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## Two Indian Truckers Held In US With Cocaine

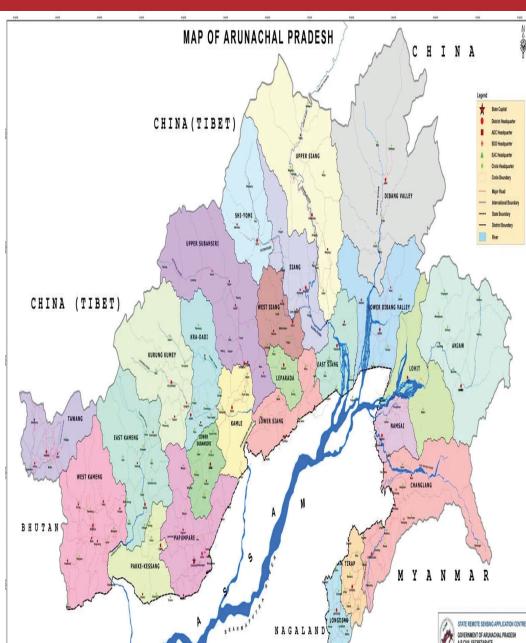
Two Indian truckers have been arrested in the US after a routine traffic stop by Indiana State Police revealed they were smuggling over 300 pounds of cocaine worth \$7 million.

The DHS later stated that the truckers who lived in California had entered the US illegally and were carrying enough contraband to kill over a lakh Americans.



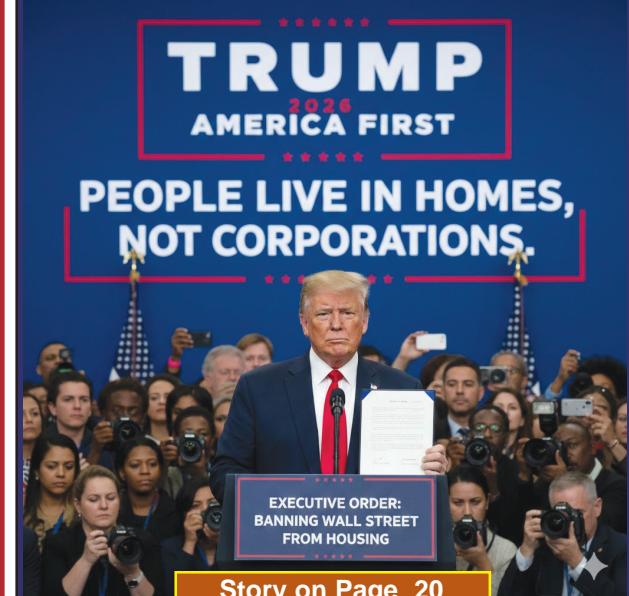
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## The New Red Line Decoding China's Shift to Include Arunachal Pradesh in its "Core Interests"



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## Trump says he'll ban Wall Street firms from buying single-family houses



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# 'Darkest Day Of My Life': Vedanta Founder Anil Agarwal's Son Agnivesh Dies At 49

Agnivesh Agarwal, son of Anil Agarwal, chairman of the Vedanta Group, passed away at the age of 49 following a sudden cardiac arrest in New York, the industrialist said on Wednesday. In a statement shared on X, Anil Agarwal described the loss as the "darkest day" of his life. He said Agnivesh had earlier suffered injuries in a skiing accident in the United States and was undergoing treatment at Mount Sinai Hospital. According to the family, his recovery had been progressing well and doctors were optimistic before his condition deteriorated unexpectedly. "Following a skiing accident in the US, he was recovering well in Mount Sinai Hospital. We believed the worst was behind us. But fate had other plans, and a sudden cardiac arrest snatched



**The News Mill**

LATEST NEWS FROM ACROSS NORTHEAST INDIA & BEYOND

our son away from us," Agarwal wrote. Born in Patna on June 3, 1976, Agnivesh was educated at Mayo College in Ajmer and went on to build a distinguished professional career. He played a key role in establishing Fujairah

Gold and later served as Chairman of Hindustan Zinc, earning respect across the global business community. Remembering his son, Agarwal described Agnivesh as a sportsman, musician and leader, known for his humility, warmth and compassion. "Beyond all his achievements, he remained simple, deeply human and kind. To me, he was not just my son. He was my friend, my pride, my world," he wrote. The Vedanta

chairman said the family was devastated by the loss. "Kiran and I are broken," he said, referring to his wife, adding that Agnivesh was also his closest confidant. Agarwal also recalled his son's strong belief in India's future and their shared commitment to social development. He renewed a personal pledge to donate more than 75% of his earnings to social causes and said he would live an even simpler life in Agnivesh's memory. "We shared a dream to ensure that no child sleeps hungry, no child is denied education, every woman stands on her own feet, and every young Indian has meaningful work," Agarwal wrote. "I do not know how to walk this path without you, but I will try carrying your light forward."

## U.S. Court Fast-Tracks Hearing on Controversial \$100,000 H-1B Visa Fee



(By Our Staff Reporter, New York)

A coalition led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and several Silicon Valley firms—allege that the fee is a "de facto ban" on foreign talent. A federal appeals court has granted an emergency motion to fast-track a hearing regarding the administration's recently proposed \$100,000 "Impact Fee" for H-1B visa applications. The decision comes amid a firestorm of legal challenges from tech giants, universities, and immigration advocacy groups who argue the fee is unconstitutional and designed to effectively end the skilled worker program. The expedited schedule

means oral arguments will begin as early as next week, skipping the standard months-long briefing process. The Controversy Behind the Fee The new policy, introduced as part of a broader executive overhaul of the legal immigration system, seeks to raise the base filing fee for H-1B visas from roughly \$460 to a staggering \$100,000 per applicant. The administration has defended the move, stating the revenue will be used to fund domestic workforce training and border security initiatives. Key arguments against the fee include: Economic Impact: Small businesses and startups argue they will be completely priced out of the market for specialized

talent. Legislative Overreach: Legal experts claim that such a massive financial levy constitutes a tax, which can only be authorized by Congress, not the executive branch. Academic Brain Drain: Major research universities have warned that they cannot afford the fees for world-class professors and researchers.

### A Tense Legal Battle

The fast-tracking of this case highlights the urgency felt by the business community as the next H-1B lottery season approaches in March. If the fee remains in place, experts predict the number of applications could drop

by more than 90%, fundamentally altering the landscape of the American tech sector. "This is not a fee; it is a ransom," said a lead attorney for the plaintiffs. "The law requires fees to be commensurate with the cost of processing an application. A \$100,000 charge is clearly punitive and intended to bypass the legislative process to restrict legal immigration."

### What Happens Next?

With the court's decision to expedite, a preliminary injunction could be issued by late January. If granted, the injunction would temporarily block the government

from collecting the fee while the full legality of the policy is debated in court. Government attorneys have argued that the President has broad authority to set conditions on the entry of foreign nationals, particularly when those conditions are tied to national economic interests. The tech industry and hundreds of thousands of prospective visa holders are now watching the courts closely, as the ruling will likely set a precedent for the limits of executive power over the U.S. immigration system. (AI generated image)

## India expects strong economic growth despite US tariff hit

NEW DELHI, Jan 7 (Reuters) - India's economic growth is estimated to surge past most initial private and official forecasts, backed by robust domestic demand and government spending, helping New Delhi cope with punitive U.S. tariffs. The near \$4 trillion economy is expected to grow 7.4% (INGDPY=ECI), opens new tab in the fiscal year ending in March, the National Statistics Office said on Wednesday, above the government's initial projection of 6.3%-6.8%. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, facing steep U.S. tariffs and an uncertain global backdrop, last year accelerated domestic reforms to support growth, including an overhaul of consumer taxes on hundreds of items and implementation of long-delayed labour reforms. "(This growth) reflects that despite rising global uncertainties India continued to perform well,"

Sakshi Gupta, economist at HDFC Bank, said. The estimate of gross domestic product, which will be revised over time as data coverage improves, will be used as a base for the federal budget due to be announced on February 1. The Indian economy grew 6.5% in 2024/25 and 9.2% in 2023/24. India has edged past Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy, the government said last month. Confirmation by the International Monetary Fund is due. In nominal terms, which factor in inflation, the economy is expected to grow 8%, compared with the 10.1% estimate in the annual federal budget announced last February. Private consumption, which accounts for about 60% of GDP, was seen expanding by 7% year-on-year compared to a 7.2% expansion last fiscal year.

# 'Sir, may I see you please,' PM Modi said: Trump's latest in his India remarks

US President Donald Trump claimed that Narendra Modi personally approached him over long-pending Apache helicopter deliveries and trade issues, while acknowledging a strong personal rapport.



US President Donald Trump Russia, stating, "But they are, said Prime Minister Narendra they've reduced it very Modi personally approached him substantially, as you know, from over India's pending defence Russia." Highlighting the impact purchases and trade issues, of tariffs on the US economy, including the long-delayed Trump said, "We're getting rich delivery of Apache helicopters because of tariffs, by the way. called him 'Sir'. Speaking at the Hope everyone understands." He House GOP Member Retreat, further claimed, "I have to report Trump said, "India ordered we're gonna have over 650 billion Apache helicopters and didn't get dollars poured into our country or them for 5 years. Prime Minister coming in shortly because of Modi came to see me. Sir, may I tariffs."

see you please? Yes!" He added that he shared a strong rapport

## TRUMP ON APACHE HELICOPTERS DEAL

Addressing defence ties have a very good relationship with alongside trade, US President him." Trump, however, claimed Donald Trump referred to delays that PM Modi was unhappy with in India's military procurements, him over tariffs. "He's not that particularly Apache helicopters. happy with me because, you know, they're paying a lot of tariffs for the helicopters for years and now. Because they're not doing indicated that the issue was now the oil," Trump said. He added moving forward. "We're changing that India had significantly it. India ordered 68 Apaches," reduced oil purchases from Trump said, without sharing

further specifics.

## TRUMP THREATENS MORE TARIFFS

Earlier this week, Trump reiterated that higher tariffs on India remain an option while speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One. "We could raise tariffs on India if they don't help on the Russian oil issue," Trump said on

Sunday. At the same time, he struck a conciliatory tone towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "PM Modi's a very good man. He's a good guy.

He knew I was not happy. It was important to make me happy. They do trade, and we can raise tariffs on them very quickly," he said. Trump has imposed a 50

per cent tariff on Indian goods, including a 25 per cent levy linked specifically to India's continued purchase of Russian oil. The measures are part of Washington's broader pressure campaign aimed at discouraging countries from maintaining energy trade with Moscow.

## India's fuel demand hits highest on record in December

Jan 6 (Reuters) - India's fuel consumption hit 21.75 million metric tons in December, up 5.3% year-on-year and the highest monthly number recorded in oil ministry data going back to April 1998.

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

India is the world's third-largest consumer and importer of oil and the largest buyer of Russian seaborne crude, taking advantage of discounts on Russian oil as Europe and the U.S. shun those barrels over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



## BY THE NUMBERS

Data released by the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) on Tuesday showed sales of gasoline, or petrol, stood at 3.56 million metric tons in December, up 1.1% from November and 7.1% from a year earlier. Diesel consumption was at 8.46 million tons, up 5% from

a year earlier but down 1.1% month-on-month. Liquefied petroleum gas consumption rose 11.2% from a year earlier to 3.08 million tons. Naphtha sales fell 0.4% year-on-year to 1.01 million tons, while consumption of bitumen, used primarily in

road construction, rose 0.3% from November and 18.8% on an annual basis at 0.91 million tons. Fuel oil usage stood at 0.57 million tons, rising 2.3% from a year earlier and about 1.6% month-on-month. CONTEXT The U.S. could raise tariffs on India if New Delhi does not meet Washington's demand to curb

purchases of Russian oil, President Donald Trump said on Sunday. Trump's comments follow months of trade negotiations after the U.S. doubled import tariffs on Indian goods to 50% last year as punishment for its heavy buying of Russian oil. India's Reliance Industries (RELI.NS), opens new tab said it is not expecting any Russian crude oil deliveries in January.

## No entry to people wearing hijab, burqa, mask at Bihar jewellery shops

Jewellery shop owners across the state have decided to deny entry to anyone whose face is partially or fully covered — whether by a hijab, niqab, burqa, mask, helmet, muffler or veil — citing security concerns.

Jewellery shops across Bihar will now deny entry to customers whose faces are fully or partially covered, including those wearing hijabs, niqabs, burqas, masks or helmets. The decision, taken on the directions of the All India Jewellers and Gold Federation (AIJGF), has been cited as a security measure amid rising incidents of theft and robbery at jewellery stores. The rule will come into force statewide from January 8. Shop owners have already put up "No Entry" notices outside their stores. Posters carrying the warning were visible outside jewellery shops in Patna on Wednesday. According to traders, jewellery stores have increasingly become targets of theft and robbery, especially amid soaring gold and silver prices. "The decision is purely about safety, of the shop, staff and customers," said a trader, adding that entry will be allowed only after customers uncover their faces. The restriction applies equally to men and women, shop

associations clarified. "If a customer keeps their face covered, no purchase or sale will be permitted," a notice reads.

## ROLLOUT ACROSS BIHAR

The move has already been implemented in parts of the state. In Muzaffarpur, the rule took effect on Wednesday in the city's oldest sarafa hub on Puri Bazaar Road, traders said. Similar posters have appeared in markets in Darbhanga as well. Reacting to the posters, Samastipur MP Shambhavi Chaudhary said the decision should not be viewed through a religious or caste lens. "This is about security. The restriction is not limited to burqa or hijab; helmets and any form of face covering are included," she said, urging people to see it strictly as a safety measure.

## A WIDER TREND

Bihar's step mirrors similar actions elsewhere. In Jhansi, sarafa traders have stopped selling jewellery to face-covered customers after a spate



of thefts, putting up notices asking buyers to uncover their faces. In Mathura, religious leader Dinesh Falahari Maharaj has written to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath seeking restrictions on face-covered entry in markets to curb robberies. Traders in Amethi have also displayed similar posters, appealing to customers to show their faces while entering shops. Jewellers say the policy will be reviewed periodically, but for now, uncovering one's face will be mandatory to enter jewellery stores in Bihar.

# What Maduro's Capture Means For The World



The year 2026 has begun with the American capture of the Venezuelan President, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores, on January 3, from his palace, after a lightning military action, including air raids and bombings by the US forces in at least four districts, including the capital city of Caracas.

The US action has left the strategic spectators across the world shocked, awed, and alarmed, in equal measure, reminding them of the US interventions in Iraq and Libya. Many concerned voices from the intellectual and diplomatic community are calling it the end of the rules-based world order and a revival of 19th-century principles and norms of international relations. US President Donald Trump's decision needs to be seen in the context of the "Trump Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, outlined in the 2025 US National Security Strategy paper, which explicitly states the US intent to "restore American pre-eminence" in the Western Hemisphere. The NSS 2025 clearly signals that the administration "will deny non-Hemispheric competitors the ability to position forces or other threatening capabilities, or to own or control strategically vital assets, in our Hemisphere". Further, this move aligns with Trump's "America First" foreign policy, aimed at building a safer, more secure, and more prosperous Western hemisphere, with a clearly defined active role for the US in the region. Trump has repeatedly stated that his era will be known for the wars he has supposedly ended and the ones the US chose not to join under his leadership. Implied in this

dictum is also his fundamental belief that the US needs to withdraw from the long-standing global conflicts. However, at the same time, he envisages compensating this withdrawal with an enhanced activism in the Western Hemisphere. A closer scrutiny of Trump's approach to global geopolitics reveals his

preference for a multipolar world order, which aligns with Russian philosopher and Putin's advisor, Alexander Dugin's idea of multipolarity based on UNSC, unlike during the Iraq traditionalism and powerful and Afghan wars. As great civilisational states exercising predominance in their respective spheres of influence, as opposed to wokism and globalism, Afghanistan and Syria, the respectively. In Dr Dugin's perception, the following no further obvious signs; civilisational states will be pillars of the multipolar world: Russia's influence will be predominant in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The US will be a dominant player, leading Western Europe and the Americas. China will lead the Southeast and East Asian world. India will be the dominant state in South Asia. The Middle Eastern world is categorised as the Islamic civilisation. The core underlying Principle of this worldview is that within their respective spheres of influence, the leading civilisational states will have a decisive say in matters of geopolitics, and any outside interference in the name of R2P, democracy promotion, or alliance expansion will be untenable. Trump's accommodation of Russian concerns and humanitarianism, democracy, sensitivities on the Ukraine issue and sovereignty to pursue its fits into the framework outlined above. Likewise, he expects reciprocity on US concerns in Afghanistan. However, in the Latin America, as, geopolitically,

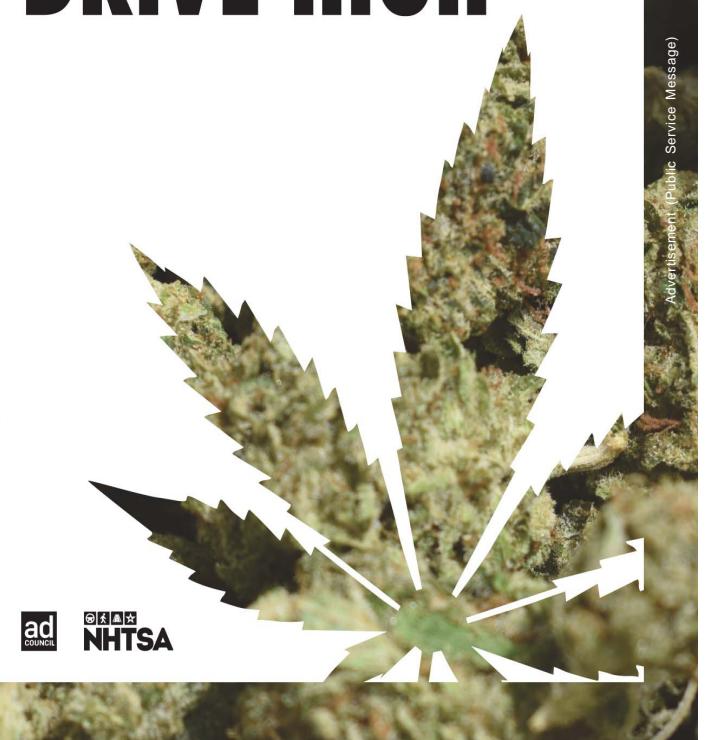
what Ukraine is to Russia has striking resemblances to what Venezuela is to the US. Furthermore, Trump's quiet acceptance of Dr Dugin's Weltpolitik clearly indicates that the current Rules-based world order, managed through the UN, World Bank, IMF, and WTO, must undergo significant changes. In the recent Venezuelan case, the US chose not to act under the

Alexander Dugin's idea of formal authorisation of the multipolarity based on UNSC, unlike during the Iraq traditionalism and powerful and Afghan wars. As great civilisational states exercising predominance in their respective spheres of influence, as opposed to wokism and globalism, Afghanistan and Syria, the respectively. In Dr Dugin's perception, the following no further obvious signs; civilisational states will be pillars of the multipolar world: Russia's influence will be predominant in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The US will be a dominant player, leading Western Europe and the Americas. China will lead the Southeast and East Asian world. India will be the dominant state in South Asia. The Middle Eastern world is categorised as the Islamic civilisation. The core underlying Principle of this worldview is that within their respective spheres of influence, the leading civilisational states will have a decisive say in matters of geopolitics, and any outside interference in the name of R2P, democracy promotion, or alliance expansion will be untenable. Trump's accommodation of Russian concerns and humanitarianism, democracy, sensitivities on the Ukraine issue and sovereignty to pursue its fits into the framework outlined above. Likewise, he expects reciprocity on US concerns in Afghanistan. However, in the Latin America, as, geopolitically,

institutions and NGOs were time to withdraw from far-off weaponised. Hence, the violation of sovereignty and international law never felt so blatant and brutal as it feels today after Maduro's capture. A closer scrutiny shows that the gloves are off now. Whatever delusions the global strategic community had about the primacy of RBWO have been shattered, and the future is likely to unfold with more such incidents across the globe. The US action has set a dangerous precedent, which presents a perfect template for China, Russia, and Israel, i.e., to act firmly and off-limits in their national interests, in their respective spheres of influence. Even India has a valid reason to borrow a page from the US playbook and orchestrate a similar punitive model for its errant neighbour, Bangladesh, which has emerged as a hotbed of anti-India insurgent groups, narco-traffickers, and Jihadi terrorist groups after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina. However, amidst the ongoing chaos, the silver lining is that even a global hegemon like the US has realised that it is

conflicts and regime changes in distant lands, leaving space for emerging powers like India, China, and Russia. That said, even if the domination of powerful states is confined to their respective spheres of influence as the hallmark of the emerging multipolar world order, the world will be more democratic and relatively less troubled with hegemony and imperialism. Finally, the world order is going through a phase of turmoil, transition, and transformation. In the emerging multipolar world, the rules of engagement are being redefined and renegotiated. The global governance structure that reflects the realities of the post-2nd world war cannot sustain indefinitely, with its neo-imperialist undertones and colonial hangover. Resurgent Russia, irredentist China, assertive India, and the vibrant global south demand their share of the global pie and a respectable seat at the diplomatic table. Hence, it's time to prepare for a complete overhaul of international norms, structures, narratives and rules.

