sterile, accredited settings -- with proper postoperative monitoring."

# Has India started paying for Russian oil in Chinese yuan?

India, already the world's top buyer of discounted Russian oil, appears to be quietly using the Chinese yuan for some of its payments, reported news agency Reuters. This comes amid signs of warming ties between New Delhi and Beijing. Traders supplying Russian crude have reportedly asked Indian state refiners to settle a few recent shipments in yuan instead of the usual dollars or UAE dirhams. State-run Indian Oil Corporation, the country's largest refiner, has made payments in yuan for at least two or three Russian shipments, according to sources familiar with the deals. Traditionally, oil payments are made in dollars, but sanctions on Russia and the need to convert payments into roubles have made alternative currencies more common. The

move to pay in yuan simplifies the process. Until now, traders had to first convert payments from dollars or UAE dirhams into yuan, which could then be exchanged into roubles. Paying directly in yuan removes one step and reduces transaction costs. Sources quoted in the Reuters report added that while Russian oil continues to be priced in dollars to comply with the European Union's price cap, the equivalent amount can now be settled in yuan. This is not the first time Indian refiners have used yuan. In 2023, state refiners experimented with Chinese currency for some purchases, but government discomfort during a period of tension with Beijing led to a pause. Private refiners continued using yuan, but state refiners largely reverted to other

currencies. The recent deals suggest that these earlier restrictions may have eased. The yuan payments are expected to expand access to Russian crude for Indian state refiners. Some traders are reportedly unwilling to accept payments in other currencies, making the yuan a more convenient choice. Analysts say this step signals India's pragmatic approach to securing energy supplies while navigating sanctions, international scrutiny, and volatile markets. The developments also come against the backdrop of improving India-China ties. Direct flights between the two countries resumed after more than five years, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited China to attend a Shanghai



Cooperation Organisation energy market, it reflects the growing use of currencies other than the dollar to navigate sanctions and geopolitical tensions. Whether payments in yuan will become routine or remain limited to specific shipments will be closely watched by analysts, traders, and policymakers alike.

## WILL IT BENEFIT INDIAN REFINERS?

For Indian refiners, paying in yuan could reduce costs, simplify transactions, and strengthen ties with Russian oil suppliers. For the broader

and policymakers alike.

# Government in talks with insurers for climate-linked insurance scheme: Report



Indian government is in early talks with insurers to design a nationwide climate-linked insurance scheme, reported Reuters. The aim is to make it easier for people to get payouts quickly after extreme weather events such as floods, heatwaves, and storms.

## WHAT IS CLIMATE INSURANCE

Climate insurance, also called climate risk insurance, is designed to protect individuals, businesses, and communities from financial losses caused by extreme weather events linked to climate change, like floods, heatwaves, storms, and hurricanes, etc. By providing timely payouts after such events, climate insurance helps people recover faster and rebuild

their lives or businesses without facing severe financial strain.

## WHAT THE SCHEME COULD LOOK LIKE

The plan would use a parametric insurance model. Under this system, payouts are made automatically when specific weather conditions, like heavy rainfall, high temperatures, or strong winds, are reached. Unlike traditional insurance, which can take years to settle claims, parametric insurance is fast and simple.

Ramaswamy Narayanan, chairperson of state-run reinsurer GIC Re, said, "We've seen the frequency and severity of adverse climate events go up, and based on that, this discussion with the government

also started," as mentioned in Assam, Uttarakhand, and the report.

## WHY INDIA NEEDS IT

India is among the countries recently seen major crop, most vulnerable to extreme losses due to floods and weather. Between 1993 and landslides.

Between 2022, the country experienced over 400 extreme events, causing at least 80,000 deaths and losses of around \$180 billion. States like Punjab, fund the insurance premiums,

## FUNDING AND STATE-LEVEL PILOTS

The federal government is exploring different ways to fund the insurance premiums,

such as using existing disaster relief funds or adding small charges to utility bills. Some states have already started pilot schemes. For example, last year, 50,000 self-employed women in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra received small payouts when temperatures exceeded 40C.

# Here's a step-by-step guide to checking and updating KYC for mutual funds

Before investing in mutual funds, one basic requirement every investor must fulfil is completing and updating their KYC (Know Your Customer) details. Without a valid KYC, your investment transactions may get blocked or rejected. But before rushing to update anything, it's important to first check your KYC status online – a process that takes less than a minute.

## HOW TO CHECK YOUR KYC STATUS

Investors can check their KYC status on the website of any mutual fund house or Registrar and Transfer Agent (RTA) by simply entering their PAN number. Once submitted, the system will display one of four possible status labels — validated, registered, on hold or rejected.