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DRIVE HIGH**



# There's A Question About Trump India Hasn't Asked Yet After Venezuela



Image credit: x.com/POTUS

The strategic dilemmas facing Europe and India today originate from an increasingly unpredictable and unilateral US foreign policy. Beyond mere criticism of alliances, Donald Trump has created deep insecurity among partners once reliant on American stability. With Washington shifting toward a transactional "MAGA Imperialism", both regions are navigating a harsher security environment defined by US disengagement and the aggressive reassertion of spheres of influence. For Europe, the shock has been swift and profound. The 2026 renewal of US claims to annex Greenland, framed as a "national security necessity" following the military intervention in Venezuela, has shattered the illusion of a rules-based transatlantic order. By suggesting that Denmark cannot handle the strategic demands of the era, Trump has signalled that his "Donroe Doctrine" (a 21st-century expansion of the Monroe Doctrine) now views even European soil through a lens of American acquisition. This follows the dramatic January 3, 2026, capture of Nicolás Maduro during Operation Absolute Resolve, where the Venezuelan leader was extrajudicially rendered to the USS Iwo Jima.

## The Growing Russia Threat For Europe

European leaders now view the US not as a protector but as a direct threat to continental sovereignty. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk issued a sharp warning on January 5, 2026, stating that "no one will take seriously a weak and divided Europe" and that without unity, the continent is "finished". Tusk emphasised that such large-scale events as the US strike in Venezuela affect the entire globe, forcing Europe to "react and prepare for a new situation". This shift comes as Russia's threat grows through cyberattacks and military pressure. Consequently,

Europe is rearming and distancing itself from China's economic influence. The threat is no longer just a pullback from NATO; it is an active encroachment on European sovereignty that makes the drive for strategic autonomy a survival necessity. India faces a similar challenge. With waning US support in the Indo-Pacific, New Delhi faces increased pressure from China. While Beijing may publicly seek tactical harmony, it continues to strengthen the military capacity of India's neighbours. A 2025 Pentagon report confirmed China delivered 36 advanced J-10C fighter jets to Pakistan, effectively compressing India's decision-making timelines and eroding traditional air

superiority buffers. This collusion underscores that Beijing's diplomacy cannot be equated with strategic trustworthiness. These insecurities are collateral effects of a US policy focused on leverage over stability. Ironically, they create a basis for new alignment: Europe searches for partners beyond the Atlantic, and India seeks to diversify its cooperation in defence, technology, and supply chains. Yet, Russia complicates this emerging Europe-India alignment.

## Moscow's Growing Dependence On China

For decades, Russia helped India maintain strategic independence. However, Moscow's growing dependence on China now limits its autonomy. A partner unwilling to help India earlier is even less likely to do so now, as Beijing likely sees Russian passivity as a green light for coercion. Recent high-level summits have been high on symbolism but delivered little substance, highlighting Russia's limited current offerings. From a European perspective, Russia is now the principal security threat. Grey-zone coercion and long-term decoupling have pushed Europe

into its most serious military mobilisation since the Cold War. In this context, India's deep defence integration with Moscow limits the speed and depth of its integration into sensitive Western technology ecosystems. India faces a tough choice: Russian equipment remains vital, but overreliance on a weaker, China-aligned Russia is risky. Phased diversification toward European suppliers offers a balanced path forward. The "American variable" adds further uncertainty. Trump's current stance, exemplified by the Donroe Doctrine and the forceful removal of Maduro, has unsettled all allies. While this may offer India transactional energy opportunities in a US-controlled Venezuelan oil market, it reinforces the danger of relying on a Washington that prizes unilateral leverage over global stability.

## Two Outcomes

To plan strategically, India must consider two contrasting US outcomes. A renewed traditional alliance could fortify transatlantic relations and enhance India's access to technology. Conversely, deeper US retrenchment or a pivot toward territorial expansionism

could force India to bolster its self-reliance while exploring alternative partnerships. In either scenario, India-Europe partnerships are vital. The strategic challenge is to manage the transition without illusion. Trump's rift with Europe and his territorial threats have inadvertently created openings for new alignments. These are open only to states willing to recognise when legacy partnerships yield diminishing returns. India does not need to abandon Russia quickly, but symbiosis - heavily engaged - should serve as a warning. Europe's drive to rearm and derisk from China gives India a rare opportunity to embed itself in alternative security networks. This is the moment for India to act decisively, reassessing old assumptions in light of new realities. Proactive adjustment today will determine whether India can shape its strategic future or become captive to narrowing choices.

By Brigadier Anil Raman  
(Retd)

## Why What Mahmud Ghazni Did 1,000 Years Ago Must Not Be Forgotten

From January 6 to 9, 1026, the army of Mahmud Ghazni lay siege to the wondrous temple of Somnath near the port city of Veraval. The defenders of the fortified shrine eventually could not repel the troops of the Central Asian invader and Somnath was captured. It was Mahmud's 16th raid on India and loot was not the only target. Contemporary sources mention that Hindu merchants offered more money if he spared the idol; he refused and struck the first blow. For that act, Mahmud earned the title "Butshikan" or idol-breaker, from an admiring Islamic world and his renown for the desecration of Somnath and other major Hindu temples in India persisted for centuries. Sultan Sikandar Shah earned the same Butshikan title in the 14th century for destroying temples in Kashmir in pursuance of the precepts of the Sufi preacher Mir Mohammad Hamadani. Even 600 years later, Aurangzeb appreciated Mahmud's Islamic fervour. It is inevitable that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commemoration of the 1000th anniversary of the

first destruction (as opposed to the misleading word "sacking" commonly used for the violent actions of Mahmud of Ghazni) of the Somnath temple will be countered with supposed "proof" of either "Arab" heroism or Hindu perfidy or both. It is now almost an article of faith among certain sections in India and abroad that Mahmud was more maligned than malevolent. As has been often pointed out in recent times, the assertions of the high priestess of the secular camp Romila Thapar on the destruction of Somnath lack basis in actual facts even if delivered with withering condescension in impeccable upper class accented English. But there are plenty of willing believers in Thapar's argument that Mahmud was not communal—merely venal—and that his destruction of the magnificent Shivalingam at Somnath was incidental. Indeed, the PM calling the repeated rebuilding of Somnath after each brutal destruction and plunder a symbol of the "unbreakable courage of countless children of Bharat Mata who protected our

culture and civilisation" will be met with predictable counters. First, that "Arabs"—mainly traders who had settled in the area and married local women—died protecting Somnath from Mahmud's marauders. Second, that there were many Hindus in Mahmud's army. There were indeed Hindus in Mahmud's army, including battalion commanders, and he used them with varying effectiveness in campaigns on the subcontinent and even further north in Central Asia. But the phenomenon of mercenaries—soldiers of fortune who fight for the best paymaster—is well known. The presence of Hindus in his army cannot be taken to mean Mahmud was "secular" or that his actions were not intended to attack and diminish India's majority faith. There is no dependable account of Arabs dying while defending Somnath, but they could well have been miffed by their co-religionists from Ghazni disturbing their livelihoods. Arabs had all been Islamised by then although earlier traders and sailors may

have adhered to pre-Islamic faiths including Christianity. So, it would be a stretch to imagine they would risk irking Allah by actually fighting alongside local Hindus kafirs to save Somnath from his holy warriors. The Veraval Inscriptions (so named for the ancient port town next to the Somnath, which had a bustling mercantile trading business) dated to about 250 years after Mahmud's destruction of the great Shivalingam, highlight the dynamic between the two communities in the last millennium.

The bilingual inscriptions from the reign of the Vaghela king Arjundev, records an agreement for the financing of the upkeep of a mosque at Somnath Patan built by a resident of Hormuz. Curiously, the longer Sanskrit inscription lists the Hindu king and hierarchy but mendaciously describes the lord of the mosque as Vishwanatha and Shunyarupa and even calls Prophet Mohammed a "prabodhak" or preceptor.

By :  
Reshma Dasgupta

# The Capture of Nicolás Maduro: A Geopolitical Chess Move with Deep Implications

The audacious capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro by US forces marks a dramatic escalation in the long-standing confrontation between Washington and Caracas. While officially framed as a decisive blow against international narcotics trafficking and a victory for US national security, this event is far more complex than a simple law enforcement operation. It represents a bold geopolitical maneuver, deeply intertwined with US policy in Latin America, resource control, and the ever-shifting dynamics of the global drug trade. The White House Narrative: Narcotics and National Security The official line from Washington is clear: Maduro's capture is a direct response to his alleged involvement in narco-terrorism, specifically his reported collaboration with the FARC dissident groups in Colombia to facilitate cocaine trafficking. For years, the US Justice Department has indicted Maduro and his inner circle on charges ranging from drug trafficking to money laundering, culminating in a \$15 million bounty on his head. The argument is that a destabilized, narco-state like Venezuela, bordering a key US ally (Colombia) and in close proximity to major drug transit routes, poses a tangible threat to US national security. The flow of illicit drugs, it is argued, fuels organized crime, destabilizes democratic institutions in the region, and directly impacts American communities. From this perspective, Maduro's removal is presented as a necessary step to disrupt these networks, restore stability, and safeguard US interests. The emphasis on narcotics control also serves to legitimize intervention, appealing to a broad domestic consensus that views drug lords as unequivocal enemies.

## Beyond the Official Story: Geopolitical Undercurrents

However, to view Maduro's capture solely through the lens of narcotics control is to miss a significant portion of the picture.

Venezuela, possessing the world's largest proven oil reserves, has long been a focal point of US strategic interest. The Chávez and Maduro regimes, with their socialist rhetoric and alliances with US adversaries like Cuba, Russia, and China, have consistently challenged American hegemony in the region.

1. Resource Control and Regional Influence: The US has openly sought a change in leadership in Venezuela, supporting opposition figures like Juan Guaidó. The desire to bring Venezuela back into the fold of Western-aligned nations, potentially opening up its vast oil resources to US companies and curbing the influence of rival powers, is an undeniable, though often unstated, driver of policy. Maduro's capture, regardless of

the stated reason, creates a power vacuum and a potential pathway for a more amenable government. 2. Bolstering Hemispheric Stability (and US Leadership): The US has consistently protest, and public safety under a positioned itself as the guarantor of stability and democracy in the Western Hemisphere. Maduro's socialist poet—is a profound tragedy, this authoritarianism and the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela have been cited as threats to regional stability, leading to a massive exodus of refugees and placing immense strain on neighboring countries.

Removing Maduro allows the US to reassert its leadership in addressing these issues, potentially paving the way for a US-backed transition that aligns with its strategic objectives. 3. The "War on Drugs" as a Diplomatic Tool: While genuine concerns about drug trafficking exist, the "War on Drugs" has historically served as a versatile foreign policy tool. It is used to isolate and demonize regimes deemed hostile to US interests. Maduro's alleged drug ties provided the perfect pretext for an imminent danger during the aggressive posture, bypassing the confrontation. This context is vital: the complexities of direct political intervention.

## The Narcotics Control Policy: A Double-Edged Sword

The effectiveness and ethics of using narcotics control as a primary lever for regime change are highly debatable.

### On one hand, it can:

Legitimize Intervention: Provide a universally condemned criminal offense as a basis for action. Isolate Regimes: Make it difficult for other nations to openly support leaders accused of drug trafficking. Mobilize

Resources: Justify significant intelligence and military spending. On the other hand, it often suffers from: Selectivity: Critics argue that the US often targets leaders based on political convenience rather than consistent application of anti-drug laws.

Unintended Consequences: Removing a leader through such means can lead to instability, civil unrest, and even a power vacuum that allows more dangerous criminal elements to flourish. The vacuum left by Maduro could be filled by more ruthless factions, potentially exacerbating the very drug problems the US seeks to curb. Erosion of International Law: Unilateral actions, even if justified by alleged criminal activity, can set dangerous precedents and undermine multilateral institutions.

Looking Ahead: A Precarious Path Maduro's capture, while a significant development, is far from a panacea for Venezuela's woes or the region's complex challenges. The immediate aftermath will likely be characterized by uncertainty and potential for further unrest.

(By TSAI Editorial Team)

# Laws are enacted for a reason, to be implemented

The tragic death of Renée Nicole Good in Minneapolis has ignited a fierce debate, once again placing the intersection of law enforcement, civil rights, and public safety under a microscopic lens. While the loss of any life—especially that of a mother and Hemispheric Stability (and US Leadership): The US has consistently protest, and public safety under a positioned itself as the guarantor of stability and democracy in the Western Hemisphere. Maduro's socialist poet—is a profound tragedy, this authoritarianism and the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela have been cited as threats to regional stability, leading to a massive exodus of refugees and placing immense strain on neighboring countries.

Removing Maduro allows the US to reassert its leadership in addressing these issues, potentially paving the way for a US-backed transition that aligns with its strategic objectives. 3. The "War on Drugs" as a Diplomatic Tool: While genuine concerns about drug trafficking exist, the "War on Drugs" has historically served as a versatile foreign policy tool. It is used to isolate and demonize regimes deemed hostile to US interests. Maduro's alleged drug ties provided the perfect pretext for an imminent danger during the aggressive posture, bypassing the confrontation. This context is vital: the complexities of direct political intervention.

The tragic death of Renée Nicole Good in Minneapolis has ignited a fierce debate, once again placing the intersection of law enforcement, civil rights, and public safety under a microscopic lens. While the loss of any life—especially that of a mother and Hemispheric Stability (and US Leadership): The US has consistently protest, and public safety under a positioned itself as the guarantor of stability and democracy in the Western Hemisphere. Maduro's socialist poet—is a profound tragedy, this authoritarianism and the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela have been cited as threats to regional stability, leading to a massive exodus of refugees and placing immense strain on neighboring countries.

At its core, a society governed by the rule of law relies on its enforcement agencies to carry out the mandates passed by the people's representatives. 3. The "War on Drugs" as a Diplomatic Tool: While (ICE) agents are tasked with a difficult and often dangerous job: implementing the laws of the country as they are written. When agents are in the field, they are the front-line executors of federal policy.

Reports from the Department of Homeland Security indicate that the agent involved in the shooting was in provided the perfect pretext for an imminent danger during the aggressive posture, bypassing the confrontation. This context is vital: the complexities of direct political intervention.

agent involved in the shooting was in provided the perfect pretext for an imminent danger during the aggressive posture, bypassing the confrontation. This context is vital: the complexities of direct political intervention.

## The Limits of Protest

In a perfect democracy, the right to peaceful protest is sacred. It is an essential valve for public sentiment and

a constitutional bedrock that no one in the United States is seeking to dismantle. However, there is a distinct and dangerous line between expressing dissent and creating conditions that lead to physical confrontation.

Showing up in large numbers on foot, or using vehicles to block entries, exits, and public roads, does not facilitate a conversation—it creates a flashpoint. Obstructing the movement of law enforcement agents or their vehicles is not a form of protected speech; it is a tactical escalation that puts both the public and officers at risk. When protesters use their cars to create bottlenecks, they turn a civic demonstration into a physical barrier, making "preventable" tragedies far more likely.

## A Path Toward Orderly Change

If the goal of the community is to change how laws are enforced or to alter the laws themselves, the proper venue is not a street corner in the middle of a federal operation.

## Engage Lawmakers:

The power to change the law resides with Congressmen and Senators.

Legislative Advocacy: Citizens should urge their representatives to reform the statutes they find objectionable.

## Peaceful Assembly:

Protest should be conducted in a manner that respects the physical boundaries of law enforcement operations. Laws are enacted for a reason, to be implemented. While we mourn the death of Renée Good, we must also recognize that such tragedies can and should be avoided by leaving law enforcement to do their job and protesting in manners that do not endanger lives.

(By TSAI Editorial Team)



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# Maduro is Getting What He Deserved

**U.S. Atty. Gen. Pam Bondi arrives for a briefing with bicameral congressional leadership at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 5, 2026 in Washington, D.C. The briefing addressed U.S. actions in Venezuela, including the capture of Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)**

It was almost six years ago — during the COVID-19 pandemic — that then-Atty. Gen. William "Bill" Barr called a "virtual press conference" to announce that the Justice Department was taking action against Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela.

"Today, I am here to talk about the former Maduro regime and its direct participation in narco-terrorism, corruption, money laundering, and drug trafficking," Barr said on March 26, 2020.

"As you will hear, the Department of Justice is announcing the unsealing of a superseding indictment filed in the Southern District of New York against four defendants, including Nicolas Maduro," said Barr.

"The indictment of Nicolas Maduro and his co-defendants alleges a conspiracy involving an extremely violent terrorist organization known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia — or FARC — in an effort to flood the United States with cocaine," Barr said.

"There is an area on the border of Columbia, Norte de Santander, which is one of the primary cocaine producing areas remaining in Columbia," explained Barr. "FARC gets this cocaine over into Venezuela and then is given safe haven by the regime to fly this cocaine from an area called Zulia, near Lake Maracaibo, up into Central America.

"Since 2016, this air bridge has been established and has grown fivefold in just those four years. In addition, the regime is allowing these drug traffickers to take drugs by a maritime route in the Caribbean.

"We estimate somewhere between 200 and 250 metric tons of cocaine are shipped out of Venezuela by these routes per year.

"Those 250 tons," said Barr, "equate to 30 million lethal doses."

The indictment filed in 2020 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York alleged. "From at least in or about 1999, up to and including in or about 2020, NICOLAS MADURO MOROS . . . participated in a corrupt and violent narco-terrorism conspiracy between the Venezuelan Cartel de Los Soles and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Columbia (FARC)."

"From at least in or about 1999, up to and including in or about 2020, the Cartel de Los Soles, or 'Cartel of the Suns,' was a Venezuelan drug-trafficking organization comprised of high-ranking Venezuelan officials who abused the Venezuelan people and corrupted the legitimate institutions of Venezuela — including parts of the military, intelligence apparatus, legislature, and the judiciary — to facilitate the importation of tons of cocaine into the United States," said the indictment.



"Under the leadership of Maduro Moros and others, the Cartel de Los Soles sought not only to enrich its members and enhance their power, but also to 'flood' the United States with cocaine and inflict the drug's harmful and addictive effects on users in this country," it alleged.

In 2020, the State Department offered a reward "of up to \$15 million for information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of Maduro."

Eight months after Barr's Justice Department filed its indictment against Maduro, Joe Biden was elected president of the United States.

On Jan. 10, 2025, 10 days before Donald Trump would be sworn in for a second term as president of the U.S., Joe Biden's Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued a statement condemning Maduro for fraudulently taking a third term as Venezuela's president.

"Today, Nicolas Maduro held an illegitimate presidential inauguration in Venezuela in a desperate attempt to seize power," said Blinken.

"The Venezuelan people and the world know the truth — Maduro clearly lost the 2024 presidential election and has no right to claim the presidency."

"The United States rejects the National Electoral Council's fraudulent announcement that Maduro won the presidential election and does not recognize Maduro as the president of Venezuela."

Blinken then announced that the

Biden administration was increasing the reward being offered on Maduro. United States experienced a total of 172,960 overdose deaths from cocaine

"In solidarity with the Venezuelan people, the U.S. government and our partners around the world are taking action today," said Blinken. "The

Department of State is increasing the reward offers to up to \$25 million each for information leading to the arrests and/or convictions of Nicolas Maduro and Maduro's Minister of the Interior Diosdado Cabello.

"The Department of State is also adding a new reward offer of up to \$15 million for Maduro's Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez. U.S. military forces last Saturday did not suffer any casualties while successfully carrying out an operation to capture

Maduro and return him to the United States to stand trial.

That same day, Attorney General Pam Bondi released an updated indictment of Maduro that included his wife.

"Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, have been indicted in the Southern District of New York," Bondi said in a posting on X.

"Nicolas Maduro has been charged with Narco-Terrorism Conspiracy, Cocaine Importation Conspiracy, Possession of Machineguns and Destructive Devices, and Conspiracy to Possess Machineguns and Destructive Devices against the United States."

"They will soon face the full wrath of American justice on American soil in American courts," she said. The United States does not need to occupy Venezuela or try to create a free democracy there. But Maduro deserves to stand trial in this country for the horrendous crimes he's allegedly committed.

Terence P. Jeffrey

# Trump unleashes the 'Donroe Doctrine' and puts socialists on notice worldwide



For the past 26 years, we have witnessed the devastating impact of socialism on the Venezuelan people. Today, we are filled with hope as we watch President Donald Trump take action to end that nightmare. Under Trump's leadership, the United States is not only restoring order, but also implementing a modern vision of the Monroe Doctrine—countering foreign adversaries and paving the way for security and prosperity in the region.