## WHAT EACH KYC STATUS MEANS

If your KYC status is shown as validated, you're good to go. You can invest, redeem or switch funds across any mutual fund without any restrictions. If the status displays registered, you can continue using your current investments without interruption. However, if you want to invest

in a new mutual fund where you have not invested before, you will have to update your KYC again. In such cases, investors can upgrade their status to 'validated' by redoing their KYC using PAN and



Aadhaar through DigiLocker, XML or the mAadhaar app. A status marked as on hold or rejected means something is missing or not matching in your records. Common reasons include an unverified mobile number or email, PAN not being linked with Aadhaar, or incorrect documentation.



# Can a cluttered home lead to a messy breakup?

## Women are no longer ashamed of their greys, but what brought about this movement?



Overflowing dressers, that box of memories no one's touched in years, or a cracked lamp waiting to be fixed "someday" – clutter takes up more space in our homes than we'd like to admit. We all complain but secretly also love to hold on to that nostalgia. (Kahani ghar ghar ki, indeed!) Ironically, while we cling to old bills, broken chargers, and college T-shirts, our elders never miss a chance to remind us that old or broken things block luck and prosperity. And somewhere between old beliefs and modern nostalgia, we end up holding on to not just stuff, but stress too. And experts say that might be hurting

our relationships more than we realise. According to a US-based survey, around 37 per cent of people admit that their partner's messiness makes them less attractive. Over 61 per cent also said clutter occasionally causes tension in their relationship. Based on the responses of about a thousand people in a relationship, the survey offers a nuanced lens into how a cluttered home and untidy habits can gradually weigh heavily on a relationship, both emotionally and physically. Clutter and chaos in relationships It's not uncommon for people to clean their desks or their spaces when they feel

overwhelmed. For some, it's a way to clear mental chaos and regain a sense of control. In fact, cluttered and unorganised spaces can take a serious toll on mental health. Naturally, it spills into relationships too, and experts agree. Living in a messy environment often creates a constant sense of chaos and discomfort, which can reduce patience and emotional closeness between partners. Shivani Misri Sadhoo, a Delhi-based marriage counsellor, says, "Over time, one partner may start feeling that the other lacks responsibility, discipline, or respect for shared space, all of which are qualities linked to attraction and trust." Apart from emotions, clutter can even change how your home feels. "It (clutter) often creates stress, anxiety, and irritability, eventually leading to the blame game. On the contrary, an organised home and wardrobe can help maintain a calm, happy, and pleasant environment. When things are in order and easily accessible, it can turn daily living into a soothing, even relaxing experience," Dr Sanjay Kumawat, consultant psychiatrist and sexologist, Fortis Hospital, Mulund, Mumbai, tells India Today.



It was a regular Sunday morning at the Khanna household when Anita Khanna (name changed) called out to her 31-year-old daughter, Naina (name changed), holding a bowl of hair dye. She had just coloured her own hair and casually offered it to Naina to cover her greys. "Baal bahut safed ho gaye hain, beta," Anita said with casual concern. Naina looked up, half amused and half annoyed. "That's offensive, mom," she replied. "I actually love my silver strands, and I'm not covering them up." VFeels relatable, doesn't it? Something has definitely shifted with our generation. While we're still open to experimenting with fun colours and balayage highlights, many of

us no longer feel pressured to hide our greys. What was once seen as a sign of ageing, something to be fixed quickly, is now being embraced as natural, beautiful, and even empowering. The insecurities we inherited "The comment 'baal safed ho gaye' is often used casually, but it has created deep insecurities for many women. It makes them feel that ageing is something to be ashamed of and that their value is tied to their looks," Dr Divya Shree K R, consultant, psychiatry, Aster CMI Hospital, Bengaluru, tells India Today. Over the years, such remarks have built pressure on women to hide their grey hair and appear younger, even when it is a natural part of life.

## The Beginning

MAD MEN

OF

NU WAY ADVERTISING

About the Author



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

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

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



The Beginning

MAD MEN OF NU WAY ADVERTISING

Sharanjit Thind Singh

## The Beginning

A True Story of the iconic rise of an Indian American Advertising Agency in Manhattan, New York in early 2000

Sharanjit Thind Singh



MAD MEN

OF

NU WAY ADVERTISING



# Maharani Season 4 trailer: Huma Qureshi as Rani Bharti eyes national politics



Actor Huma Qureshi is set to be back as Rani Bharti with season 4 of her political drama series 'Maharani.' The trailer, released on Thursday, signals a significant shift as Rani sets her sights beyond Bihar and steps into the national political arena. 'Maharani' draws on the upheavals in Bihar politics. The new trailer suggests Rani will now be taking on the Prime Minister (played by Vipin Sharma) for Bihar's growth. As she is challenged by Sharma's character, Huma, as Rani, talks about capturing the throne in Delhi. In the series, Rani began her journey as a homemaker before being swept into politics after her husband, Bihar's Chief Minister, suddenly resigned. Across the seasons, viewers saw Rani evolve from a newcomer to a strategic political figure. Now, the series promises to show her facing