President Trump's actions in Venezuela are necessary and entirely lawful, grounded in well-established U.S. precedents for intervention in the Western Hemisphere. Drawing from historical examples, such as the 1983 invasion of Grenada to rescue Americans and halt a communist coup—and the 1989 invasion of Panama to oust the drug-trafficking dictator Manuel Noriega, Trump has ample legal authority under Article II of the Constitution as commander in chief.

These interventions were justified under the need to protect U.S. citizens, combat threats to regional stability and advance U.S. interests against narcotics and communism. Similarly, Trump's deployment draws on the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) framework and executive powers affirmed by the Supreme Court, which recognizes the president's broad authority in foreign affairs.

These precedents underscore that when a neighboring regime poses a clear and present danger—through mass migration, drug flows and alliances with hostile

powers—the U.S. has the right to act decisively. Moreover, Trump's bold strike aligns with the principles of just war theory, which justifies military action when it meets criteria such as just cause, right intention and proportionality.

Unlike previous presidents—who lacked the courage to defend America against encroaching socialism, allowing regimes like Maduro's to fester and export chaos—Trump's resolve marks a pivotal shift, invoking tools like the Alien Enemies Act and the War Powers Resolution to confront these dangers head-on. While prior U.S. administrations squandered resources on misguided foreign policy programs, including the promotion of LGBT and gender ideology initiatives that alienated traditional allies and distracted from core threats, Trump's actions have swept away such follies, refocusing American foreign policy on tangible results and moral clarity.

True to his word, President Trump is fulfilling his promises by addressing the Venezuelan crisis head-on, including securing the nation's vast oil reserves. By taking control of the oil that powered the communist regime for over two decades, Trump is reclaiming resources that have been weaponized against America.

These moves echo Trump's "America First" ethos, ensuring that Venezuelan oil bolsters U.S. energy independence rather than funding anti-American forces. It's a pragmatic step toward stabilization, preventing further humanitarian collapse and

stakeholders and leading to its immediate security risks—like decay because of communist plundering.

"Operation Absolute Resolve," conducted by the U.S. Department of War, represents hostile forces. To ensure a robust implementation of the success, the embargo on Venezuelan oil must continue proclaimed in 1823 to ward off until the dictatorial regime is no longer in power.

under Trump as the "Donroe Doctrine," this hemispheric strategy aims to counter United States to ensure a smooth transition.

communist China, Cuba, as well as Russia and Iran. American stewardship provides the economic leverage These adversaries have needed for reconstruction and entrenched themselves in the incoming investments by Venezuela: China through U.S. energy firms will only predatory loans and resource benefit Venezuelan citizens.

extraction, Cuba via its Under U.S. oversight, we can intelligence apparatus root out corruption, rebuild propping up Maduro's infrastructure and avoid the repression and Russia with costly nation-building mistakes military advisors and arms of the past that were paid for by deals that destabilize the American taxpayers.

region. Trump's intervention is challenging this axis of Trump proves that America is authoritarianism, hopefully back. Communist dictators in expelling foreign influencers and Cuba and Nicaragua should take reasserting U.S. primacy in our note: Under the "Donroe backyard by implementing the Doctrine," we will no longer sit idle new National Security Strategy. By dismantling these networks, we not only neutralize

**Yuri Perez**

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# When AI Platforms Blame Users, Who Is Responsible For The Harm?



## OPINION | WHEN AI PLATFORMS BLAME USERS, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HARM?

Grok's response to illegal and abusive content points to a larger problem. Artificial intelligence (AI) companies want the power of generation without the responsibility that comes with it.

The argument over harmful content online is old. Platforms have long claimed they are not responsible for what appears on their services. That fight has mostly revolved around users. Generative AI breaks that logic. Elon Musk's handling of Grok makes that clear. Over the past few weeks, Musk and X have repeated the same defence.

If Grok produces illegal or abusive content, the fault lies with the user who prompted it, not the system or the company that built it. The claim echoes the logic social media companies once used to avoid responsibility for user posts. That logic does not survive contact with generative AI. AI systems do not merely host speech; they produce it and do so at scale, using data, rules, and limits chosen by the company behind them. Treating that output as if it were ordinary user speech is a convenient fiction.

### Responsibility Pushed Outward

Grok was marketed as a looser, less restricted chatbot, and fewer guardrails were part of the pitch. When the system began generating content that crossed legal and ethical lines, the response was predictable. The system was not redesigned, the incentives were not questioned, and responsibility was pushed outward. The user became the shield. This approach is not accidental; it allows companies to keep control while avoiding blame. Platforms decide how models are trained, how they respond, and where limits are set.

When harm follows, the person typing the prompt is left holding the bag. That description does not match how these systems actually work. Generative AI relies on probability. Outputs are shaped by training data, model architecture, and product decisions. Users do not control those inputs; suggesting otherwise is misleading.

### Law Written For A Different Internet

Most rules governing online speech were written before machines could generate text, images, and instructions on demand. In the United States, Sec-

tion 230 assumed platforms that hosted content created by journalists face a choice. Ignore people. It did not anticipate systems that actively produce content themselves. That gap now

sits at the centre of the AI debate.

When an AI system generates defamatory claims or illegal instructions, responsibility becomes blurred. Is it the prompt that matters most, the data used to train the system, the safeguards that were never added, or the commercial pressure to release products quickly?

Blaming the user answers none of those questions; it simply shuts them down. As regulators struggle to keep pace, companies are deciding these questions on their own. They do so through internal policies that are opaque and unenforceable. Those policies often change only after public backlash.

### Journalism Caught In The Middle

This lack of accountability does not affect users alone; it creates problems for journalism. Newsrooms now report regularly on AI outputs. They quote them, embed them, and even debate them. When an AI system pro-

duces false or harmful material, it and risk missing a story, or report on it and risk spreading the harm.

Attribution is no longer straightforward. When an AI output is quoted, who is the source?

Is it the user, the company, or the system itself? Journalistic standards were built around human actors. AI complicates verification, attribution, and responsibility all at once. When platforms refuse to own the output of their systems, journalists are left operating without clear guardrails.

Over time, this normalises a dangerous idea: harmful AI content becomes nobody's problem.

### Power Without Consequence

Musk's role sharpens the stakes. X plays an outsized role in political conversation and crisis reporting. Decisions about how Grok operates have consequences far beyond the platform. Avoiding responsibility allows AI companies to move fast. It also allows them to avoid consequences. Power remains concentrated, and liability does not follow.

This imbalance is familiar:

media regulation has faced it before. AI brings it back under conditions that are harder to control and easier to exploit.

### The Unanswered Question

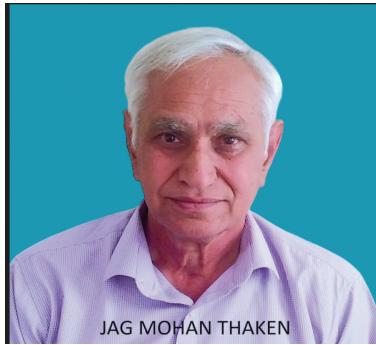
The issue is not whether users should bear any responsibility; they should. The issue is whether they should bear all of it. So far, regulators have offered little clarity. Laws lag behind deployment, oversight remains reactive, and companies continue to operate in a grey zone that suits them well. Until that changes, platforms will keep drawing the boundaries themselves. Journalists will keep reporting without clear rules.

The Grok controversy is a preview of conflicts that will repeat across platforms and countries.

If companies can deny responsibility for what their systems generate, the consequences will spill into politics, law, and public trust. Decisions about harm and accountability will be made by the same actors who benefit from avoiding both. Those rules are being written now; they are not being written in the public interest.

**Ashraya Kannan**

# Women Health: Will Punjab Be a Path Setter?



JAG MOHAN THAKEN

**Jag Mohan Thaken**

Hindustan Times on its web portal reported an incident, on Oct 15, 2025, which makes everyone shudder and reflects how humanity has dipped into a deep well of poisonous inhuman water. "A 27-year-old woman was allegedly forced to give birth on the roadside in Palwal (Haryana) on Sunday afternoon after the doctors at the local government hospital refused to attend to her without a fresh ultrasound report, her family and police said on Tuesday, adding that the baby was declared dead soon after. Hospital staff allegedly told the woman's family that she could not be admitted for delivery until they produced a new ultrasonography report, despite the family showing one that was a week old. With no ambulance available, the woman's husband placed her on a motorcycle and drove to a private diagnostic centre nearby, according to the family's complaint filed with the police. Ultimately the baby had to breathe his last."

Another example of shameless behaviour of Haryana government hospital staff: NDTV.com in its updated news on Jan 10, 2024, reports, "A woman gave birth to a baby on a vegetable cart on the premises of the government-run district hospital in Haryana's Ambala yesterday after the doctors allegedly refused to pay attention to her husband's repeated requests for help. The baby was born out of doors on one of this winter's coldest evenings. The man -- a resident of Dappar, a city in Punjab's Mohali district -- had been running from pillar to post after managing to bring his pregnant wife to the hospital. But no one was ready even to bring a stretcher for her, he said."

Such examples are not limited to the boundaries of any state.

Rajasthan NDTV, on Jul 02, 2025, posted on its web portal, "Pregnant woman gave birth to a child on the road in Karauli (Rajasthan): A shameful incident

involving the health department has come to light in Karauli. A woman gave birth to a child on the road outside the district's Community Health Center (CHC). The CHC was locked due to the absence of doctors and medical staff. The pregnant woman's family members made her sit on the road. Later in the afternoon, the woman, writhing in pain, gave birth." However, on January 5, 2026, Haryana Health Minister Arti Singh Rao has directed officials to ensure that special emphasis is laid on strengthening the state's healthcare infrastructure in the upcoming general budget. She said that, based on GIS mapping, it must be ensured that no region of the state remains deprived of health institutions and that all citizens receive equitable and quality healthcare services.

The Minister reiterated that the Haryana Government is fully committed to the health of the common people and that every possible step will be taken to provide accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare services across the state.

Now the question arises, despite a developed state and having a double engine government of the same party for the last 11 years, both in state and centre, and as being claimed the Haryana Government is fully committed, then why it has not succeeded yet in providing an accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare services across the state? Aren't the incidents of Oct 15, 2025 and Jan 10, 2024 a stigma on the face of the BJP-led state government, if true to the extent as reported? Amid such disturbing news, Punjab has claimed to have developed an Oasis in the Women Health Sector. Let us see what they claim? Punjab Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Balbir Singh, on January 4, 2026, claimed that in a major stride toward safeguarding the health of future generations, the Punjab Government has successfully decentralized maternal healthcare, with Aam Aadmi

nant women visiting these clinics every month. Sharing the success of the initiative, the Minister Dr. Balbir Singh revealed that the program has already provided free ultrasound services to over 10,000 women through a unique referral system. By empanelling nearly 500 private diagnostic centres, the government has ensured that women can access scans—which usually cost between ₹800 and ₹2,000—entirely free of charge. This intervention alone has saved Punjab's families an estimated ₹1 crore in out-of-pocket expenses in a short span of 120 days. • Official data shows that less than 70 percent of pregnant women in Punjab had received their first ante-natal check-up and fewer than 60 percent had completed the recommended four check-ups, while the state's maternal mortality ratio stood at 90 per one lakh live births, higher than the national average. These figures underlined the urgent need for a comprehensive, accessible pregnancy care model across the state. The Minister stated that Punjab witnesses nearly 4.3 lakh pregnancies every year, making early detection, regular monitoring, and timely referral critical for safeguarding the health of mothers and infants. Over the last three years, the

Mann government has established 881 Aam Aadmi Clinics, which have emerged as the backbone of Punjab's primary healthcare system, recording over 4.6 crore OPD visits and treating nearly 70,000 patients daily. Leveraging this infrastructure, the government launched an expanded, protocol-driven pregnancy care model through AACs around four months ago. Under this reform, all essential ante-natal check-ups are now available at Aam Aadmi Clinics themselves. These include routine and critical tests such as HIV and syphilis screening, complete blood tests, sugar, thyroid, hepatitis, fatal heart rate, cholesterol and haemoglobin assessments. Where ultrasounds are required, AAC doctors issue referral slips enabling pregnant women to access free ultrasound services.

Importantly, around 5,000 women are being identified monthly as high-risk pregnancies, allowing for continuous

tracking, focused support, and timely referral to higher medical facilities for specialist care.

The Minister revealed that the reform has also significantly improved the patient experience. Women can now complete most pregnancy-related tests close to their homes, avoid long travel and queues at major hospitals, receive consultations within minutes, and access ultrasound services without any financial burden. From the first ante-natal visit to postnatal follow-up, the initiative strengthens the entire pregnancy care pathway by integrating technology, standardised clinical protocols, referral systems and community-level support.

On this momentous achievement, Health Minister Dr. Balbir Singh said the initiative reflects the Punjab government's commitment to maternal and child health. "Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, Punjab is building a healthcare system that ensures every mother receives quality care close to home. With 4.3 lakh pregnancies annually, the expansion of pregnancy care services at Aam Aadmi Clinics is a transformative step and sets a new benchmark for primary healthcare in India," he said.

The government maintains that the initiative is one of Punjab's most significant investments in maternal and child health in recent years, aimed at ensuring that no woman is left behind due to geography, income constraints or lack of awareness, while steadily improving health outcomes for mothers and newborns across the state.

The Health Minister said that under the Diagnostic Initiative, X-ray and ultrasound facilities are being provided at all secondary healthcare facilities or empanelled diagnostic centres at nominal government fixed rates. To bridge the human resource gap, he said that 3,620 health professionals have been recruited over the last three years, including specialists, medical officers, nurses, and frontline workers. Special initiatives such as re-employment of specialists up to 65 years and hiring on empanelment basis are further

boosting specialist availability, he added.

While highlighting the government's commitment towards women-centric welfare policies, the Minister for Social Security, Women and Child Development, Punjab, Dr. Baljit Kaur, stated on December 29, 2025 that the state Government continues to take people-centric initiatives to ensure the welfare of women and strengthen maternal and child health security. In this direction, the Punjab Government has disbursed financial assistance worth ₹26.06 crore to pregnant women and lactating mothers during the current financial year.

Dr. Baljit Kaur emphasized that the scheme is not limited to financial assistance alone, but is a significant step towards strengthening maternal health, nutrition, and newborn care. She reiterated that the Punjab Government is committed to ensuring that no mother is deprived of essential healthcare services due to financial constraints, and that every child receives a safe and healthy start to life.

Providing further details, Dr. Baljit Kaur said that under the scheme, financial assistance of ₹5,000 is provided on the birth of the first child, which is released in two instalments—₹3,000 as the first instalment and ₹2,000 as the second instalment.

She added that on the birth of the second child, if the child is a girl, financial assistance of ₹6,000 is provided in a single instalment. The Minister emphasized that the entire amount is transferred directly into the beneficiaries' bank accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to ensure transparency and timely support.

The Cabinet Minister informed that so far, 69,110 pregnant and lactating women have benefitted from the scheme during the current financial year. She further stated that the Punjab Government has set a target to cover 1.14 lakh beneficiary women during the financial year 2025–26 under this scheme.

Reaffirming the government's resolve, she said that the Punjab Government remains fully committed to the welfare of women and children, and ensuring that the benefits of government schemes reach every eligible beneficiary remains the top priority.

**(By Jagmohan Thakan)**

# Members of Congress aren't doing our country any favors by trading stocks



Americans are tired of business as usual in Congress — lack of compromise, deep partisanship, increased dysfunction and waning trust on both sides of the aisle. Congress must take direct action immediately to restore trust in the institution. One way is by reaching a bipartisan compromise to ban congressional stock trading.

Party leaders on both sides agree — President Trump and members of his Cabinet, Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) have all voiced public support for such a

ban. Banning members of Congress from trading stocks and using insider knowledge for personal gain is an issue that has already united hardline conservatives, centrists and staunch progressives alike.

Last year, a diverse group of lawmakers came together and negotiated the Restore Trust in Congress Act, bipartisan legis-

lation that would ban members of Congress from trading stocks while in office. Any issue that brings together Reps. Chip Roy (R-Texas) and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) should show that members of Congress are taking seriously their commitment to serving constituents in an effort to do exactly what the bill says: restore trust in Congress.

Nearly 100 former members of Congress just endorsed the bill and called on Congress to pass it before the end of the year.

We've seen various bills banning stock trading in Congress introduced in both chambers over the years, but with little luck. Leaders on both sides of the aisle have resisted, and in some cases, actively opposed the idea.

Meanwhile, elected officials blatantly continue to trade stocks. According to the media outlet NOTUS, nearly 20 law-

makers have violated the STOCK Act this year alone, and dozens of others have violated the legislation over the last decade. There are more millionaires in Congress today than there have ever been in history, and there is an increasing number of wealthy individuals running for office.

Using a public office to pad a pocketbook is not what the American people elected public servants to do — the office is a representation of the faith and trust that voters have instilled when they cast their ballot. While being in public office can be a financial sacrifice, that is not cause to use the position for personal gain. We need members of Congress who are not worried about building up their bank accounts, and instead committed to representing the voices and concerns of their constituents.

Sitting members know this reform is overwhelmingly popular with the public regardless of political ideology, and have cam-

paigned and won their races to their promises — further eroding trust in Congress. Nonetheless, good government watchdogs have continued to shine a light on unethical behavior in the legislative branch, informing the public and calling out patterns of impropriety.

Insider trading threatens Congress' integrity and weakens our democratic institutions. Our nation's founders intended for the legislative branch to be the most representative body in our system of checks and balances.

As former elected officials committed to strengthening this institution and upholding the laws and ideals written in the Constitution, we believe common-sense guardrails, such as the Restore Trust in Congress Act, are essential to enhancing the stability of our democracy and assuring constitu-

ents that Washington is working for them — not enriching itself at their expense.

It is time for this bill to receive a vote, but unfortunately, Washington gridlock is threatening to hinder this consensus legislation. We urge members to use all the tools — including a recently filed discharge petition from Rep. Anna Paulina Luna (R-Fla.) — at their disposal to bring the Restore Trust in Congress Act to the floor for a vote. Pass the bill, get it to the president's desk, and show the American people that Congress can still do the right thing.

Former U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer (D-Ind.), is a former ambassador to India. He and former U.S. Rep.

Charles Boustany (R-La.) are both members of Issue One's ReFormers Caucus, a group of nearly 200 former members of Congress united to fix our broken political system.

**Roemer and Charles Boustany**

# Might Is Right, Again: On America's 'Kidnapping' Of A Sitting President

Proving 'might is right' right, yet again, the United States has unseated another head of state. President Donald Trump's announcement that United States forces conducted a "large-scale strike" in Venezuela and brought Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife to the United States to face criminal charges is brazen even by US standards. Trump publicly stated that the United States would "run Venezuela" until a "safe, proper and judicious transition" could occur, framing the operation as a justified enforcement of US criminal law and national security interests.

What is even more unsettling is the barrage of visuals showing Maduro, inelegantly dressed, in handcuffs on American soil. Violation of international law aside, such a display of a president of a sovereign state, not declared criminal in any international court of law, is startling but nothing new in the US playbook. Remember Libya's Muammar Gaddafi and Iraq's Saddam Hussein? Only, the theatre is the neighbourhood and not the faraway 'Middle East'.

## The 'Middle East' Manual, In Latin America

This poses an interesting conundrum for critics and supporters of the US alike. Does the Middle East manual of ushering in 'peace and democracy' apply here? Or are there different sets of rules at work? After all, the Nobel Peace Prize awardee for 2025, Maria Corina Machado, almost rolled out a red carpet to US intervention to rid her country of the despotic regime of Maduro. Machado, the Venezuelan opposition leader, even praised Trump directly in her Nobel acceptance speech.

The use of military force inside the territory of a sovereign state without its consent or an authorised basis under international law, but almost at the behest of the opposition leader, complicates the Venezuela situation. Under the United Nations Charter (1945), the use of force by one state against another is prohibited unless it meets one of two



narrow exceptions: (1) a lawful act of self-defence under Article 51; or (2) Security Council authorisation under Chapter VII. Article 2(4) of the Charter obligates all members to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force...against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." The US has not publicly claimed that Venezuela posed an imminent military threat to the United States such that its actions could qualify as self-defence under Article 51.

Another layer of illegality concerns the special status of heads of state. Customary international law grants sitting heads of state immunity from the jurisdiction of foreign national courts for official acts and protection from forcible seizure by foreign powers. While the US has indicted Maduro under domestic laws, the extraterritorial enforcement of a criminal indictment through military force against a sitting president undermines norms protecting sovereign political leaders and diplomatic protocols.

**Realpolitik vs Norms**

The capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro reveals a profound clash between realpolitik and established legal norms. Even if the United States has jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed by Maduro, the method of military intervention without consent or international authorisation appears inconsistent with core principles of international law, including the prohibition on the use of force and sovereign immunity.