even greater challenges as she enters the national stage. Huma Qureshi spoke about season 4 of 'Maharani' and expressed, "Rani Bharti's journey has always been about defying the odds, but this season, her ambition hits a whole new level. From homemaker to Chief Minister, she shook Bihar's political ground. Now, she enters the nation's toughest battlefield." She added, "Maharani 4' isn't just the next chapter; it's her boldest leap yet. The stakes are national, the power games more brutal, and every move could make or break her. It's the most daring, intense, and unfiltered version of Rani we've ever seen, and I can't wait for audiences to witness her evolution on Sony LIV." Directed by Puneet Prakash, the series is produced by Kangra Talkies Pvt. Ltd and concept by Subhash Kapoor.

## Deepika Padukone defends 8-hour work demand, slams industry bias

Actor Deepika Padukone has spoken out for the first time regarding her recent exit from 'Spirit' and 'Kalki 2898 AD'. Her exit from both films created a stir, with reports suggesting that Padukone requested set 8-hour shifts. The 'Padmavat' actor has now challenged what she views as double standards within the Indian film industry. She opened up in a recent interview about how her request for fixed work hours has been received differently compared to her male counterparts. In an interview with CNBC TV18, Deepika stated, "By virtue of being a woman, if that comes across as pushy or whatever, then so be it. But it is no secret that a lot of superstars, male superstars, in the Indian Film Industry, have been working for 8 hours for years, and it's never made headlines!" She continued, "I don't want to take names now and make this into a whole thing, but it is very commonly, publicly known that a lot of male actors have been working for 8 hours a day for years. A lot of them only work for 8 hours Monday to Friday.



They do not work on weekends." The production house of 'Kalki 2898 AD' earlier confirmed that the actor would not be part of the film's sequel. Their official statement read, "This is to officially announce that @deepikapadukone will not be a part of the upcoming sequel of #Kalki2898AD. After

careful consideration. We have decided to part ways. (sic)" The statement also said, "Despite the long journey of making the first film, we were unable to find a partnership. And a film like @Kalki2898AD deserves that commitment and much more. We wish her the best with her future works.(sic)" Following

her departure from 'Spirit', director Sandeep Vanga Reddy also shared his perspective on social media. Without mentioning her by name, Reddy posted on X, "When I narrate a story to an actor, I place 100% faith. There is an unsaid NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement) between us.

## Meet Bilal Siddiqi — The Co-Writer Behind Aryan Khan's 'The Ba\*ds of Bollywood'



Aryan Khan's Netflix debut *The Ba\*ds of Bollywood* has been making waves since its September 18, 2025 release. The satirical drama, which dives deep into the dazzling yet chaotic world of the Indian film industry, has earned praise for its sharp humor, witty dialogues, and insider references. While Aryan Khan directed and co-created the show, another creative mind helped bring its biting dialogue and nuanced writing to life — Bilal Siddiqi, the show's co-writer and co-creator. Siddiqi, who shares writing credits alongside Aryan Khan and Manav Chauhan, infused the series with his signature literary depth and narrative flair. His knack for blending realism with satire added a layered touch to the show's portrayal of ambition, ego, and excess in Bollywood's glittering world. The series, produced by Gauri Khan under Red Chillies Entertainment, stars Lakshya Lalwani, Raghav Juyal, Sahher Bamba, and Bobby Deol, and features a cameo by Emraan Hashmi.



# Kartik Aaryan-Anurag Basu film finally gets title, and it's pure Aashiqui nostalgia

Kartik Aaryan and Anurag Basu's film has reportedly been titled 'Tu Meri Zindagi Hai' after distancing from 'Aashiqui' franchise. The film is planned as a major summer romance release, aiming for a May 2026 release.

Kartik Aaryan's much-anticipated romantic musical with filmmaker Anurag Basu is reportedly titled 'Tu Meri Zindagi Hai', inspired by the popular 1990 song from 'Aashiqui'. Initially considered as the third instalment in the 'Aashiqui' series, the project became a standalone film after producers Mukesh Bhatt and Bhushan Kumar parted ways. Also starring Sreeleela, the film is planned as a major summer romance, aiming for a May 1 premiere. Filming is ongoing in Mumbai and will continue through 2025, with patchwork expected in early 2026. The chosen title reflects a move to avoid direct association with the original franchise while still evoking nostalgia. The film featuring Kartik Aaryan and Sreeleela was originally conceived as the third part of the 'Aashiqui' franchise. Due to creative and production



changes, it shifted direction. A report in Mid-Day suggested that the romantic musical has been christened 'Tu Meri Zindagi Hai', taking inspiration from the Kumar Sanu and Anuradha Paudwal song in 'Aashiqui' (1990)."