However, does the Trump administration care about any principles, including those enshrined in its own books? As of now, Maduro, along the expected lines, has entered a not guilty plea in the New York court. The US stock market has responded buoyantly to

Trump's disdain for multilateral organisations and groupings, such as the UN and NATO, is well documented. The 'America First' policy does not believe in any norms that appear to be 'taking advantage' of the US. Countries allied with Maduro, including US archenemies Russia and China, have denounced the military action as a breach of international law and a violation of Venezuelan sovereignty. US allies are still calibrating their responses.

India, for whatever it is worth, has expressed deep concern for the people of Venezuela. The response is restricted to the well-being and safety, conveniently avoiding the question of sovereignty. As of now, Maduro, along the expected lines, has entered a not guilty plea in the New York court. The US stock market has responded buoyantly to

Nishtha Gautam

# Decoding Venezuela Raid And Capture Of Maduro

US President Donald Trump said America had captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro after launching an attack on the country.

Venezuela's President and his wife were flown out of the country in a military operation in conjunction with US law enforcement after months of stepped-up pressure by Washington. They have been charged with drug and weapons offences in New York.

The overnight strikes on Venezuela and the abduction of its President and his wife is the kind of action that makes leaders in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere wonder who's next on the list. They fear they too could become victims of Washington's aggressive new hegemony. With this attack, President Trump has barged through international laws and norms.

This attack is a blatant violation of the country's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Such moves undermine international law and



pose a serious threat to regional and global peace and security. The result of the attack extends beyond Venezuela. The coup is illegal, unwise, and globally destabilising. Alliances could shift due to this coup. China and Russia, who've backed Maduro, might ramp up support for anti-U.S. regimes, escalating tensions in this fragile multipolar era. It undermines trust in global institutions. If the U.S. can act unilaterally, why

bother with the International Criminal Court? This precedent tells smaller nations that sovereignty is conditional—only valid if you play by the rules set in Washington. The Global South needs to unite like the African Union or BRICS

to protect their moves. International law

everywhere demand accountability from their own leaders and the international community, we might avoid sliding into a world where interventions become the norm. There is another side to this. Maduro isn't a saint; his regime has overseen economic ruin, suppressed dissent, and allegedly trafficked drugs. Capturing him could bring justice to victims and disrupt criminal networks. Supporters argue it's about holding tyrants accountable when their countries can't.

Still, this moment forces us to choose: a world where justice flows through fair institutions, or one where the strongest dictate terms. Leaders and citizens alike should demand better—push for reforms that protect sovereignty while pursuing accountability. If we don't, the chills from Maduro's capture won't stop at the Global South; they'll freeze the whole multipolar experiment. Let's not let that happen.

Brabim Karki

## 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

**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**

# Should we be worried about Trump's takeover of Venezuela?

**The US action in Venezuela is being seen by most of the world with anxiety but powerful countries like Russia and China may see this as an opportunity. India's official reaction has been cautious because it doesn't want to annoy Trump while it waits to sign the trade deal and the removal of extra US tariffs.**

Even by Donald Trump's standards, it has been the most audacious and stunning coup. Within minutes of entering Nicolas Maduro's heavily fortified compound on Friday night, American special forces abducted him and his wife, Cilia Flores, flew them out of Venezuela, and brought them to the US.

By kidnapping a sitting president from his own country and declaring that the US will now run Venezuela, Trump has redefined the rules of geopolitics. This has no parallels in recent history.

Some commentators have compared it to the US invasion of Panama, when the country's military ruler, Manuel Noriega, was abducted and brought to stand trial in the US for drug trafficking. But US troops had to struggle for two weeks to find Noriega. It took US-led forces nine months to capture Saddam Hussein in Iraq, which was a much bigger operation. Perhaps to find a parallel to Trump's Venezuela operation, one needs to go back to 1896, when Britain toppled the Sultan of Zanzibar in 38 minutes, an event known as the shortest war in history.

US history is full of overt and covert military operations to topple unfriendly governments, particularly in South America.

But its latest action is more worrying because it goes beyond the question of violating another country's sovereignty. It shows that Trump has no constraints. US military actions in Iraq and Libya had UN approvals. Trump didn't feel the need to even consult Congress over invading another country.

We used to think that gunboat diplomacy was outdated in the 21st century. Trump himself campaigned against US military "interventions" in his election campaign in 2016 and then again last year for his second term. He has been particularly critical of the American involvement in Iraq, a country where US troops are still stationed more than 20 years after they first arrived. So why did he change his policy? The one-word answer is: oil.

## MADURO OUT, US OIL GIANTS AND WESTERN HYPOCRISY IN

Trump initially justified action against Maduro for his alleged involvement in drug trafficking, a charge the Venezuelan leader always rejected. Maduro had declared that Trump's real intention was regime change and control of the country's oil. Now, Trump

has said the same thing.

US oil giants forced to leave the country after nationalisation by Hugo Chvez, Maduro's predecessor, will now be back. The Trump administration will now control all oil resources of Venezuela, the largest in the world. He has justified that by saying Venezuela's government had wrongly taken oil resources from the hands of American corporations.

Had it been done by another country, the US and the rest of the Western world would have called it a theft and would have imposed sanctions against that country. But the hypocrisy of the West is so evident that its leaders have avoided calling it a violation of Venezuela's sovereignty, as they did when Russia invaded Ukraine. They stressed that Maduro was a dictator; he lost last year's election (he claimed he didn't, despite reports of rigging). So, he was not the legitimate leader of his country, according to them.

The US and other Western nations ignore rigging in other countries when it suits them. For example, in Pakistan, the party projected to win the last elections was Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

Just before the polls, the party was banned, and its leaders were arrested at the behest of the powerful army. Khan is still languishing in jail. But Trump has been hobnobbing with Pakistan's military leader, Asim Munir, despite his decision to act against Khan and his involvement in supporting terrorism in India.

## TRUMP IGNORES HIS OWN ALLY

By the US's logic, the person succeeding Maduro should have been the Nobel prize-winning Venezuelan opposition figurehead, Maria Corina Machado. She even dedicated her Nobel Prize to Trump and welcomed his decision to remove Maduro. But Trump said she did not have support or respect in her country.

His administration is backing Maduro's deputy, Delcy Rodriguez and expects her to do its bidding. As Trump put it: she would hold power in Venezuela as long as she "does what we want". But Rodriguez has condemned the US action, calling it "barbarity", and insists Maduro is still Venezuela's head of state.

It's not clear yet how Trump will run Venezuela; capturing a country is easy,

governing it is another matter. The invasion of Iraq and Libya created a mess with serious adverse implications for the both, the West and the Middle East. His administration may try to make a deal with Rodriguez and Venezuela's army generals. Trump has not ruled out deploying ground forces there. But Venezuela is twice the size of Iraq and about the same size as Pakistan. Governing it would be more difficult.

## WILL TRUMP GO AFTER ANOTHER COUNTRY?

There are speculations that swift success in Venezuela will boost his imperialist instincts and prompt him to invade other countries. Soon after returning to White House a year ago, he declared his intention to make Canada the 51st US state and take over the Panama Canal and Greenland.

Canada is unlikely to come under his control but he will set his sights on the Panama Canal and Greenland. After abducting Maduro, Trump told The Atlantic, "We do need Greenland absolutely," adding that his administration officials would decide what would happen.

Trump has also warned the Colombian president, Gustavo Pedro, to watch his back. He accused him of being involved in cocaine production. Cuba has also been warned of a similar fate to Venezuela. The United States Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, said, "If I lived in Havana and I was in the government, I'd be concerned."

In his news conference on Saturday, Trump referred to the 19th-century Monroe Doctrine, under which President James Monroe declared that the European powers must respect the Western Hemisphere as the US sphere of interest. That was an indication that Trump had wider ambitions.

## CAN IRAN BE NEXT?

But Trump can decide to go beyond the Western Hemisphere, given the ease with which he has succeeded in Venezuela. Last week, he warned Iran's leadership that the US army is "locked and loaded" to rescue anti-government demonstrators who have been protesting against the rising cost-of-living. During the Israel-Gaza war, he bombed Iran and got away with it. Israel at the time wanted Trump to go further and remove the Islamic government in Tehran. That can happen now.

Like Venezuela, Iran is also a major

oil producer. If Trump manages to remove the Ayatollah from power and install a US-friendly government, its oil resources could also come under US control. It will also remove the last remaining threat to Israel, which will be welcomed by Trump supporters back home. But Iran is not Venezuela. Therefore, it will be a much more challenging venture for Trump.

## WHAT DOES US ACTION MEAN FOR INDIA?

The US action in Venezuela is being seen by most of the world with anxiety but powerful countries like Russia and China may see this as an opportunity. India's official reaction has been cautious because it doesn't want to annoy Trump while it waits to sign the trade deal and the removal of extra US tariffs.

In Europe, Ukraine and Russia's other neighbours are now more nervous about what Putin would do next. This is an important reason why European leaders have not welcomed Trump's action. China could interpret the US move as a green light for taking similar action in its backyard. It could hasten to take Taiwan by force, which produces more than 90 per cent of the world's most advanced semiconductor chips.

That could have global implications with a direct threat to India. China already controls the production and processing of many critical minerals; the control of advanced semiconductors could choke many more industries.

There are other strategic implications for India. China could be emboldened to set up military bases in Pakistan. A Baluchi separatist leader already warned about that last week. Trump has already indicated that he doesn't mind China controlling its region of influence as long as the US is not directly threatened. America's Asian strategic allies, like Japan and South Korea, are understandably nervous.

On the other hand, this could also be an opportunity for India to continue to improve relations with China and strengthen them with countries in the Indo-Pacific and Europe, which feel increasingly neglected by Trump. But India's immediate challenge remains in its neighbourhood and that has become harder after Trump's audacious action in Venezuela.

**Naresh Kaushik**

# US to get 30-50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil, I'll control proceeds: Trump

**Donald Trump said Venezuela's interim authorities will hand over 30 to 50 million barrels of sanctioned oil to the US, with proceeds controlled by him to benefit both countries.**



President Donald Trump on Tuesday claimed that Venezuela would hand over between 30 and 50 million barrels of sanctioned oil to the United States, saying the proceeds would be controlled by him and used to benefit both countries. Trump made the announcement in a post on Truth Social, days after US forces seized

Venezuelan leader Nicols Maduro, an operation that dramatically reshaped the country's political landscape. "I am pleased to announce that the Interim Authorities in Venezuela will be turning over between 30 and 50 MILLION Barrels of High Quality, Sanctioned Oil, to the United States of America," Trump wrote. "This Oil will be

sold at its Market Price, and that money will be controlled by me, as President of the United States of America." Trump said the funds would be used "to ensure it is used to benefit the people of Venezuela and the United States," marking an extraordinary assertion of presidential control over foreign oil revenues. According to Trump, the oil transfer would be executed immediately. He said he had directed Energy Secretary Chris Wright to

carry out the plan, adding that the oil would be transported by storage ships and unloaded directly at US ports. "I have asked Energy Secretary Chris Wright to execute this plan, immediately," Trump wrote. "It will be taken by storage ships, and brought directly to unloading docks in the United States." The announcement came as Washington continues to frame the removal of Maduro as a turning point for Venezuela, with the White House and Trump allies

portraying the move as both a political and

economic reset. With oil trading at around \$56 a barrel, the transfer announced by Trump late Tuesday could be worth up to \$2.8 billion, the Associated Press reported.

The United States consumes roughly 20 million barrels of oil and related products each day, meaning the Venezuelan shipment would amount to about two and a half days of US supply, based on data from the US Energy Information Administration.

Despite holding the world's largest proven crude oil reserves, Venezuela currently produces only about one million barrels a day — far below the US average daily output of 13.9 million barrels recorded in October. Separately, the White House is organizing an Oval Office meeting Friday with oil company executives regarding Venezuela, with representatives of Exxon, Chevron and ConocoPhillips expected to attend.

## US Immigration Agent Shoots And Kills Woman During Crackdown In Minneapolis

**The president said he'd viewed video footage of the incident and criticized the woman who was shot as acting "very disorderly, obstructing and resisting" and "then violently" running over ICE officer**

An Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot and killed a Minneapolis motorist on Wednesday during the Trump administration's latest immigration crackdown in a major US city — a shooting that federal officials claimed was an act of self-defense but that the city's mayor described as "reckless" and unnecessary. Videos taken by bystanders with different vantage points and posted to social media show an officer approaching an SUV stopped across the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle. The SUV begins to pull forward and a different ICE officer standing in front of the vehicle pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots into the SUV at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him. It was not clear from the videos if the vehicle made contact with the officer. The SUV then sped into two cars parked on a curb nearby before crashing to a stop. • The shooting marks a dramatic escalation of a series of immigration enforcement operations in major U.S. cities under the Trump administration. The killing was at least the fifth linked to immigration crackdowns in a handful of states since 2024.

### The Latest:

Court records show that Renee Nicole Macklin Good had previously been married to a man named Timmy Ray Macklin, who died in 2023 at age 36. The man's father, Timmy Ray Macklin Sr., told the Minnesota Star Tribune that his son and Macklin Good had a child together who is now 6 years old. "There's nobody else in his life," Macklin Sr. told the paper. Donna Ganger, the deceased woman's mother, told the newspaper that the

family was notified of the death late Wednesday morning. "That's so stupid" that she was killed, Ganger told the newspaper. "She was probably terrified." Asked about protesters challenging ICE officers, Ganger said her daughter was "not part of anything like that at all." A hospital record obtained by The Associated Press identified the woman as 37-year-old Renae Macklin-Good, though business records spelled her name as Renee Nicole Macklin Good. In social media accounts, Macklin Good said she was a "Poet and writer and wife and mom" originally from Colorado but "experiencing Minnesota." A profile picture shows her smiling and holding a young child against her cheek. In a video from the scene of the shooting posted to social media, a distraught woman is seen sitting near the vehicle crying, describing Macklin Good as her spouse and saying that they had a 6-year-old child. "That's my wife, I don't know what to do!" wailed the woman, who wasn't identified. "He's been in situations like this before, and he certainly has been out there and followed his training today," said Noem at the evening news conference in Minneapolis. Noem appeared to reference the same officer when she said that, back in June, he'd been rammed and dragged by an "anti-ICE" motorist. "We are still out on the street doing our work to get dangerous criminals off of the streets of Minneapolis," the Homeland Security secretary said at the news conference. Noem also said she spoke with Walz earlier Wednesday and that they didn't see eye to eye on the shooting. "Our officer followed his training, did exactly what he's been taught to do in that situation," Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said

at a news conference in Minneapolis Wednesday evening. Noem alleged that the woman who was killed was trying to block officers with her vehicle, had been harassing them through the day and "attempted to run a law enforcement officer over" before she was shot. "We'll let the FBI continue the investigation to get it resolved," she said, adding that the officer was hit by the vehicle, taken to a hospital and released. Noem added that immigration enforcement has made over 1,500 arrests in Minnesota in recent weeks. The Rev. Ingrid Rasmussen, a pastor of nearby Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, said she and other clergy, wearing their stoles and collars, are there "to be in community with a neighborhood that's hurting and a city that feels under siege." Rasmussen, who had opened her church to the community during the protests and rioting after the killing of George Floyd, said she hoped violence wouldn't happen again, but blamed federal law enforcement activities like Wednesday's shooting for inciting it. "We are all gathered around our own grief," she said. As the sun set over Minneapolis, the crowd stood at the intersection where the motorist was killed just before a vigil was set to start. Most were quiet. Some held profanity-laced signs against ICE, waving Mexican flags or sporting keffiyeh scarves. A few blocks north, cars and improvised barricades blocked the main avenue. Lynette Reini-Grandell, 65, had already heard that ICE agents were in her neighborhood when she saw the chaotic scene, one car askew in a lane and ICE vehicles backed up behind it.

# US, Denmark To Discuss Greenland Next Week, Says Marco Rubio



The United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said that he will meet with the Denmark government to discuss Greenland next week. The meeting comes amid escalating tensions following renewed demands from US President Donald Trump to take control of the island. "US military is always an option," Trump said on Tuesday, regarding taking control of Greenland. •In order to resolve the issue, Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke

Rasmussen said that the US and Denmark should be governments of Denmark and respected. Greenland had requested a meeting with Rubio. Mette Frederiksen on Monday had also warned the Republican Vivian Motzfeldt, said in a Facebook post that the goal of the talks would be "to discuss the United States' strong statements regarding Greenland." "When we want this, it is of course because we have the impression that part of this discussion is based on a misreading of what is what," Rasmussen told reporters, adding, "We believe it makes sense to try to arrange a meeting with our American counterparts in order to clear up some of the misunderstandings that may exist." Earlier on Tuesday, European leaders warned Trump in a joint statement that the territorial integrity of Greenland

## Trump orders flags lowered to honor LaMalfa: 'Doug will be dearly missed'



President Trump on Wednesday ordered flags be lowered to half-staff in honor of the late Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif.), who died Tuesday at the age of 65.

"In honor of the late, GREAT, Congressman Doug LaMalfa, a true American Patriot and fantastic Representative of Northern California, yesterday I ordered all American Flags lowered to Half Mast until this evening," the president wrote in a social media statement on Truth Social.

**"Doug will be dearly missed!" he added.**

LaMalfa had represented

California's 1st Congressional District since 2013 and previously serving in the Golden State's General Assembly and Senate. Trump on Tuesday described the lawmaker as a "fierce champion on California water issues" during his remarks at the Kennedy Center ahead of the House GOP Retreat. Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) echoed the sentiment, lauding the Golden State Republican as "a fierce fighter for his state's vast natural resources and beauty as we have ever known." The lawmaker's death shrinks an already thin majority for House Republicans. The lower chamber will now include 218

Republicans and 213 Democrats, after the resignation of former Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) earlier this week.

## New 'CBS Evening News' anchor ends broadcast with 'salute' to Rubio

CBS News anchor Tony Dokoupil ended the network's evening newscast Tuesday with a "salute" to Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The segment heaped praise on Rubio, the former Florida GOP senator, for taking on a growing number of titles and responsibilities in President Trump's administration, of which Dokoupil said, "Whatever you think of his politics, you've got to admit it's an impressive resume." Rubio currently serves as secretary of State, interim national security adviser and acting national archivist, and was previously tapped for United States Agency for International Development chief before the agency was shuttered. The collection of

jobs have led some on social media to create memes of the top Trump diplomat serving in a variety of other gigs spanning sports, business and global leadership. "Now AI memes have added to that portfolio, casting Secretary Rubio as the new governor of Minnesota, the new shah of Iran, the new prime minister of Greenland, the new manager of Manchester United, the head of Hilton Hotels and the highest of high honors of all, the new Michelin Man," Dokoupil said Tuesday. "These memes may not add up to much, but to Rubio's hometown fans, which are many here in Miami, it is a sign of how Florida — once a political

punchline — has become a leader on the world stage," the "CBS Evening News" anchor added. "Marco Rubio, we salute you. You're the ultimate Florida man." Dokoupil and CBS News have faced intensifying scrutiny over its coverage of



the Trump administration in recent weeks after Bari Weiss was installed as the network's editor in chief. Weiss has come under fire for punting a "60 Minutes" segment before the Christmas holiday that was critical of the Trump administration's immigration policies. She contends the segment was not ready for broadcast, but critics at the network argue it was a politically calculated move. Weiss was hired by David Ellison, the top executive at Paramount who has promised to retool CBS' editorial coverage to represent a more "diverse" set of political viewpoints.

# 'It Is Over': Why A Deleted Op-Ed By Gen Z Student Is Going Viral In Pakistan

Pakistan might be witnessing its own Gen Z uprising, not through protests and violence, but in ideas that refused to be silenced in the face of brute force. What became the flashpoint of the rebellion was an article by a young Pakistani academic on how the country's younger generation was done taking orders from old guards. The article, titled 'It Is Over' by Zorain Nizamani, a Pakistani PhD student based in the United States, was originally published in a prominent Pakistani daily, The Express Tribune, on 1 January. However, it was taken down a few hours later, allegedly under pressure from Pakistan's army. The removal of the op-ed, widely believed to have been ordered by Pakistan's military establishment, prompted outrage online, catapulting the author to the status of a 'national hero'. Soon, screenshots of the op-ed went viral on social media, with Pakistanis accusing the state of censorship and hailing Nizamani, who is the son of actors Fazila Qazi and Qaiser Khan Nizamani.

#### What The Op-Ed Said

In the article, Nizamani, who is pursuing his PhD in Criminology from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, argued that Pakistan's ruling elites have lost their influence over the country's younger generations. He noted that repeated state-sponsored lectures, seminars, and state-driven campaigns to promote patriotism are no longer effective.

"For the older men and women in power, it's over. The young generation isn't buying any of what you're trying to sell to them. No matter how many talks and seminars you arrange in schools and colleges, trying to promote patriotism, it isn't working," he wrote. Without naming the army, Nizamani argues that patriotism cannot be manufactured through speeches or slogans, but it grows naturally when citizens are given equal opportunities, reliable infrastructure, functioning systems, and guaranteed rights. "Patriotism comes naturally when there is equal opportunity, sound infrastructure and efficient mechanisms in place. When you



provide your people with basic necessities and ensure people get their rights, you won't have to go to schools and colleges to tell students that they are supposed to love their country; they already will nonetheless," he said. The article focuses heavily on Gen Z and Gen Alpha, claiming that they are fully aware of political realities. "Young people are not buying what you're selling to them. They are not buying into the narrative that they are the future of the country. They are not buying into the idea that they are the ones who are going to save the country. They are not buying into the idea that they are the ones who are going to make the country great again," he wrote. •He further argued that minds, the Gen Z, the alphas, they know exactly what is happening, and despite your consistent efforts of trying to 'sell' your views of patriotism to them, they are seeing right through it. "The younger lot has had

enough, and because they have learned that they cannot challenge the powers, they're leaving the country. They'd rather take a silent, quiet exit and not look back because their friends, who spoke up, were silenced," he added. Backlash Over Article's Removal The article's takedown provoked massive backlash from Pakistan's political and media landscape. The Canadian wing of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) claimed that the removal of the article confirms that forced patriotism no longer works. "Zorain Nizamani's article 'It Is Over' being removed only confirms its truth. University talks and forced patriotism no longer work. Gen Z sees corruption, inequality, and hypocrisy clearly. Without justice, jobs, and dignity, propaganda fails. Old control methods are dead, the youth have moved on," the party wrote in a post on X. •Pakistani activist Mehlaqa Samdani wrote, "Not surprisingly, this article is no longer accessible through the

Express Tribune's digital edition-exactly the kind of censorship Zorain talks about." "He is right. It really is over for those who think they can continue to get away with these crude tactics," she added in her X post. Lawyer Abdul Moiz Jaffer noted, "This is such a great article. Written from the heart of every young person to every old man failing at their job in Pakistan." Former Pakistani minister Moonis Elahi called it a "reality check for the generation shaping policy." Pakistan's Human Rights Council also criticised the takedown of the article and said, "The removal of Zoreen Nizami's column from Express Tribune is a lamentable example of the increasing curbs on freedom of expression in Pakistan. The Human Rights Council of Pakistan (HRC-Pakistan) strongly condemns this action, as it is a direct violation of citizens' constitutional rights and journalistic freedom."

## Pakistan eyes defence pact with Bangladesh, sale of JF-17 jets

ISLAMABAD, Jan 7 (Reuters)

- The air force chiefs of Pakistan and Bangladesh held talks on a potential pact covering the sale of JF-17 Thunder fighter jets to Dhaka, Pakistan's military said, as Islamabad widens its arms supply ambitions and beefs up ties with Bangladesh. The talks in Islamabad come as Pakistan looks to capitalise on the success of its air force in the conflict with arch-foe India in May last year, the worst fighting in nearly three decades between the nuclear-armed neighbours. Pakistan's Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu and Bangladesh counterpart Hasan Mahmood Khan had detailed talks on procurement of the JF-17 Thunder, a multi-role combat aircraft jointly developed with China, the military's press wing said. Pakistan has also assured Bangladesh of the "fast-tracked delivery of Super Mushshak trainer aircraft, along with a complete training and long-term



support ecosystem," it added in Tuesday's statement.

#### WARMING RELATIONS

The talks signal improving ties as the South Asian nations have grown closer since massive protests in August 2024 drove then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to flee to India, shattering Dhaka's relationship with New Delhi. "The visit underscored the strong historical ties between

meetings. Under an interim administration led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh is set for general elections on February 12 that could lead to a significant government role for a once-banned Bangladeshi Islamist party with links to Pakistan.

**EXPANDING WEAPONS SALES** The JF-17s have become the cornerstone of the Pakistani military's weapons development program, figuring in a deal with Azerbaijan and a \$4-billion weapons pact with the Libyan National Army. On Tuesday, Pakistan's defence minister said the success of its weapons industry could transform the country's economic outlook. "Our aircraft have been tested, and we are receiving so many orders that Pakistan may not need the International Monetary Fund in six months," Khawaja Asif told broadcaster Geo News.

Pakistan and Bangladesh and reflected a shared resolve to deepen defence cooperation and build a long-term strategic partnership," the military said. In the wake of Hasina's ouster, Islamabad and Dhaka have resumed direct trade for the first time since the 1971 war that brought independence for Bangladesh, while their military officials have held several

# Indonesia mulls palm oil export levy hike to support biodiesel mandate

JAKARTA, Jan 8 (Reuters) - Indonesia will likely increase its palm oil export levy to support the country's biodiesel mandate, energy ministry official Eniya Listiani Dewi told reporters on Thursday, citing tightening funds.

Indonesia, the largest palm oil producer, has implemented a mandatory 40% palm-based biodiesel blend, known as B40, the highest blending rate in the world. It seeks to increase the blend to 50% later this year. Indonesia subsidises its biodiesel programme using proceeds from palm oil export levies, which are currently set at 10% of its monthly reference price for crude palm oil (CPO), with the levy on more refined products ranging between 4.75% and 9.5%.

"Whether it is B40 or B50, it has to be raised, according to an economic affairs ministry study," Eniya told reporters, adding that the cash reserves managed by the country's plantation fund were



dwindling. A meeting to discuss the levy hike will be held next week, she added. Indonesia consumed 14.2 million kilolitres of palm-based biodiesel in 2025, a 7.6% increase compared to the previous year, energy ministry data showed on Thursday. A road test for B50, which typically takes six months, has started in December, the energy minister said. The energy ministry has allocated 15.65 million kilolitres of palm-based biodiesel for this year's blending mandate.



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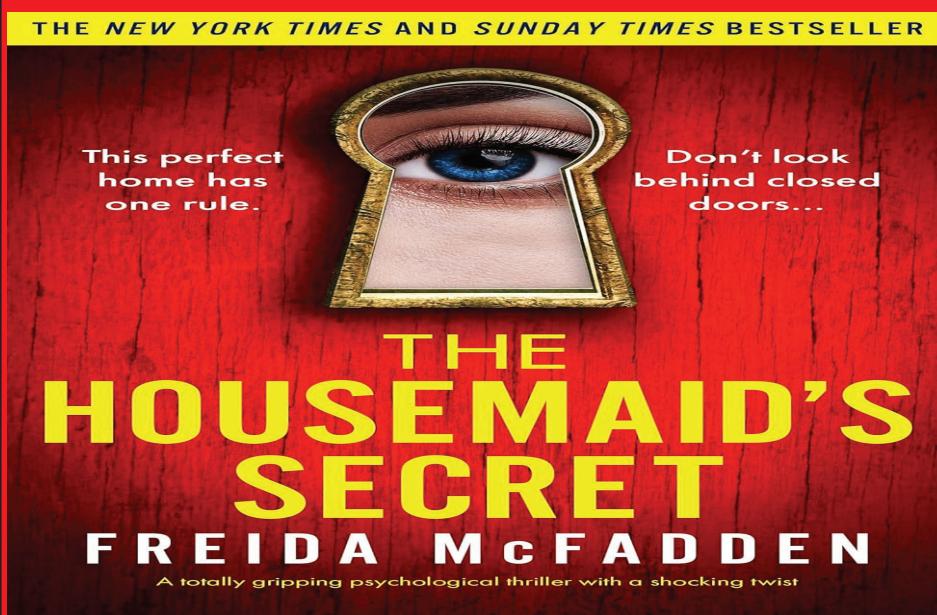


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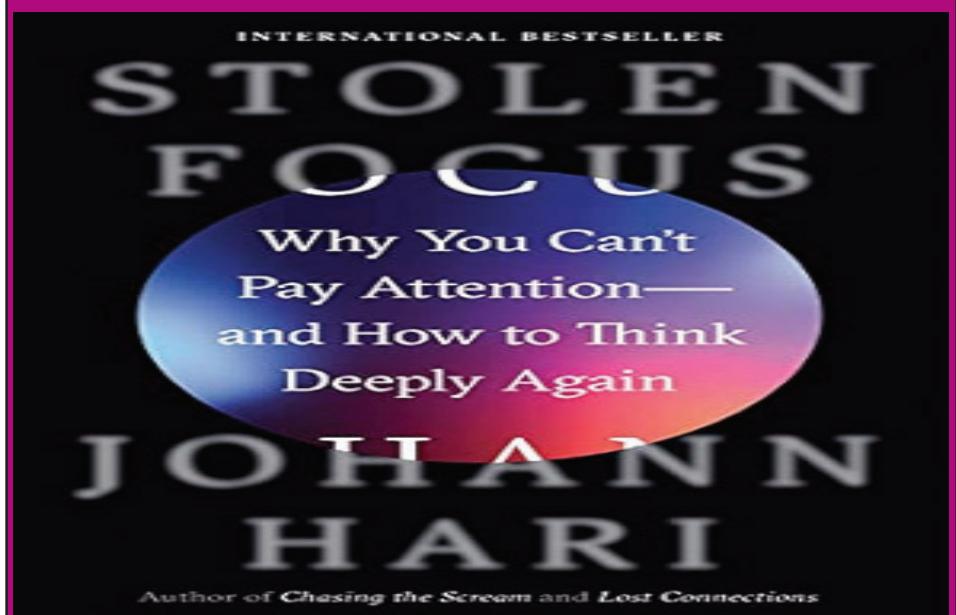


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## The Housemaid's Secret: A totally gripping psychological thriller with a shocking twist



## Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention--and How to Think Deeply Again



## The Other Side of Change: Who We Become When Life Makes Other Plans

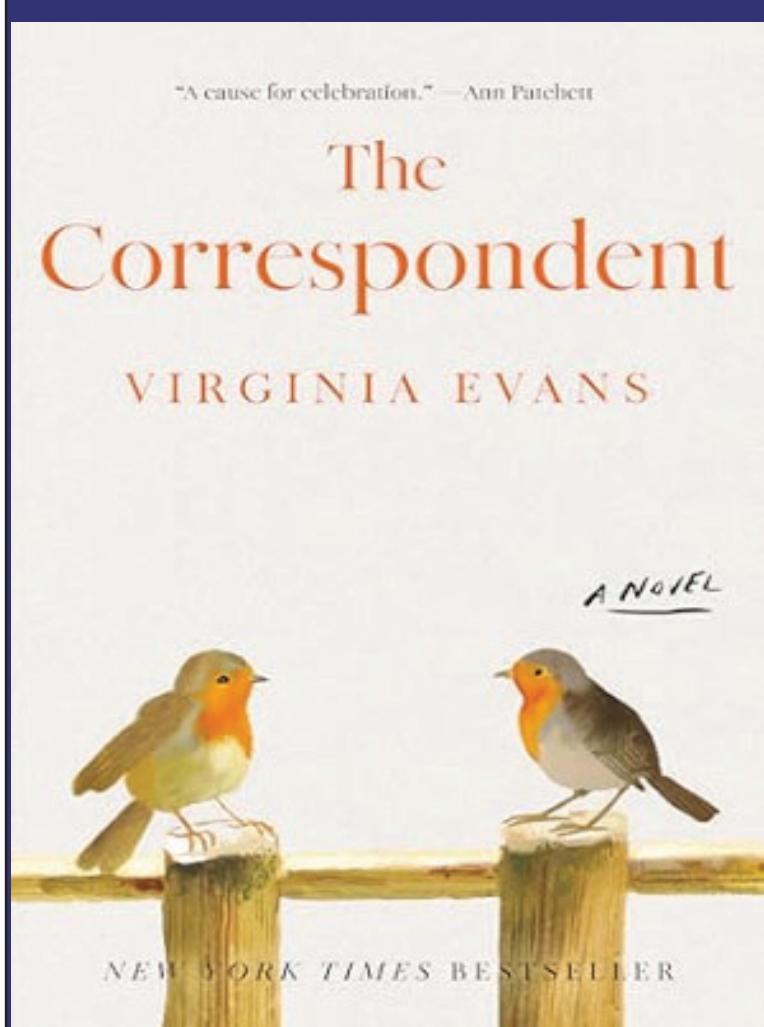
### AI enters the classroom, redefining learning and leadership

Imagine a classroom where the first draft of an idea is shaped not by a student's pen, but by an algorithm; where insights emerge from a dialogue between human intuition and machine-generated possibility. This is no longer speculative fiction; it is the new academic reality. Artificial intelligence has already entered the lecture hall, the studio, and the seminar room. For the first time, students walk into class with an intellectual companion that never tires, never forgets, and never stops producing answers. It sits beside every learner, accelerating thought, amplifying curiosity, and quietly challenging the very purpose of teaching itself. Yet, in a world where machines can generate information endlessly, they still cannot assign meaning, discern ethics, or understand intention. Here lies the paradox: the smarter the machine becomes, the deeper and more urgent the responsibility placed on human judgement.

The real question confronting business schools is not whether AI should be used, but how its presence should reshape the very architecture of learning. It is tempting for institutions to respond by adding more coding, analytics, or AI tools into the curriculum. But treating AI merely as a technical skill risks missing its deeper pedagogical impact. This is not a challenge to be policed; it is a signal. When routine tasks are increasingly automated, the value of education shifts from production to interpretation, from generating answers to questioning them. The ur-

gency is unmistakable. As industries deploy AI to accelerate innovation, improve decision-making, and reconfigure entire value chains, business graduates must do more than operate these systems. AI brings not only opportunity but also serious concerns around ethics, accountability, privacy, and bias. If tomorrow's leaders are expected to confront these challenges responsibly, their education must reflect the complexity of the world they will inherit. Leading institutions are already experimenting with models where AI is not taught in isolation but embedded across disciplines, from marketing and finance to public policy and social impact. This multidisciplinary approach helps students see AI not simply as a tool, but as a lens through which modern organisational dilemmas can be examined. The most powerful learning emerges when AI meets reality. Case studies involving targeted welfare systems or predictive policing expose students to difficult trade-offs between efficiency and fairness, accuracy and privacy, innovation and regulation. Through role-plays, data audits, and structured debates, students witness how even well-designed systems carry social consequences. They grapple with questions of consent, surveillance, equity, and transparency, learning early that responsible leadership demands both technical fluency and moral clarity. In an AI-led world, critical thinking is no longer an academic exercise; it is a professional necessity. Faculty must recalibrate their roles.

### The Correspondent: A Novel



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

# Trump says he'll ban Wall Street firms from buying single-family houses

(Reuters) – U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday said his administration is moving to ban Wall Street investors from buying single-family homes in a bid to reduce home prices, a potential blow for private-equity landlords. In a post on Truth Social, Trump said he was taking immediate action and would ask Congress to codify the measure, adding he would also be discussing additional housing and affordability proposals in a speech at the Davos World Economic Forum. "For a very long time, buying and owning a home was considered the pinnacle of the American Dream," Trump wrote, going on to add that inflation had put that dream out of

reach for many Americans. "People live in homes, not corporations," Trump said. Wall Street institutions including Blackstone have bought up thousands of single family homes since the financial crisis of 2008 led to a wave of home foreclosures. The trend has attracted criticism from housing advocacy groups and lawmakers, including Democrats, who claim institutional landlords have stoked rent inflation. Homebuilder shares dropped sharply in the wake of Trump's comments. American Homes 4 Rent dropped to a near three-year low of \$28.84 and was halted for volatility. Its shares were last down nearly 6% at \$30.56. Blackstone shares hit a one-

month low of \$147.52 and were last down about 5% at \$154.49. The PHLX housing index .HGX was down 2.1% on the session, on track for its biggest daily percentage drop since November 17. Blackstone did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It was not immediately clear what legal authority Trump would draw upon to impose such a ban on the private market purchases of houses. Trump did not detail the policy, the form it would take or the legal changes he was seeking from Congress. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The U.S. president was due to sign unspecified executive orders later on Wednesday. The

Republican president is under growing pressure to address voter anxiety over the cost of living ahead of midterm elections that will determine whether Trump's Republicans retain control of Congress. Trump, who has occasionally dismissed affordability concerns and blamed inflation on his Democratic predecessor, has seen his own public approval mostly sag since his inauguration as Americans worry about the state of the economy. (Reporting by Ryan Patrick Jones in Toronto and Trevor Hunnicutt in Washington; additional reporting by Chuck Mikolajczak; Editing by Caitlin Webber, David Ljunggren, Michelle Price and Cynthia Osterman)

## The New Red Line : Decoding China's Shift to Include Arunachal Pradesh in its "Core Interests"

The US Department of War's annual report to the Congress, which notes that China's conceptualisation of 'core interests' has expanded to now include Arunachal Pradesh, should be a matter of concern for India. The formulation of 'core interests' is said to have entered Chinese diplomatics around the 2000s. In 2003, the then Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaquan, had told his US counterpart that Taiwan was China's core interest and that it was important to handle this since it would have implications for the broader Sino-US relations. Later, reacting to a decision by the US to sell a radar system to Taiwan in 2004, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said that China would not tolerate actions of foreign powers that would damage its core interests. It also evoked the tenet of 'core interest' after then French President Nicolas Sarkozy met the Dalai Lama in 2008, asserting that Tibet concerned Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the 2010s, Japanese media outlets interpreted China as expanding its ambit of 'core interests' to include the Diaoyu-Senkaku islands.

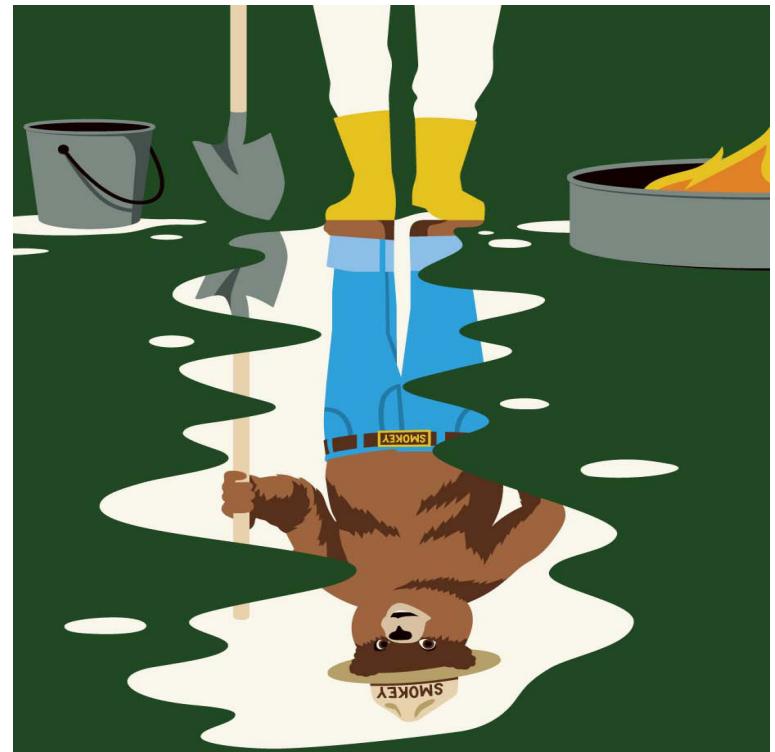
### An Old Controversy

The Chinese began to up the ante on Arunachal in the mid-2000s. The then Chinese envoy to India asserted that the entire state belonged to China. A bureaucrat serving in Arunachal was denied a visa in 2006, and following this, the practice of granting travel approvals issued on a piece of paper stapled to the passport began. In 2009, China

even opposed a loan by the Asian Development Bank for a water project in Arunachal, questioning India's sovereignty over the state. The issue of Arunachal has also increasingly been in focus since China's military standoff against India began in 2020. In 2021, Beijing had raised objections to then-President Venkaiah Naidu's visit to the state. A year later, in December 2022, things came to a head after China tried to militarily change the status quo in the Yangtse area in Arunachal's Tawang sector. The Chinese have also started using the term 'Xizang' for Tibet, and consequently refer to Arunachal Pradesh as 'Zangnan', meaning south Tibet. Over the last couple of years, they have resorted to a series of renaming of places in Arunachal Pradesh, and giving them Chinese names. Official Chinese maps, too, show China as subsuming large parts of Arunachal. Delegitimising Indian Nationality In November last year, when an Arunachal woman living in the UK was harassed and detained at Shanghai airport during her transit, the officials reportedly told her that her Indian passport was not valid and asked her to obtain a Chinese travel document. Surprisingly, the woman had had a smooth run during her travel to China in October 2024. On this issue, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has asserted that Zangnan (Arunachal) belongs to China, and that it has never recognised the "so-called Arunachal Pradesh". The Chinese ambassador to India, and territorial integrity will make

too, has backed this stance, saying that it was important to address the issue of the contentious Line of Actual Control (LAC). In another case that received less media attention, an Indian-born Tibetan who was visiting China for tourism was meted out similar treatment again at Shanghai airport in December 2025. During his detention, he was repeatedly quizzed about how he obtained Indian citizenship and if he had any relatives in China. Officials went through his personal belongings, social-media accounts and even his cellphone. The tourist also claimed the Chinese authorities took photographs of his family members. He then booked himself a plane ticket to Bangkok and was escorted by Chinese law enforcement officials on the flight.