## Title selection

The title was chosen to connect with classic romance while avoiding complications. A

source explained, "When choosing the title, it was a preemptive move by the makers to avoid making a direct reference to Aashiqui. The team wanted a name that evoked nostalgia, but didn't risk legal or creative complications. 'Tu Meri Zindagi Hai' felt like the perfect fit." The team deliberately distanced the project from the 'Aashiqui'

series.

The report quoted a source suggesting that the makers chose this as it distances the project enough from the 'Aashiqui' franchise. "Filming for 'Tu Meri Zindagi Hai' is underway in Mumbai and will continue through 2025, with patchwork and edits into early 2026. This schedule gives the team time to add any creative

elements needed for the final cut. The film is expected to showcase Anurag Basu's signature romantic style, aiming to deliver a classic love story. With several months until release, the filmmakers have time to fine-tune the narrative and music, maintaining the high standards associated with the director and genre. The production team is positioning the movie as a high-profile summer romance, targeting a May release to capture the summer audience and follow the tradition of major romantic films during this period. Alongside Kartik Aaryan and Sreeleela, the film brings together director Anurag Basu and producer Bhushan Kumar. The decision to make it a standalone film followed the split between Mukesh Bhatt and Bhushan Kumar, shaping the project's direction. The official title announcement is awaited.

# Daughter was asked for nudes during video game: Akshay Kumar recalls cyber horror



In a powerful appeal at a public event in Mumbai on Friday, actor Akshay Kumar urged Maharashtra's Chief Minister to introduce a weekly "Cyber Period" for students in classes 7 to 10. The actor narrated a distressing personal incident to highlight the growing threat of cybercrime, which he believes now surpasses traditional street crime. During the inaugural ceremony of Cyber Awareness Month 2025 at the State Police

Headquarters, Akshay Kumar shared a shocking incident involving his daughter to highlight the menace. He recalled how, a few months back, his daughter was playing an online video game when a stranger messaged her, asking for her gender. After she responded "female," the stranger immediately requested for nude pictures. His daughter promptly turned off the game and informed her mother, but the incident served as a stark

lesson. Emphasizing that such exchanges are a common entry point into cybercrime, Kumar stressed there was an urgent need to educate children on

how to protect themselves from online predators and threats. His plea for a mandatory "Cyber Period" aims to equip the next generation with the necessary

knowledge to navigate the digital world safely. "I want to tell you all a small incident which happened at my house a few months back.

## Chandni Bar sequel makers clarify after Madhur Bhandarkar's complaint over title

The 'Chandni Bar Returns' makers have issued a statement and cleared the air about the unauthorised use of the film's title. This came after Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar objected to the film's title and filed a complaint with the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association (IMPPA) against producer Sandeep Singh and director Ajay Bahl. Bhandarkar directed the original 'Chandni Bar', a critically acclaimed film released in 2001 that starred Tabu and won multiple National Awards. He alleges that the new project is using the title without securing his permission or the



authorisation of his company, Bhandarkar Entertainment. Legend Studios maintains that all necessary legal rights and clearances have been acquired from the rightful Intellectual Property (IP) and Trademark owners of the original 2001 film,

'Chandni Bar'. The studio has also shared the official Government of India Trademark Registry certificate, which establishes the registration of the title with the original producers of the film, R Mohan (late Lata Mohan Iyer).

# Priya Kapur a Cinderella stepmother, Karisma's children allege in assets battle

Karisma Kapur's children have accused Priya Kapur of giving them "Cinderella stepmother" treatment by diverting Sanjay Kapur's assets to her own children, limiting their shares, and intensifying the dispute over the allegedly forged will.

The inheritance dispute over late businessman Sanjay Kapur's assets has taken a dramatic turn, with Karisma Kapoor's children accusing Priya Kapur of giving them "Cinderella stepmother" treatment. They allege that Priya Kapur shifted assets to her own children while attempting to restrict their shares. Senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, representing Karisma's children, described the newly surfaced will as "a manifestly forged document" and part of a larger conspiracy. He told the court there was enough material to lodge a criminal complaint. According to Jethmalani,



Priya Kapur's attempts to upload beneficiary forms and other documents. He said her actions, including the hurried allocation of assets and restriction of the children's shares, showed a clear focus on advancing her own family's interests. During the hearing, Priya Kapur's counsel requested an investigation into leaks of documents to the media, showing certain documents before the court. Counsel for Rani Kapur highlighted that an inquiry was necessary to understand how these leaks occurred. The court responded that the indication itself was sufficient. Karisma Kapur's children, through their lawyer, sought a status quo on all assets to prevent any further movement or creation of third-party rights. Jethmalani said that while their immediate prayer was for status quo, Priya Kapur's conduct "speaks volumes" and raises serious concerns about her entitlement to possess these assets.

Karisma Kapoor's children were not informed about the will until July 30, even though it had been executed on March 21. "You got to know about the will from the witnesses and one day prior to the reading," he said, noting that the executor only denied the assertion in pleadings, while the initial correspondence suggested no denial. Jethmalani highlighted

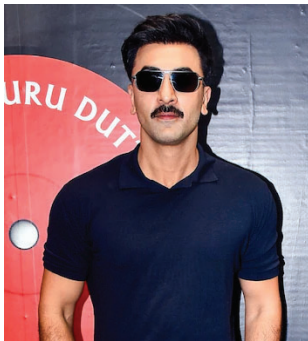
that the executor of the will, a close friend of Sanjay Kapur, was never informed by him about her appointment. "It is a natural course of conduct for a man who is so educated that he will certainly ask the executor that I'm going to do this, do I have your permission," he said, calling it suspicious that Sanjay Kapur never informed her before

executing the will. The lawyer also accused Priya Kapur of breaching her fiduciary duty and violating the trust by breaking confidentiality. Emails presented in court showed Priya Kapur focusing on her personal assets while telling the plaintiffs that money was being given to them but not fully disclosing details. She was allocated roughly 60%

of the assets, approximately 12% to her son, and 75% of the trust. Jethmalani noted her apparent haste in preparing letters related to beneficiary forms to decide company shares, aimed at restricting Karisma's children's shares. 'CINDERELLA STEPMOTHER' "This is a Cinderella stepmother," Jethmalani told the court, citing

## Ranbir Kapoor admits he's a product of nepotism: Had to prove myself

Terming himself a "product of nepotism", Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor on Thursday said he was always aware of the perks of being born into a film family, but lineage never guarantees success. Ranbir, part of the fourth generation of the illustrious Kapoor family, said he had to develop an individualistic approach and prove his talent independently to sustain in the industry. "I'm a product of nepotism and I got it very easy in my life, but I always had to work hard because I realised that I come from a family like this and if I don't have an individualistic approach and if I don't make a name for myself, I'll not succeed



titled 'Tribute to legendary filmmaker Raj Kapoor and Guru Dutt', during the 'Celebrate Cinema 2025' festival at filmmaker Subhash Ghai's film institute Whistling Woods. "What do I feel about being born in this family? For me it was like any other normal family, I didn't know any better," said the actor, adding that he grew up watching music directors, singers and lyricists come to his house to create songs for grandfather Raj Kapoor's movies. "There used to be a lot of arguments, but not of the domestic kind. They would debate over a scene or the correct lyrics of a song," he said. Ranbir, known for movies such as 'Wake Up Sid', 'Rockstar', 'Barfi', 'Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani', and 'Animal', said he learnt pretty early in his life that filmmaking is a team effort. "Filmmaking is not dictatorship, it's a

marriage of so many people and artists coming together, and believing in something, and believing in inspiring people," the actor said, recalling the words of his great-grandfather Prithviraj Kapoor. "What he said moved deeply -- 'Kala desh ki seva mein'.

## Maharani Season 4 trailer: Huma Qureshi as Rani Bharti eyes national politics



Actor Huma Qureshi is set to be back as Rani Bharti with season 4 of her political drama series 'Maharani'. The trailer, released on Thursday, signals a significant shift as Rani sets her sights beyond Bihar and steps into the national political arena. 'Maharani' draws on the upheavals in Bihar politics. The new trailer suggests Rani will now be taking on the Prime Minister (played by Vipin Sharma) for Bihar's growth. As she is challenged by Sharma's character, Huma, as Rani, talks about capturing the throne in Delhi. In the series, Rani began her journey as a homemaker

before being swept into politics after her husband, Bihar's Chief Minister, suddenly resigned. Across the seasons, viewers saw Rani evolve from a newcomer to a strategic political figure. Now, the series promises to show her facing even greater challenges as she enters the national stage. Huma Qureshi spoke about season 4 of 'Maharani' and expressed, "Rani Bharti's journey has always been about defying the odds, but this season, her ambition hits a whole new level. From homemaker to Chief Minister, she shook Bihar's political ground.

in the film industry. "You guys celebrate a lot of success of my family, but there are a lot of failures also, and as much as you learn from the success, you learn from the failure also," the 43-year-old actor said. Ranbir, son of actors Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor, was speaking at a session,



# How to fix your posture (without quitting that desk job)

**Your poor posture may seem harmless until it isn't. That subtle ache you keep brushing off can soon turn into stiffness, pain, and eventually muscle imbalances, nerve compression, or reduced mobility.**