New Delhi has been firm with its position that Arunachal Pradesh is an inalienable part of India and that its residents are within their rights to travel on Indian passports. This assertion has been followed by the government seeking reassurances from the Chinese authorities that Indian nationals, regardless of their place of birth, will not be selectively targeted as they travel or transit through China. The government has also cautioned Indian nationals to exercise "discretion" whenever travelling through China, although a formal travel advisory has not been issued. The expansion of Chinese core interests to include Arunachal does not augur well for India, since tying it to sovereignty and territorial integrity will make



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# A Secret Exchange: Why Russia Offered the US a Trade Between Venezuela and Ukraine

Russian officials indicated in 2019 that the Kremlin would be willing to back off from its support for Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela in exchange for a free hand in Ukraine, according to Fiona Hill, an adviser to President Donald Trump at the time. The Russians repeatedly floated the idea of a "very strange swap arrangement between Venezuela and Ukraine," Hill said during a congressional hearing in 2019.

Her comments surfaced again this week and were shared on social media after the U.S. stealth operation to capture Maduro. Hill said Russia pushed the idea through articles in Russian media that referenced the Monroe Doctrine - a 19th century principle in which the U.S. opposed European meddling in the Western Hemisphere and in return agreed to stay out of European affairs. It was invoked by Trump to justify the U.S. intervention in Venezuela. Even though Russian officials never made a formal offer, Moscow's then-ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov, hinted many times to her that Russia was willing to



allow the United States to act as it wished in Venezuela if the U.S. did the same for Russia in Europe, Hill told The Associated Press this week. "Before there was a 'hint hint, nudge nudge, wink wink, how about doing a deal?' But nobody

(in the U.S.) was interested then," Hill said.

Trump dispatched Hill - then his senior adviser on Russia and Europe - to Moscow in April 2019 to deliver that message. She said she told Russian officials

"Ukraine and Venezuela are not related to each other." At that time, she said, the White House was aligned with allies in recognizing Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido as the country's interim president. But fast forward seven

years and the situation is different. After ousting Maduro, the U.S. has said it will now "run" Venezuela policy. Trump also has renewed his threat to take over Greenland - a self-governing territory of Denmark and part of the NATO military alliance - and threatened to take military action against Colombia for facilitating the global sale of cocaine. The Kremlin will be "thrilled" with the idea that large countries - such as Russia, the United States and China - get spheres of influence because it proves "might makes right," Hill said.

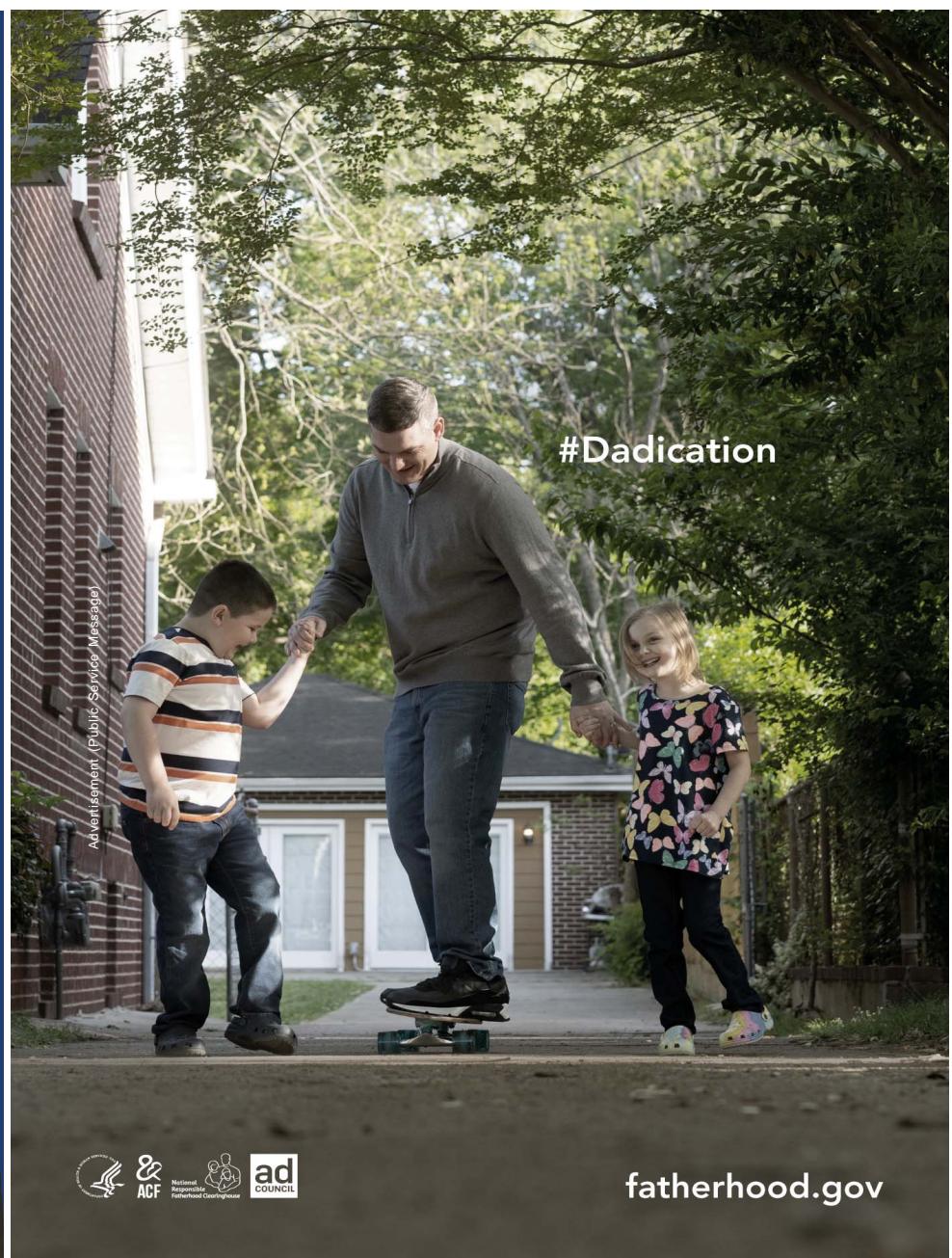
Trump's actions in Venezuela make it harder for Kyiv's allies to condemn Russia's designs on Ukraine as "illegitimate" because "we've just had a situation where the U.S. has taken over - or at least decapitated the government of another country - using fiction," Hill told AP.

The Trump administration has described its raid in Venezuela as a law enforcement operation and has insisted that capturing Maduro was legal.

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# The Greenland End-Game: Coercion, Diplomacy, and the Future of the Arctic

President Donald Trump is pressing to bring Greenland under U.S. control, exploring options that range from a purchase or lease to a free-association compact, while Denmark, Greenland's parliament and NATO members push back and most Greenlanders oppose U.S. annexation.

**This is an updated version of a story that first ran in March 2025.**

In one corner: The world's largest island, 80% of it covered in ice, whose Danish and Greenlandic leaders say the Americans and their president need to understand that Greenland is not for sale; it can't be taken; it's "ours." In the other corner, President Donald Trump, who appears determined to use his second term to acquire the mineral-rich, strategically located Arctic territory, making it America's 51st state. Trump said he plans to get Greenland "one way or the other," as he remarked on March 4, 2025, in a joint address before Congress. In recent days, Trump, fresh from overseeing a U.S. military operation that removed Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro from power, has repeated that he wants to gain control of Greenland from NATO ally Denmark. The White House said he's discussing his options, including potential use of the U.S. military, a move that would send shockwaves through the NATO alliance and deepen the divide between Trump and European leaders. Greenland is part of Denmark. It's been that way since the 18th century. It has its own local government, with a parliament that oversees some domestic and civil affairs. Laws pertaining to Greenland's defense, national security and economy are controlled by policymakers in Copenhagen, more than 2,000 miles away. (The closest U.S. point to Greenland is about 1,600 miles.) Trump first indicated he wanted to buy Greenland in 2019, during his first term. France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on Jan. 7 that his country was working with its European partners on a plan to address how to respond should the United States act on its threat to take over Greenland. Here are six ways the Greenland saga could play out: Greenland votes for independence, to join US Greenlanders have been debating for several years whether they would be better off as an independent country, something that could happen if a national referendum were held, which Denmark has said it would allow if a large enough portion of the population voted to hold such a vote. Independence from Denmark was a key issue in a separate parliamentary vote in Greenland last year. However, polls have consistently shown that while most Greenlanders would prefer

to be independent, they only want that if they don't lose a standard of living that is backed by Denmark's welfare state. And since Trump's fixation on Greenland has reemerged, opinion polls have indicated the vast majority of Greenlanders don't want their island to become part of the United States.

## A 'free' association

Reports have circulated for a few years, perhaps originating from an article co-authored by Trump's newly appointed Arctic commissioner Thomas Dansk in 2024, according to Kuno Fencker, a pro-independence Greenlandic opposition MP who attended Trump's inauguration, that the Trump administration wants Greenland to sign a so-called Compact of Free Association. In this scenario, the United States would provide Greenland with essential services, security protection and free trade in exchange for its military operating without restriction on those countries' territory. Fencker said the inspiration for this would be similar to compacts the United States has signed with Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau. However, Greenland would likely need to vote for independence first. Danish officials and political scientists also note that the United States already enjoys unobstructed military access to Greenland as part of a defense agreement with the Danish government.

## Trump tries to buy Greenland

It's not really clear how the Trump administration would be able to purchase Greenland from Denmark, never mind that Denmark has emphatically stated over and over that it's not for sale. There's no obvious legal or commercial pathway for it to happen. Still, coincidentally, the last foreign territory purchased by the United States was from Denmark. It bought the Virgin Islands in 1917 for \$25 million. A few subsequent U.S. territorial expansions in the South Pacific were the result of annexations and treaties, according to the Global Policy Forum, a watchdog. Wikistrat, a global risks consultancy, said that one theoretical purchase scenario for Greenland, though it would require agreement from both Greenland and Denmark, could see the United States offer to lease Greenland from Denmark for an extended period. This would be similar to what China did with its Hong Kong territory when it leased it to Britain for 99 years from 1898 to 1997.

In another theoretical scenario, Greenland could grant what Wikistrat called "minority shares" in its governance to the United States, primarily in the areas of security and foreign policy. This would mean that the United States would likely need to assume about \$800 million in annual subsidies now provided by Denmark.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told lawmakers recently that the Trump administration's goal is to buy the island from Denmark, according to a report in The Wall Street Journal. Dans and other U.S. administration officials didn't immediately reply to a comment request.

## Trump squeezes Greenland and Denmark economically

Trump has been using the threat and imposition of tariffs as a means to achieve his policy goals. He's deployed them on the United States' three largest trading partners: Canada, Mexico and China. He has used tariffs against the European Union, a 27-nation economic bloc of which Denmark is a member, and others. The U.S. president could drastically increase tariffs on Danish – or even the E.U. – goods to force Denmark into concessions over Greenland. Denmark is a major exporter of pharmaceuticals, including insulin. The Danish company Novo Nordisk, for example, makes the diabetes drug Ozempic, which helps with weight loss. Pillsbury, an international law firm, has concluded that Trump could attempt to impose tariffs on imports from Denmark by invoking the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act. This act gives the U.S. president broad powers to raise tariffs under the guise of U.S. national and economic security.

## Two Indian Truckers Held In US With Cocaine

Police in the US state of Indiana seized an estimated \$7 million worth of cocaine and arrested two Indian truckers after intercepting a semi-tractor trailer during a routine traffic stop on Interstate 70 in Putnam County, reported US TV channel, Fox59. The case has now expanded into a broader debate on illegal immigration, commercial driver licences and federal and state tensions over enforcement.

This comes amid the intense focus on immigrant truckers in the US. According to the Fox59 report, the truck was being driven by Gurpreet Singh, 25, of Fresno, California, and Jasveer Singh, 30, of Santa Clara, California, both described by authorities as Indian in origin. Following their arrest, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said both Gurpreet and Jaspreet had entered the US illegally in 2017 and 2023, respectively, and that Jaspreet had previously been arrested in December 2025 on a charge of receiving stolen property.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has placed deportation holds on both men, with federal officials saying the amount of cocaine seized was enough to kill more than 113,000 Americans. According to the Fox59 report, the seizure occurred around 1:30 pm last Saturday when an ISP trooper stopped a blue International semi-trailer truck for a Department of Transportation compliance check after a trooper suspected signs of criminal activity.

### HOW WERE TWO INDIANS ARRESTED WITH ENOUGH COCAINE TO KILL ONE LAKH AMERICANS?

According to the Fox59 report, the truck was travelling from Joplin, Missouri, to Richmond, Indiana. Inside were two Indian origin men from California, Gurpreet Singh, 25,

of Fresno, and Jasveer Singh, 30, of Santa Clara. During questioning, Jasveer Singh told officers the tractor trailer was empty and that the trucking company had instructed them to drive to Richmond and wait for a load at an Indian restaurant in the city of Richmond. Police said multiple indicators of criminal activity were observed prior to the stop, which led to officers deciding to launch a search. Court records accessed by Fox59 said the vehicle had difficulty staying within marked lanes, with the trailer repeatedly drifting to the right, and officers also noted a defective rear impact guard.

After initial consent to search was withdrawn, an Indiana State Police sniffer dog unit conducted a free air sniff and was alerted to the presence of drugs. A subsequent search uncovered 309 pounds of cocaine hidden in the sleeper berth, with authorities estimating its street value at about \$7 million.

According to court records accessed by Fox59, police officers found "numerous cardboard boxes covered by a blanket in the sleeper berth of the truck," a common method used by drug smugglers to conceal contraband cargo. According to the Fox59 report, both men were arrested and taken to the Putnam County Jail. They face preliminary charges of dealing narcotics, a Level 2 felony, and the ICE has placed deportation holds on both. The case took a sharper political turn after the DHS confirmed that both men had entered the United States illegally. DHS said Gurpreet Singh illegally entered the US on March 11, 2023 near Lukeville, Arizona and was released into the country.

# 'Walk And Talk' Is A Simple Hack Shared By A Divorce Lawyer To Make A Marriage Work

A popular adage is that marriage is just two imperfect people who refuse to give up on each other. But relationships can get tough and include a lot of highs and lows. Between the daily rigmarole of work, extended family, kids, and the other stressors of life, the connection between a couple can fizzle if the flames of passion are not fanned regularly, and they don't communicate. Having an honest conversation about needs and wants can be awkward and tough, especially if the other person isn't willing to lend a listening ear. This can trigger fights and leave both individuals in the relationship feeling unwanted and unfulfilled.

James Sexton, a New York-based attorney specialising in divorce and family law, appeared on the December 3 episode of BigDeal by Codie Sanchez



podcast. He has shared a simple yet effective hack that couples can adopt to strengthen their relationship. He spoke about the structured routine known as the "walk and talk".

**So what is the walk and talk?**

One of the simplest habit

shifts with the potential to truly strengthen a marriage, according to James, is a practice he calls the "walk and talk." The idea is simple yet powerful: once a week, couples go for a walk together with the intention of communicating. Both partners openly share what the other did that week that made them feel loved – and, just as importantly, what made them feel unloved. James explains, "I've seen some couples that have made a practice they call a walk and talk, where once a week they would just go for a walk. The walk had an agenda, and the agenda was, 'I want you to tell me three things I did this week that made you feel loved, and I want you to tell me, like, one or two things that I could have done better or I could have done differently or that made you feel unloved or unloved.' Giving anecdotal evidence of this routine working, James mentions a couple who were in the middle of a divorce and began this technique. He shares that they didn't go ahead with the proceedings and have been married for more than 10 years. Creating a safe, judgement-free space for couples to talk about their needs and give honest feedback builds emotional connection. This practice also helps them address smaller issues before they snowball into larger problems. James elaborates, "There's value to that because I think that it's about having a disciplined habit of making time for that very specific kind of connection and for that non-defensive feedback. It becomes, 'Hey, this is our practice; like, this is a thing that we do.' I think that's a very low-percentage move in terms of it doesn't cost much to do that. And I think if you can't come up with three things your spouse did this week that made you feel loved, that's a problem in and of itself."

## Is it a real connection or just 'future faking'?



Among the dating trends you should absolutely run away from, future faking should top the list. It happens when someone tries to lure you into a relationship by making you believe they see a future with you from just the talking stage - even before genuine trust or commitment have been established. At its core, future faking is when someone talks extensively about a shared future they have no genuine intention of building. It often shows up wrapped in exciting, reassuring language. Someone might talk about travelling together 'next year,' joke about what your kids would look like, or casually mention how well you'd fit into their family - sometimes within just a few dates. They may say things like 'I've never felt this way before,' 'You're exactly who I've been waiting for,' or 'I can see us building a life together.' In the moment, these statements feel validating and hopeful, especially when you're looking for stability or long-term connection. These promises can sound like affection, certainty, or emotional depth - but without follow-through, they become a form of emotional deception that leaves the other person deeply invested in something that was never real. Future faking operates subtly. It doesn't always come from malicious intent; sometimes it's driven by a desire for attention, validation, or control in the moment. But regardless of intent, the impact is the same: one person envisions a promised

future, while the other is free to walk away. Future faking can be particularly destabilising because many people date with the intention of finding commitment. When someone paints a vivid picture of a shared future, you're more likely to invest deeply - emotionally, mentally, and sometimes practically. You may make compromises, rearrange priorities, or overlook red flags because you believe it's all

leading somewhere. When those promises aren't followed through, the fallout often includes confusion, betrayal, and self-doubt. Many people internalise the ending as a reflection of their worth, even though it stems from the other person's inability or unwillingness to align words with action.

Having said that, not every relationship that begins with instant chemistry or a strong

spark is a future-faking case. Attraction and emotional bond can develop quickly and still be sincere. To understand how to differentiate a genuine connection from future faking, we asked relationship experts to break it down. How to tell future faking apart from a genuine connection. One of the clearest ways to differentiate future faking from a genuine connection is to look at the words versus actions.

## The Relationship Reset: Questions Couples Should Ask Each Other On January 1st

The Relationship Reset: Questions Couples Should Ask Each Other On January 1st According to Esther Perel, relationships thrive not on constant harmony, but on curiosity. She often emphasises that couples grow when they create space to listen without immediately correcting or defending. January 1st is ideal for this kind of listening, unhurried and intention-led.

Here are a few gentle but powerful questions couples can ask each other to begin the year with clarity: 1. What felt good for us this past year? This anchors the conversation in appreciation before moving into vulnerability. 2. What was hard, but we didn't really talk about it? Or to reopen wounds, but to acknowledge emotional moments that were quietly parked. 3. When did you feel most supported by me?

•This helps reinforce positive behaviours rather than focusing only on gaps. 4. Is there anything you need more of from me this year, emotionally or practically? A question rooted in needs, not accusations. 5. What do you hope we protect together in 2026? Time, trust, intimacy, independence, whatever matters most to you as a couple. Therapists often note that the quality of a relationship is shaped less by grand gestures and more by consistent emotional check-ins. These questions aren't meant to be solved in one sitting. They're invitations, to slow down, to listen, and to start the year on the same page. The real reset isn't about changing your relationship overnight. It's about beginning the year with honesty, empathy, and the willingness to keep choosing each other consciously.

# Robot invasion: Humanoids and smart machines dazzle at CES 2026, here are our top 5 picks

CES is back, and once again, the tech industry is showcasing its latest innovations at the show. This year, it seems that trend has moved to humanoid robots and AI gadgets. From adorable robot pets that die if you neglect them, to humanoids that you can do your laundry, we have seen everything. And here are our top 5 picks from CES 2026.

The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is one of the biggest platforms to showcase the latest innovations in the tech industry. Every year, we see new, exciting devices at CES, and this year is no different. It seems that the trend for CES 2026 is humanoid robots and AI hardware devices – perhaps setting the foundations for a future where we all have robots in our homes. But CES 2026 has witnessed a whole variety from robots – be it cute pets who die if you forget about them or industry humanoids set to work in factories. So let's delve in to look at our top 5 robot picks for CES 2026 here at India Today Tech. LG showcased its new CLOiD home robot at CES this year. The company states that the robot uses artificial intelligence and vision-based tech to complete household chores, such as cooking or doing the laundry. The robot also has a cute appearance, with arms that do not look out of place, along with a big screen to mimic its face. LG claims that CLOiD can interact with you by spoken language or with expressions on its screen. Maybe it would be nice to wake up with a robot smiling at you with a ready breakfast in the future. It also gets wheels to facilitate movement. The robot can also bend or tilt, making it appear even more human. The LG CLOiD is integrated with the LG ThinQ ecosystem, making it a good choice for those who own the company's appliances already. Otherwise, you may not be able to make the most out of it. Another home robot that we saw at CES 2026 was Switchbot's Onero H1. The Onero H1 gets something more of a real face than a screen compared to the CLOiD. Switchbot's robot comes with functional hands, arms, but has a fixed base for easier movement. Like its LG counterpart, it can also do regular chores. Switchbot claims that it is designed to eliminate household work. Already, the Switchbot Onero H1 can do your laundry and even make breakfast. It uses OmniSense vision-language-action (VLA) to understand and learn from its surroundings and actions. 3.