Each Monday, you return to that chair - a love story bound by an unbreakable 8-to-9-hour no-separation policy for five straight days. Then comes the weekend, only for the cycle to begin all over again. Sure, there are breaks - for lunch, coffee, and the occasional loo visit. But if you really listen to your body, you'll know that's not enough. The dull ache in your back (and neck), the slouching, and those rounded shoulders are proof. As much as your sedentary lifestyle, your posture is equally to blame. As the hours go by, you start to slouch; your neck bears the brunt too, thanks to the laptop sitting below eye level. Every now and then, someone might remind you - "Hey, sit straight, don't mess up your spine!" - and you quickly fix your posture. But before you know it, you're right back in that default,

carefree mode where good posture is a distant memory. Your poor posture may seem harmless until it does not. One day, you realise that the subtle ache you've been brushing off has turned into something harder to ignore. It could start with stiffness or mild pain, but over time, poor posture can lead to muscle imbalances, nerve compression, chronic back and neck pain, and even reduced mobility. You might find yourself struggling to sit or get up comfortably, constantly fatigued, and battling that nagging soreness that never really goes away. "Most people come in with neck pain, stiff shoulders, or lower back aches - all of which are strongly linked to prolonged slouching or sitting in the wrong position. Over time, poor posture can also lead to tension headaches, early disc

problems, or nerve compression that causes tingling in the arms or legs," says Dr Lokesh Venkat Bheemisetty, Consultant Joint Replacement Surgeon at Arete Hospitals, Hyderabad. Chronic back and neck pain is the most common complaint. It is a result of slouching, as it puts extra pressure on the spine and surrounding muscles. "Many people also experience tension headaches because forward head posture strains the neck muscles. Slouching compresses the chest, which can reduce lung capacity and lead to shallow breathing and fatigue," adds Dr Gaurav Prakash Bhardwaj, Director - Sports Injury, Joint Preservation and Replacement Surgery, PSRI Hospital, Delhi. The longer you ignore posture problems, the harder they are to fix. But fixing your posture, or working towards



it, can significantly help. So, we asked health experts how to damn fix the posture (without actually quitting the 9-to-5 job). It is possible. All you need is to be mindful and consistent with your effort. We promise, it doesn't mean shifting your entire focus from your professional commitments to whether your back is straight or not. But first, the basics: how should you sit at work? Good posture is less about sitting up stiffly and more about keeping the spine in a relaxed, neutral

position. Dr Vandana Kumari (PT), a physiotherapist, explains what 'good posture' means in different situations: While sitting: Sit back fully on the chair and keep your feet flat on the ground. Keep your back straight and shoulders relaxed. The top of your computer screen should be at eye level. While standing: Distribute your weight evenly on both feet. Avoid locking your knees. While using a mobile phone: Bring the phone up to eye level instead of bending your neck down.

## Does silently stalking your ex online count as cheating?

**Did you accidentally see a post from your ex and are now contemplating whether to go full stalker mode or not? Wait right there, as silently looking into your ex's life will not help you.**

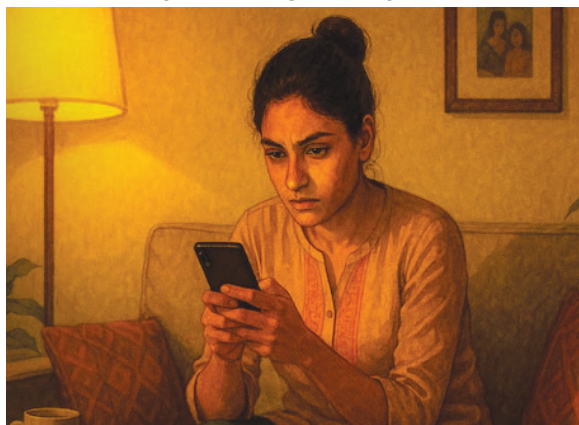
You did it, you moved on. You went through every stage of heartbreak and came out stronger, maybe even found happiness again in someone new. But then, one fine day, while scrolling through social media, bam a post from your ex pops up. Before you know it, you're deep-diving into their feed. Not because you want them back, but to see how they've been. Are they thriving? Are you doing better? Well, that's the thing about social media, people never really leave. Unlike the Y2K era, when blocking a number meant a clean break, today's hyper-connected world keeps everyone within reach, even your ex. But here's the question: if you're quietly stalking them, without any intention of rekindling the past, does it still count as cheating?

### The invisible thread

Jasmine Arora, consultant and clinical psychologist at Artemis Hospitals, Gurugram, tells India Today that social media has changed how we handle relationships and separations. "People can look at someone's profile, stories, or updates without ever sending a

message. This invisible connection can make it harder to move on, because even watching someone without saying anything can keep feelings alive." Arora adds that when people check without telling anyone, it could mean they're curious, have unresolved feelings, or like staying connected even if it's indirect. To this, Sheena Sood, consultant in psychology and counsellor at PD Hinduja Hospital and Medical Research Centre, Mumbai, adds, "When someone finds themselves repeatedly checking an ex-partner's social media, they're not merely being curious, they're maintaining what I call a phantom attachment."

"The emotional thread hasn't been severed; it's simply been digitised. The neurobiological reality is stark: every viewing triggers the same reward pathways in the brain that the relationship itself once activated. We're essentially administering micro-doses of a connection that no longer exists in physical reality," Sood shares. She goes on to explain that letting go is harder today because psychology and technology work



against it. Social media erases the natural distance that once helped people heal; the not knowing, the fading memories, the space time created. Earlier, moving on meant making an effort to stay in touch; now it takes effort to stay away. This leads to what can be called ambiguous closure: when a relationship ends in reality but lingers emotionally, leaving you stuck between the past and the present.

### What it means for your mental health

According to Arora, silently stalking someone on social media is often a sign of unresolved

feelings, insecurity, or trouble with detachment. She tells us, "This habit could hurt your mental health by making you compare yourself to others and feel bad about yourself. In a current relationship, it can lead to emotional distance, trust issues, or distraction as attention is divided." Meanwhile, Sood shares that the impact of this act on mental health is more significant than most people recognise, and she has observed several consistent patterns. Constantly checking your ex online can seriously affect your healing. Instead of moving through the normal stages of grief and

reaching acceptance, you stay stuck in denial or hope because every time you look, it feels like starting over. What begins as harmless curiosity can turn into a habit, checking their posts late at night, worrying about what they're doing, or feeling restless when you can't see their updates. Over time, this can lead to anxiety, low mood, and even lower self-esteem. Watching your ex seem happy or move on faster only makes you feel worse, keeping you trapped in a cycle of emotional pain. "The impact on the current relationship is perhaps where I see the most damage. A partner who continues monitoring an ex is fundamentally not fully present. They're maintaining a parallel emotional reality that syphons energy, attention, and emotional availability from their current relationship. Even if the current partner never discovers this behaviour, they will feel its effects," she adds. Dr Aarti Anand, senior consultant psychologist at Sir Gangaram Hospital, New Delhi, feels that looking into your ex's life is a breach of trust, as passive behaviours online can signal that, psychologically, a part of you is still engaged.

# Everest didn't find Everest: An Indian did, and history forgot him

The tallest peak located in the Himalayas, now popularly known as Mount Everest, was first measured by an Indian, Radhanath Sikdar, in 1852, four years before the British declared Peak XV as the tallest mountain in the world. A mathematical genius, he was known in his time simply as a "computer." The tallest mountain was given the name after the then Surveyor General of India in 1856, George Everest, who was surveying the geography of the land controlled by the British. With a few instruments and plenty of skill, Sikdar used trigonometry to do what no one else had – and for it, he never got the credit. History might have allowed his name to fade, but as we say, some names are too sharp to be erased. Radhanath Sikdar is one of them.

## FROM CALCUTTA

### CLASSROOMS TO THE GREAT TRIGONOMETRICAL SURVEY

Sikdar was born on October 5, 1813, in Calcutta, in a Bengali family that valued learning over luxury. His brilliance in mathematics caught the attention of John Tytler, a professor at Hindu College. Tytler took him under his guidance, recognising that this young man had a mind built for numbers and problems that defied others. In 1831, when George Everest was looking for mathematicians for his Great Trigonometrical Survey of India, Radhanath Sikdar was already fluent in Euclid's Elements, Newton's Principia, and the principles of analytical geometry. He was hired as a 'computer' at a salary of thirty rupees per month – considered a humble beginning for someone about to measure

the roof of the world. He was later sent to Sironj near Dehradun, part of a team of Indian computers. His sharpness stood out. Even Everest noticed, once stopping Sikdar's transfer to another department. He specialised in geodetic surveys – studying the shape of the Earth, its position in space, and gravity – and soon devised his own methods to improve accuracy. After Everest's retirement in 1843, Colonel Andrew Scott Waugh took charge.

### THE MAN WHO FOUND PEAK XV

Only 9 years after the retirement of Everest in the year 1852, as Chief Computer, Sikdar analysed data from Himalayan peaks. The accepted tallest mountain at that time was Kangchenjunga. But Sikdar's calculations told a different



story. Using observations from multiple stations, he found that a peak known simply as Peak XV stood higher – exactly 29,000 feet (8839 metres). Ironically, Sir George Everest Waugh, perhaps doubting the neat round number, added two more feet to make it 29,002, and announced it officially in 1856. That number remained the world's reference for nearly a century. And yet, when the mountain was named, it was not Sikdar's but Everest's name that stuck. He had never even seen the mountain and once argued that Indian names should be preserved. History, however, decided otherwise.

## Everything I have seen here...: UK PM counters Trump's 'dead economy' jibe

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer asserted that India was well on track to become the world's third-largest economy by 2028, in what was seen as a seeming jibe at US President Donald Trump's claim that India's economy was "dead". With Prime Minister Narendra Modi by his side, Starmer made no bones about the fact that India's growth story has been remarkable, with the country recently becoming the world's fourth-largest economy, surpassing Japan. The UK Prime Minister, who began his speech by greeting the gathering in Hindi, reinforced that the country wanted to be partners on India's growth

journey.