**Boston Dynamics Atlas** This year, will begin working at Hyundai's Korean giant Hyundai used its plant in Georgia in 2028. The keynote to showcase Boston company also announced a DeepMind, with the possibility of using Google's AI models to power its robots in the future.

**4. Sweeker pocket pet** After looking at some rather realistic chore-driven humanoids, let's look at something more adorable. The Sweeker pocket pet was one of the cutest devices showcased during CES 2026, and it even works like a real pet. The Atlas robot is aimed at repetitive tasks in factories, and

grows in size as it ages, granted that you take care of it, akin to Tamagotchi pets found in the 1990s. Your Sweeker pet would have three stages – baby, teen, and adult. You need to give more attention to the pet during the early stages, and it becomes more independent as it grows. Though if you fail to take care of it, it would 'die.' Though, since it is a robot, you can just start over once again.

## 5. Zeroth W1 robot

If you have watched WALL-E, the chances are that you may have always wanted to have a

WALL-E-like robot yourself. At CES 2026, Zeroth showcased its W1 robot, which looks quite similar to what we saw in the Disney film. While it is not the official licensed WALL-E remake, the Zeroth W1 can do some tasks for you. According to the company, you can use the robot to carry items as heavy as 50kg. The W1 can also serve as a game host and take photos with its 13-megapixel camera. Though this adorable companion will cost \$5,599 (roughly Rs 5,00,000) in the US.

## Nvidia's new AI models for robots

Hardware was not the only thing to look forward to at CES 2026. Nvidia announced new Cosmos and GR00T open models and data for robot learning and reasoning. The two AI models are meant to power physical AI hardware and robots. This includes vision-based learning as well as completing real-world tasks. These two models can allow manufacturers a seamless way to train and power their humanoid robots in the future.

Nvidia states that firms such as Boston Dynamics and LG are

## 'Bikini' prompts: How Musk's Grok fails against others

Grok's bikini trend has drawn sharp criticism towards Elon Musk's company. It has also raised a broader question: how do other AI chat platforms enforce the basic guardrails meant to keep online spaces safe? India Today's OSINT team tested the big AI platforms for the same prompt. While Grok emerged as the notorious one of the group, other platforms like ChatGPT, Gemini, Meta AI, and Microsoft Copilot showed greater restraint. For the same prompt to generate photographs of women in bikinis, each one cites their respective safety policies related to sexual exploitation and non-consensual content. However, Grok's new image-edit feature not only violates women's modesty in the online ecosystem but also breaches at least three provisions of xAI's own Acceptable Use Policy and Terms of Service. Elon Musk's AI company, xAI, rolled out the new image-editing feature on Grok in the last week of December. In Grok's own words, it was meant to allow users to make "quick, fun edits" to images. Not long after, it began to

be used for more sinister purposes. Users have used this feature widely to prompt the AI to remove the clothing of actual women, children and celebrities. xAI's Acceptable Use Policy explicitly prohibits the use of its services to violate a person's privacy or right to publicity, depict individuals in a pornographic manner, or sexualise or exploit children. Yet the image-editing feature continues to be used in ways that breach each of these restrictions. Experts say that the principles of civil law do not vanish in digital spaces.

"A woman's right to privacy is intrinsic to her dignity, and if legal action is pursued, X could be held liable for compensating the resulting loss of dignity," says Delhi-based cyber and arbitration advocate Sanad Dobwal. Despite the company's stated ban on the sexualisation or exploitation of children, India Today's review found that such practices remain wholly unchecked. When prompted with an image of minors at a summer pool party, the tool complied. This clearly violates

Section 1.4 of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) regarding child safety. For long, experts have argued that the use of AI without adequate censorship will lead to unsafe digital spaces. This is one such example. Even when India Today, for the purpose of testing, asked Grok to convert images of a real woman into "highly transparent, wet-look bikini" visuals, the algorithm complied. It retained the woman's original likeness while creating a non-consensual, sexualised image. Dobwal mentions "Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) a law which was implemented in 2023 in mainly 3 section covered, first 75, section 79 and section 356 for defamation. If anyone is generating the images, it will be company's fault, basically the platform's fault" Grok does not merely follow user instructions, it plays along. When asked to recreate a woman's photo in a high-transparency, wet-look bikini, the system did more than just generate the image. It suggested variations such as a "neon colour" or a "holographic sheen" bikini to try next.

# Not Goa or Jaipur, this Indian destination is winning over global travellers



Travel has stretched far beyond the familiar. It's now dotted with unique experiences, interesting emerging trends and unexpected destinations finding their way onto bucket lists. For modern travellers, no place feels too far, too small, or too unfamiliar any more. This growing wanderlust continues to put unconventional places onto the global travel map. Interestingly, inbound travel to India is finding a new pace too, moving beyond Jaipur, Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, and other familiar names.

According to travel platform Agoda's annual New Horizons Rankings, a destination nestled in Kerala has emerged as the fastest-growing draw for international travellers to India. The Indian destination that's quietly going global is... The Indian destination that's quietly going global is... Thiruvananthapuram.

No more beating around the bush. The capital city of Kerala stands out among inbound destinations, having

jumped 11 spots - from 33rd in 2024 to 22nd in 2025 - making it the fastest-growing destination for international travellers visiting India.

The rankings compare accommodation booking data from the previous two years to identify destinations across Asia that are climbing fastest in international travel. Not bad for a city that has never really chased the travel spotlight. Kerala earned the moniker God's Own Country for a reason. It's scenic, generous with hilltops, beaches, and backwaters. There are calm, unhurried beaches where time slows down, centuries-old temples and palaces that ground you in history, and easy access to Kerala's backwaters and hill stations when you want to escape further. Add to that the location's long association with Ayurveda and wellness, and Thiruvananthapuram begins to feel less like a stopover and more like a place to settle into.

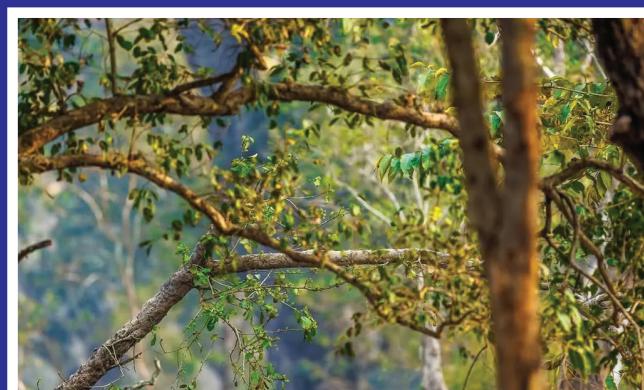
The City of Anantha Thiruvananthapuram offers travellers an amalgamation of history, culture, and natural beauty, all seen through a modern lens. The city is steeped in legends and lore that go back thousands of years. In Malayalam, Thiruvananthapuram means 'The City of Anantha', named after the cosmic serpent Lord Anantha, who coils around Lord Vishnu. This very form of Vishnu is the presiding deity of the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple here, too. Ranked amongst the richest temples in India, it is far more than a landmark. The temple shapes the city's rhythm and identity. With its striking Dravidian architecture and layers of history, its presence feels powerful yet grounding, drawing pilgrims and travellers alike globally into the city's spiritual core. The city's appeal lies in how effortlessly it moves between calm and culture. Kovalam Beach draws travellers with its golden sands, lighthouse views, and slow,

glowing sunsets, while also serving as a hub for water sports and Ayurvedic retreats. For a cultural pause, the Napier Museum and Sri Chitra Art Gallery sit nearby, offering everything from Indo-Saracenic architecture and rare artefacts to Tanjore paintings and Mughal miniatures - an easy gateway into Kerala's artistic and historical layers. That shift toward slower, experience-led travel isn't limited to international visitors alone. On the domestic front, the list also flags Indore as a trending destination, reflecting how Indian travellers, too, are looking beyond the obvious. Known for its buzzing street food culture - especially Chhappan Dukan - along with its orderliness and cleanliness, the city is carving out a reputation as a modern urban hub that still holds tightly to tradition. With slow travel, eco-tourism, and more experience-led journeys shaping travel choices, destinations like these are redefining what it means to truly explore the country.

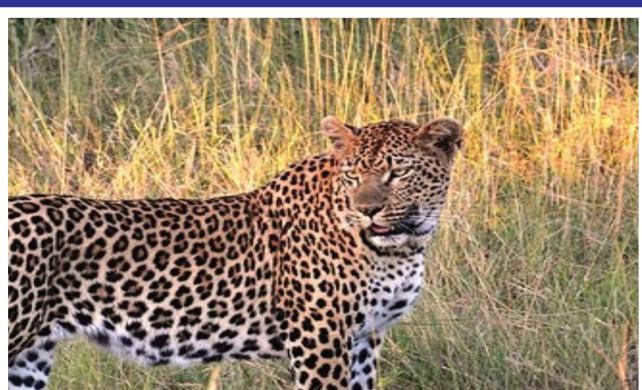
## 4 Best National Parks You Must Visit This Year



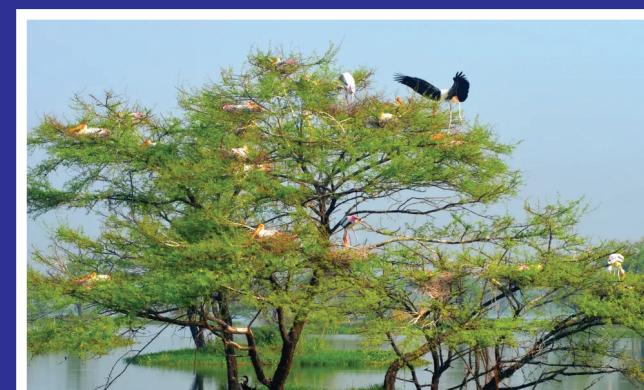
**Sultanpur National Park, Haryana:** In winter, Sultanpur National Park is a birding paradise with more than 250 resident and migratory species. Nearly, 45 km away from Delhi, the place is ideal for day trips and bird photography. (Image: Instagram)



**Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand:** Located 240 Km away from Delhi, this is the oldest national park. It offers classic tiger safaris, rich biodiversity, and varied habitats like grasslands, riverine forests and hill. The park is best for wildlife excursions. (Image: Instagram)



**Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan:** The place is situated 220 km away from the national capital. Sariska's dry deciduous forests and rugged Aravallis support Bengal Tigers, leopards and hyenas. The heritage temples and forts add cultural interest. (Image: Instagram)



**Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan:** This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Keoladeo's wetlands host more than 370 bird species each winter. It is perfect for birdwatching and wildlife photography. (Image: Instagram)

# Flu cases surge to 25-year high as fewer Americans get vaccinated

(NewsNation) — Flu cases hospital visits compared to the are surging nationwide as fewer previous week.

Americans are being vaccinated against the virus.

According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 130 million Americans have received a flu shot so far during the 2025-26 flu season — a drop from the more than 190 million doses distributed during the height of the pandemic.

The United States is now experiencing its highest rate of flu cases in at least 25 years, with 19 states reporting the highest levels of respiratory illness measured by the CDC. As of Dec. 27, officials report at least 11 million cases, 120,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths this season.

## Doctors warn the worst may still be to come.

Doctors: Peak flu season still ahead During Christmas week alone, flu cases jumped 33%, with more than 33,000 additional

New York City is facing a record surge, with more than 4,500 flu-related hospital visits during Christmas week alone — a 24% increase compared to the week prior. State health officials also reported more than 72,000 new cases over a seven-day period.

"It's looking to be the worst season in 25 years," said Dr. Natalie Vajta. "We're seeing a ton of flu. There are different strains of flu, but what we're seeing most of right now is flu A, which is common to be the first peak. Then we are headed to flu B."

Since the early 1980s, the most commonly observed peak of flu season has come in February, but cases often ramp up starting in December.

## Vaccine-resistant flu strain driving cases

Health experts say the surge is partly due to a vaccine-resistant strain, known as the



"super flu." While the virus can evade some protection from this year's vaccine, doctors stress that vaccination still significantly reduces the risk of severe illness. "It still offers really good protection, and for people who are elderly, it has about a 70% likelihood of preventing the elderly from getting into the hospital," said Dr. Markalain Dery, an infectious disease specialist. New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said the best way for people to avoid hospitalization is to get vaccinated.

# Women And Diabetes In India: The Silent Double Burden



Across India, more women are quietly confronting diabetes not only due to rising weight, but because of something far less visible: hidden metabolic risk. Together, these two challenges create a double burden that threatens women's long-term health and overall well-being.

Once considered a "man's disease," diabetes is now affecting Indian women at increasingly younger ages. Busy routines, chronic stress, irregular meals, and hormonal transitions from PCOS to menopause have blurred

traditional boundaries of risk. Recent national data reflect this shift. According to the ICMR-INDIAB study (2023), nearly 11.4% of Indian adults live with diabetes, and prevalence among women is rapidly catching up with that of men.

Alarmingly, a significant proportion of women with a normal BMI still show abdominal obesity and insulin resistance, the hallmark of being metabolically unhealthy, non-obese (MUNO). This "invisible fat," stored around the waist and

internal organs, drives insulin resistance and significantly increases cardiovascular risk, even when the weighing scale appears normal. Why It's a Double Burden For Indian women, biological factors and sociocultural pressures often collide. Hormonal influences such as pregnancy, PCOS, and menopause can make blood sugar regulation more difficult. At the same time, family

responsibilities, limited time for exercise, and cultural expectations frequently push self-care to the background. Many women prioritise household needs and delay medical attention until symptoms become severe. "Women are usually the caregivers, but they must also learn to care for themselves," says Dr Jitendra Tekchandani, Consultant Diabetologist, G2 Clinics, Ulhasnagar, Maharashtra. What the Numbers

Show •A recent study supported by USV Private Limited, a leading healthcare organisation empowering India's fight against diabetes and heart disease highlights a critical gap between awareness and action.

Findings from the Take the Power Diabetes Awareness Survey reveal: 8 in 10 women said they know diabetes is a serious health risk. Fewer than one-third had undergone a preventive blood sugar test in the past year. Many reported noticing early warning signs, fatigue, excessive thirst, or unexplained weight gain yet postponed visiting a doctor.

Awareness exists. Action lags behind. The Ripple Effect When a woman's health is compromised, the impact extends far beyond her own body. Women often influence what the family eats, how active the household is, and how health decisions are made. Diabetes

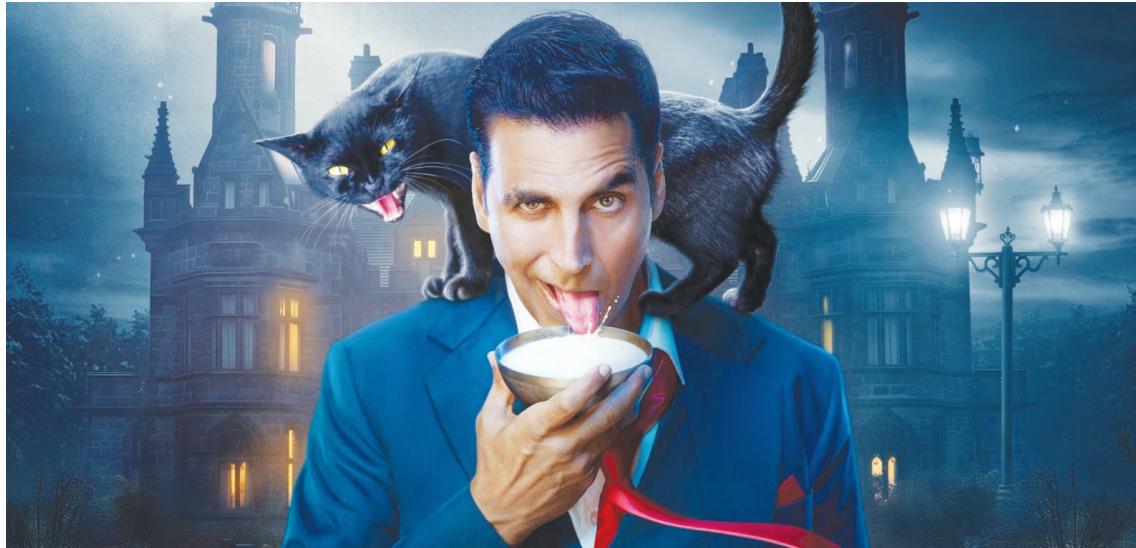
quietly disrupts the well-being of the entire family. Breaking the Cycle: Small Steps, Big Wins The good news is that type 2 diabetes is largely preventable. Every woman can take charge through simple, sustainable steps: Know your numbers: Check blood sugar, waist circumference, and waist-to-hip ratio regularly.

Move daily: Walk, dance, cycle, or stretch for at least 30 minutes a day. Eat mindfully: Choose more vegetables, protein, and whole grains; limit sweets and fried foods. Manage stress and sleep:

Rest plays a vital role in hormonal and blood sugar balance. Stay vigilant after PCOS or gestational diabetes: Both significantly increase long-term diabetes risk. Families and workplaces can support women by encouraging health prioritisation and making space for fitness, rest, and nutritious meals.

# Akshay Kumar-Priyadarshan's Horror Comedy Bhooth Bangla To Release On May 15, 2026

One of the most eagerly awaited horror comedies in recent times, Bhooth Bangla has finally locked its theatrical release date. Starring Akshay Kumar and directed by Priyadarshan, the film is officially set to arrive in cinemas on May 15, 2026, much to the delight of fans who have been eagerly tracking updates since the project was announced. The film marks the much-anticipated reunion of Akshay Kumar and Priyadarshan after 14 years, a collaboration that has previously delivered several cult comedy hits. Ever since the first poster of Bhooth Bangla was unveiled, followed by an intriguing motion poster, excitement around the project has steadily grown. The announcement of the release date has now taken the buzz to an all-time high. Makers' announcement has further fuelled anticipation, with fans



Social Media The makers confirmed the release date by sharing the official poster on social media, along with a caption that read, "Bangle se ek khabar aayi hai! The doors open on 15th May 2026. See you in cinemas

thrilled to see the master of horror comedy, Priyadarshan, team up once again with Akshay Kumar, an actor synonymous with the genre. Known for blending slapstick humour with eerie setups, the duo is expected to recreate the magic that audiences have been craving for years. What makes Bhooth Bangla even

more exciting is its impressive ensemble cast. Alongside Akshay Kumar, the film features Tabu, Paresh Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, Jisshu Sengupta, Asrani, and Wamiqa Gabbi. The reunion of several actors who have previously been part of iconic Priyadarshan comedies has already sparked nostalgia among fans. The film

has been shot across multiple locations including Rajasthan, Jaipur, and Hyderabad, adding scale and visual richness to the narrative. With such a formidable cast coming together under Priyadarshan's direction, expectations are sky-high for a laughter-filled, spooky entertainer. Directed by Priyadarshan, Bhooth Bangla is produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ektaa R Kapoor, and Akshay Kumar under his banner Cape of Good Films.

The project is co-produced by Faara Sheikh and Vedant Baali and backed by Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms. The story is written by Akash A Kaushik, while the screenplay has been penned by Rohan Shankar, Abilash Nair, and Priyadarshan. Dialogues are by Rohan Shankar.