"Namaskar doston... I want to congratulate the PM on his leadership, aiming to be the world's 3rd largest economy by 2028. Your vision of Viksit Bharat is to make it a completely developed country by 2047," the UK PM, who is in his first visit to India, said. "Everything I have seen since I have been here is absolute proof to me that you are on track to succeed in that. We want to be partners on that journey," Starmer further emphasised.

### TRUMP'S DEAD ECONOMY REMARK

Starmer's remarks and the optics of him arriving in India with the largest ever delegation

of more than 100 CEOs, entrepreneurs, university chancellors and cultural leaders are enough to suggest that the Indian economy is not "dead" as Trump remarked a few weeks ago. Two months back, amid a downturn in ties with India over New Delhi's purchase of Russian oil, Trump labeled India a "dead economy". "I don't care what India does with Russia. They can take their dead economies down together, for all I care," Trump said in a damning post on Truth Social in July. The remark came as the US imposed an additional tariff of 25%, taking the total to 50%, to punish New Delhi for its massive purchases of Russian oil.

## Tussle at Tata, the 2016 saga | From the India Today archives



For Cyrus Mistry and his band of faithfuls, it had been business as usual till as late as Friday, October 21. Most of the Group Executive Council (GEC) members that constituted Mistry's brains trust in the mammoth Tata Group were apparently unaware of the impending removal of their boss. In fact, just a month ago, in an interaction with this reporter, Mistry had spoken with some pride of the Tata's tradition of graceful exits. He was speaking in a very different context, of course. Another key team member had expanded on how the Tata way was to ensure that any senior leader, even when being asked to go, would leave with his dignity intact. It was an indication of how badly Mistry misread the signals coming from the Tata Trusts, headed by his predecessor Ratan Tata, which has a huge say in the board decisions of the Tata Sons, the

holding company of the Tata Group. The abrupt way in which the chairman was unseated by the board-hidden under the agenda of "any other business"-did not reflect well on the Tatas who have always built themselves up on doing things the proper way. While legal, it was hardly the most ethical way to remove someone so senior for a group that prides itself on doing not only the right thing, but also the right way. Mistry himself, in a hard-hitting letter to the board, said, "I have to say that the board of directors did not cover itself with glory.... To replace your Chairman without so much as a word of explanation and without affording him an opportunity to defend himself... must be unique in the annals of corporate history." By all accounts, Mistry was first told of the decision to remove him by a board member of Tata Sons on Sunday, October 23.

## Why the global grip of Indian gangs is spelling fear for desi diaspora?

The global reach of Indian organised crime has surged, with syndicates once confined to India's heartlands now orchestrating violence and extortion on foreign soil. From Canada's suburban streets to Europe's ports, these gangs exploit diaspora networks, digital tools, and porous borders to expand their empires. The recent shoot-out in Canada's Surrey tied to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang underscores this growing menace, highlighting how Indian gangs are posing a serious threat to business establishments abroad and posing transnational threats. On Tuesday, multiple incidents of firing were reported at

locations linked to an Indian restaurant chain owner in Surrey, South Surrey, and Maple Ridge areas of Canada. Lawrence Bishnoi associate Goldy Dhillon claimed its responsibility through social media. On October 6, Surrey, British Columbia, was rocked by gunfire targeting properties linked to businessman Navi Dhesi, also known as Navi Tesi. The Lawrence Bishnoi syndicate, led by the jailed gangster from a Gujarat prison, claimed responsibility through videos posted by associate Fateh Portugal. The attacks hit Dhesi's Swift 1200 AM radio station, hours after it aired anti-gang content, and two other sites.







From Abhishek Mishra,  
25 Lavender Drive,  
Edison, New Jersey



## How Lord Shiva strengthened New Jersey family's faith

Lakhs of pilgrims undertake the Amarnath Yatra every year to pray at the snow Shivaling in the sacred cave. Faith for one family in Edison, NJ, was strengthened by mysterious events unfolding in their home.

Abhishek Mishra, who has enjoyed a successful corporate career, shared with the press naturally formed (Swayambhu) images of Shiva appearing in their home without any human involvement. "Shankar Bhagwan has blessed us and we feel his divine presence all the time," he said.



Among the astonishing phenomena at the Mishra house on Lavender Drive was a Shivaling that formed in ice during the winter, while a 50-foot image of Lord Shiva holding a trident appeared in the backyard snow. Inside, an image of Shiva with Nandi was seen on the bathroom tiles, and another meditative form of Shiva emerged from ice.

Many people have been eager to witness this remarkable event, calling it a spiritual wonder. Abhishek Mishra, an intuitive, tells all to believe in Divine Power, called by different names in various religions, adding that aligning with it will make our life happy, peaceful, and prosperous.

***Abhishek Mishra can be reached at 732.690.0404 for more details.***