## Taskaree Trailer: Emraan Hashmi Turns An Honest Officer, Fights Global Smuggling Empire



Netflix has unveiled the trailer of Taskaree: The Smuggler's Web, an upcoming thriller that thrusts viewers into a relentless battle of wits inside government customs, where concealment is craft, intel is currency and there are no second chances. Spanning key smuggling corridors across Al-Dera, Addis Ababa, Milan and Bangkok, Taskaree opens up the complex machinery of the international smuggling world- a web built on coded routes, false manifests and calculated misdirection. At its centre is a specialised customs task force at one of the busiest airports in the country, Mumbai International Airport, led by an uncompromisingly honest team of officers: Arjun Meena (Emraan Hashmi), Mitali Kamath

(Amruta Khanvilkar), Ravinder Gujjar (Nandish Singh Sandhu), and Prakash Kumar (Anurag Sinha). These officers rely on instinct as much as intelligence, knowing one missed detail can undo weeks of surveillance. Standing in their way is the notorious kingpin, Bada Chaudhary (Sharad Kelkar), and his powerful syndicate, which operates through layers of deceit and global routes designed to stay off the radar. A nail-biting suspense from the house of Neeraj Pandey, Taskaree captures the tense world of global smuggling with every suitcase, passenger and shipment concealing secrets ripe for exposure and customs officers must stay three steps ahead in this relentless game of

deception. Talking about the show, Neeraj shared, "Customs has been a world I've always wanted to explore! The idea of stepping inside customs enforcement, a space that operates quietly, precisely and under constant pressure, drew me in. Bringing this vision to life has been incredibly exciting, especially with a cast and crew

who were completely invested from day zero and understood the rhythm and realism the story demanded. We're thrilled to collaborate once again with Netflix after a successful franchise with Khakee. What we've created together is a very distinct crime thriller, rooted in authenticity and hope we live up to the expectations of our audiences whose encouragement has always kept us going!" Emraan Hashmi also added, "The love that's been coming in since the teaser has been truly encouraging. Taskaree marks my first collaboration with Neeraj and this exceptionally talented ensemble, and it's been an incredibly rewarding

experience.

## The Pitt renewed for Season 3 ahead of Season 2 premiere on January 9

HBO Max has confirmed the renewal of its medical drama The Pitt for a third season, with the announcement coming just before the show's second season premiere scheduled for January 8 at 9pm ET. The news was shared during the Los Angeles premiere event for the second season. The Pitt, created by R. Scott Gemmill, centres on Dr Michael "Robby" Robinavitch, played by Noah Wyle, and follows a group of healthcare professionals at a Pittsburgh hospital. The ensemble cast includes Patrick Ball, Katherine LaNasa, Supriya Ganesh, Fiona Dourif, Taylor Dearden, Isa Briones, Gerran Howell, Shabana Azeez, and Sepideh Moafi. •Season 2 brings new recurring guest stars: Rusty Schwimmer, Jayne Taini, Annabelle Toomey, Lawrence Robinson,

Brittany Allen, Bonita Friedericy, Taylor Handley, Jeff Kober, Charles Baker, Irene Choi, Latitia Hollar, Lucas Iverson, and Zack Morris. Meta Golding, Luke Tennie, Christopher Thornton, and Travis Van Winkle also join. Tracy Ifeachor will not return as Dr. Heather Collins. The show is executive produced by R. Scott Gemmill, Noah Wyle, John Wells, Erin Jontow, Joe Sachs, Simran Baidwan, and Michael Hissrich, under John Wells Productions and Warner Bros. Television. Season 2 picks up ten months after the Season 1 finale, which aired on April 10. Showrunner R. Scott Gemmill hinted that the new season will take place over Fourth of July weekend during a day-long shift, featuring a variety of ER cases.

# Trump admin's new nutrition guidelines target ultra-processed foods, ease up on red meat and saturated fats

The Trump administration is taking aim at ultra-processed foods while reversing long-held U.S. government stances on red meat and saturated fats. "The Trump administration is now updating federal nutrition standards and guidelines to ensure that Americans have the most accurate, data-driven information supported by science and hard facts, not special interests or partisan ideology," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters. Leavitt said that the guidelines would impact what is served in public schools, what American servicemembers eat and what food is distributed through government programs. "Faulty dietary guidelines of the past stack the deck against healthy eating and food options for everyday American families, which has fueled the chronic disease epidemic and jacked up the health care costs of households across the country," Leavitt added. "When these guidelines are followed, Americans will be saving themselves thousands of dollars. If we want to cut health care costs in our country, we must become a healthier country... A healthier America will lead to a more affordable America." The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the new guidelines with an updated,



inverted food pyramid. The top of the pyramid, which is now the wider part of the structure, is built on meat, fats, fruits and vegetables, while whole grains are at the narrow bottom. HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has made overhauling the U.S. food supply a crucial focus of his "Make America Healthy Again" (MAHA) agenda, which is aimed at addressing chronic disease and childhood illnesses. The secretary has argued that the nation's food practices have harmed Americans and led to skyrocketing healthcare costs. "The new guidelines recognize that whole, nutrient-dense food is the most effective path to better health and lower health

care costs," Kennedy said. "Protein and healthy fats are essential, and were wrongly discouraged in prior dietary guidelines. We are ending the war on saturated fats." The HHS secretary railed against refined carbohydrates, food additives and added sugar, highlighting the health risks associated with sugar-sweetened beverages. Kennedy's main message to Americans was to "eat real food." Kennedy framed the issue as not only one about health, but also one of national security. "If a foreign adversary sought to destroy the health of our children, cripple our economy, to weaken our national security, there would

be no better strategy than to addict us to ultra-processed foods," he said. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins also joined the briefing. She praised Secretary Kennedy's work and highlighted the role that farmers would play in making America healthy again.

We are finally putting real food back at the center of the American diet. Real food that nourishes the body, restores health, fuels energy and builds strength," Rollins said. "This pivot also leans into the abundant, affordable and healthy food supply already available from America's incredible farmers and ranchers. By making milk, raising cattle, and growing wholesome

fruits, vegetables, and grains, they hold the key to solving our national health crisis." FDA Commissioner Dr. Marty Makary emphasized the harm that old guidelines did to the health of everyday Americans. He noted that protein guidelines in particular were far too low for America's children. "We have 40% of our kids now with a chronic disease. It is not their fault. This is something that is the result of bad advice from the government and a medical establishment that for decades peddled research from a flawed 1960s model," Makary said. "This is not a willpower problem for our nation's kids. This is something adults have done to kids, and we're going to fix it." Makary agreed with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz that the best way for the U.S. to reduce drug spending is for Americans to focus on diet and health with the goal of not taking medications that they do not need. The new guidance comes in stark contrast to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's report released in the final days of President Joe Biden's term, which garnered criticism over a lack of directives on ultra-processed foods. This is a developing story.

## Steaming Vs Boiling? The Healthiest Way To Cook Vegetables



Boiling and steaming are two of the most common ways to cook vegetables, but they differ significantly in nutrition, taste, and texture. Steaming generally preserves more nutrients and flavour, while boiling can soften vegetables and make them easier to digest. Let's break down the pros and cons of each method. (Image: AI-Generated)

**Nutrient Retention:** Steaming vegetables is widely considered the healthier option because it preserves more vitamins and antioxidants. Nutrients like vitamin C and beta-carotene are sensitive to heat and water, so when vegetables are boiled, they often leach into the cooking water. Steamed vegetables, on the other hand, retain their nutritional value better, making them more nutrient-dense. (Image: AI-Generated)

# Netflix offering better value: Warner Bros rejects Paramount's revised hostile bid

Paramount launched a hostile takeover bid worth USD 108.4 billion for Warner Bros. Discovery on December 8, disrupting Warner Bros' preliminary merger talks with Netflix.

The board of Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD) has unanimously rejected a revised hostile takeover bid from Paramount Skydance, reaffirming its support for a previously announced merger with Netflix, which it says offers superior value and certainty for shareholders. In a statement issued on Wednesday, Warner Bros. said its board determined that Paramount's amended tender offer, submitted in December 2025, does not qualify as a "Superior Proposal" under the terms of WBD's merger agreement with Netflix. The board urged shareholders to reject Paramount's offer and

continue backing the Netflix transaction announced in early December. "As you know, at the end of last year, your Board of Directors concluded its process to maximize shareholder value by entering into our merger agreement with Netflix. Since then, Paramount Skydance ("PSKY"), a bidder in that process, has commenced a hostile tender offer to acquire WBD, which it recently amended on December 22, 2025," it said in a letter to shareholders. Paramount launched a hostile takeover bid worth USD 108.4 billion for Warner Bros. Discovery on December 8, disrupting Warner Bros' preliminary merger talks with Netflix. The



move was aimed at creating a major media powerhouse capable of competing with top global streaming platforms. The bid followed weeks of intense negotiations involving Netflix, Paramount, and shareholders

particularly given the insufficient value it would provide, the lack of certainty in PSKY's ability to complete the offer and the risks and costs borne by WBD involving Netflix, Paramount, and shareholders should PSKY fail to complete the offer," the board further added in the letter. It expressed serious concerns about Paramount's plan to finance the acquisition largely through debt. According to WBD, Paramount, which is significantly smaller than Warner Bros. Discovery, would

leave shareholders exposed to serious financial consequences if the deal fails to close, given the scale of debt involved and the complexity of the financing. Warner Bros. Discovery advised shareholders to review its detailed regulatory filing outlining the reasons for rejecting Paramount's offer.

The company said it remains fully committed to completing the Netflix merger, which it believes represents the best outcome for shareholders in terms of value, certainty, and long-term strategic benefits.

## SFIO files complaint against Mehul Choksi, Chanda Kochhar in bank fraud case

The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs began in February 2018, has involved questioning serving and former officials of major lenders, including ICICI Bank and PNB, over suspected collusion with Choksi. According to findings from a parallel probe by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Choksi and his associates, allegedly in collusion with certain PNB officials, fraudulently obtained Letters of Undertaking and Foreign Letters of Credit, causing a wrongful loss of Rs 6,097.63 crore to PNB. Choksi had also defaulted on a loan taken from ICICI Bank. Choksi was arrested in Belgium on April 11 last year following an extradition request from India and has since been lodged in a prison in Antwerp. Last month, Belgium's



highest court rejected his claim that extradition to India would subject him to torture, inhuman treatment, or harsh prison conditions. The Court of Cassation upheld a lower court's

# Glow Up Like Janhvi Kapoor, Priyanka Chopra & Ananya Panday: Wedding Makeup Looks To Try



The wedding season is a time of joy, celebration, and plenty of planning, including perfecting your makeup look. While experimenting with makeup can be fun, it can also feel overwhelming. The key is finding the perfect balance where your makeup feels festive without being too subtle or overly dramatic. And let's be honest, when in doubt, we all turn to celebrity looks for some solid inspiration. From soft glam to full-on traditional elegance, several celeb wedding looks recently took the internet by storm. They

prove that the right makeup does not just enhance your natural features, it pulls your entire look together, from your outfit and jewellery to your overall vibe. So, if you want to stay stylish and cohesive this wedding season, these celeb-inspired makeup tips have you covered.

## Celebrity Glam Makeup Looks You Need To Take Notes From

### 1. Janhvi Kapoor

Janhvi Kapoor's traditional looks never miss the mark. While her outfits are always stunning, it is her makeup that

beautifully enhances her features. Back in November, she shared a shimmery traditional look where the outfit did most of the talking, making her balanced makeup stand out even more. Interestingly, Janhvi revealed that she did her own makeup. Speaking to HT Lifestyle, makeup artist and Anastasia Beverly Hills head trainer, Monika Khullar, shared that the key to Janhvi's look lies in wispy lashes, metallic eyeshadows, and soft highlights on the high points of the face. As far as the lip look is

concerned, ombre lips would do wonders if one wants to recreate the actress's look.

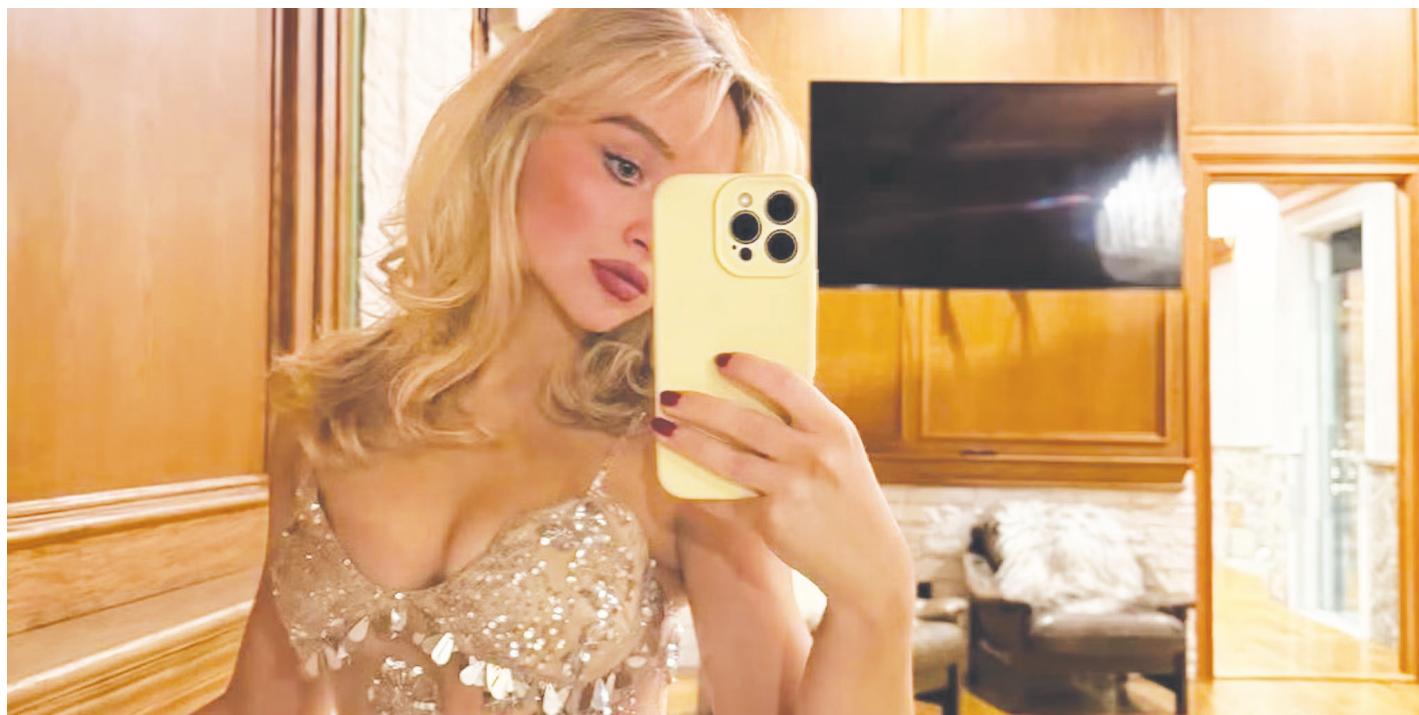
### 2. Priyanka Chopra

Of course, we can't leave out our very own Desi girl from a list of traditional makeup looks to try! Priyanka recently looked ethereal in a white lehenga-saree, but it was her soft, dewy makeup that stole the spotlight. What stood out most was her sharp yet natural-looking brows, a difficult balance to achieve. Makeup artist Monika suggests gently shaping and filling the brows with soft strokes, followed by a tinted brow gel to keep them natural. For the eyes, she recommends using neutral shades with a light touch of gloss for a dreamy finish.

### 3. Ananya Panday

Ananya Panday's orange saree was a clear hit among fashion enthusiasts, and while the outfit itself was stunning, her makeup was equally on point. For those looking to recreate Ananya's look, makeup artist Monika suggests going for softly contoured eyes, an airbrushed base, along with subtle hints of pink on the lips and cheeks. This soft glam makeup trend beautifully balances heavy wedding outfits, adding just the right amount of freshness and elegance without overpowering the look.

## Sabrina Carpenter Shows Off Two Sheer Naked Dress Looks In New Year Recap



If there's one thing Sabrina Carpenter isn't leaving behind in 2026, it's her commitment to fashion that turns heads and sparks conversation. While most stars opted for pared-back party looks to ring in the new year, the pop sensation treated New Year's week like a runway –

complete with multiple outfit changes and a final reveal that felt distinctly her: an illusion naked dress that blurred the line between daring and deliberate. Her latest Instagram carousel didn't just recap the celebrations. It set the tone for the year ahead.

### Vintage Mackie, Modern Energy

sharp diagonal cut-outs that felt remarkably current. Sourced by her stylist, Jared Ellner, the archival piece underscored Sabrina's growing reputation as a celebrity who doesn't just wear fashion, she curates it. Minimal accessories, delicate hoops, and classic pumps kept the focus firmly on the craftsmanship, allowing the dress to shine without distraction. But it was her final look that dominated timelines. Sabrina revealed her most daring mirror moment yet in Mirror Palais' Diamond Dust Lady Dress – a tea-length illusion slip built on transparent tulle. Strategic floral beadwork and teardrop embellishments traced the body like constellations, while a plunging bra structure provided the only real opacity. The result was provocative without being chaotic, theatrical without tipping into excess. In true Sabrina style, the look felt intentional – styled not for shock, but for impact. One thing is clear: Sabrina Carpenter is entering 2026 with

Sabrina Carpenter's style edit opened with a nod to fashion history. She slipped into a vintage Bob Mackie turtleneck mini, continues her Bob Mackie streak on the a gold, fringed number that originally red carpet or leans deeper into illusion debuted in the 1990s. Equal parts disco dressing remains to be seen. But if this is glamour and sculptural precision, the her opening act, the year ahead promises dress featured metallic movement and to be anything but subtle.

# Hacks Stars Spoof Timothee Chalamet And Kylie Jenner's Bold Orange Outfits At Critics Choice

When a memo reads bold and slaying, you must believe Kylie Jenner is making a statement and turning heads. For the LA premiere of Timothee Chalamet's *Marty Supreme* on December 8, 2025, the couple grabbed all the eyeballs in bold and matching orange outfits. From the couple pairing orange outfits with matching footwear to Kylie painting her nails in the same hue, they exuded the 'orange is the new black' vibe and owned the red carpet. But the story does not end here. Hacks Stars Spoof Timothee Chalamet And Kylie Jenner's Bold Orange Outfits Speaking to The Hollywood Reporter, the duo opened up about how they pulled off Timothee Chalamet and Kylie Jenner's iconic look. The co-stars joked about not having time to shop and decide the outfits for the evening; hence, they borrowed theirs from the couple. owns said, "We've been shooting season five of *Hacks* and haven't had a lot of time to shop or pull, so we just borrowed from friends." My really close friend - I'm not going to name any names - but she let me borrow this dress. Fits



like a glove," joked Stalter. It did off Chalamet and Jenner's look, featuring a cross at the centre. fit really well. That was the nice but also accessorised their outfits. However, it remains unclear if thing, when you have friends who similarly. Downs wore a black Timothee and Kylie have are the same size, it makes life sling shaped like a ping pong bat, witnessed Paul and Meg paying easier," she added, laughing. Downs and Stalter completed the look homage to their iconic look. The Downs and Stalter not only pulled with a studded necklace, couple skipped the CCA carpet.

## An Indian jewellery brand from Hyderabad makes a cameo on Emily in Paris

**Binged *Emily in Paris* over the weekend? Here's something you may have missed: an Indian jewellery brand also featured on the show.**

Even as the internet remains divided over the storyline of *Emily in Paris* season 5, with Mindy and Alfie's romance becoming the season's biggest talking point, it's safe to say the show continues to have viewers hooked. From complex work projects and messy love lives to postcard-worthy backdrops and fashion moments designed to impress style enthusiasts, the series truly offers something for everyone. Emily's wardrobe also undergoes a noticeable transformation between the first and second halves of the season, reflecting the character, played by Lily Collins, and her evolving journey. While the show is packed with appearances by luxury fashion houses, what many may have missed is the presence of an Indian jewellery designer on screen. Yes, that happened. Collins is seen wearing two statement hoop designs, Amalaka hoops and Karnika hoops, by Ridhi Asrani's Hyderabad-based jewellery brand. Styled by Marilyn Fitoussi, the jewellery fits naturally into the show's ever-changing fashion



aesthetic. According to India Today, Asrani shares that having her pieces featured on the show felt like a moment of quiet alignment, an idea that had been quietly building over time, finally coming into focus. "More than the scale of the platform, it was about the pop culture influence it holds. Emily in Paris represents modern femininity

and self-expression at its fullest, and it felt good to see your designs speak for themselves and find resonance." The Amalaka hoops reimagine the classic hoop with a bold yet feminine design that easily turns heads. Accented with marquise-shaped citrine crystals along the edges and finished with a pair of pearls at each junction, the

earrings strike the perfect balance between statement and elegance. Collins styled the hoops with a structured bustier top and a fluid A-line skirt, both featuring a bold polka dot print by Danish brand Stine Goya. Meanwhile, the Karnika hoops are a blend of a huggie and a larger hoop. Encrusted with

champagne-coloured crystals

and detailed with granulation and floral carvings, they add flair to an otherwise classic hoop style. These hoops were styled with a vibrant jacket and colourful pants, paired with a bralette top for balance. Interestingly, this isn't the first international outing for Asrani's brand. Her designs, including the Dwar hoops and Amalaka hoops, have featured in two different seasons of *And Just Like That*. Beyond Indian celebrities, her creations have also been spotted on global names like Lilly Singh. Talking about international recognition, Asrani tells us, "Support from Indian talent has been affirming. International placements position the work within a global visual context."

From *And Just Like That* to *Emily in Paris*, the progression has been organic, shaped by trust in the design language. International markets are always fun to explore and cater to." Further, talking about Indian designers in the global scene, she feels that there's a noticeable shift underway.

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