



Story on Page 21

'Why Did Osama Bin Laden Feel Safe In Pakistan?'

Jaishankar's Strong Message On Terrorism, Pahalgam

Story on Page 25



S. Jaishankar India's
Minister of
External Affairs

"Let me remind you of something – there was a man named Osama bin Laden. Why did he, of all people, feel safe living for years in a Pakistani military town, right next to their equivalent of West Point?"

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, in Brussels, made a strong case against terrorism in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam and the subsequent Operation Sindoor.



Shehbaz Sharif,
Prime Minister of
Pakistan



Osama bin Laden, was
killed in Abbottabad,
Pakistan, on May 2, 2011

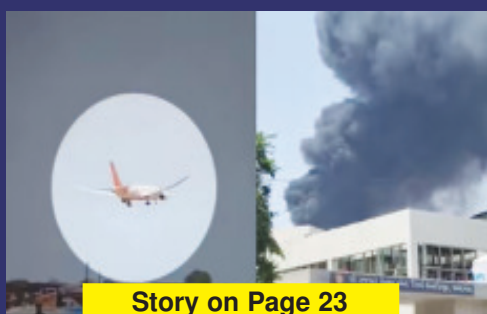
India's Poverty Decline Stuns The World

World Bank Data On India And
Pakistan Shows Massive
Contrast Over Poverty



Story on Page 24

Air India Crash: What may have gone wrong?



Story on Page 23

Trump Tariff Revenue Soars 78%. Who's paying them?



Story on Page 22

Elon Musk
says some of
his social
media posts
about Trump
'went too far'



Story on Page 26

Mumbai Auto
Driver was
making 8 Lakh
Rupees Per
Month from "US
Consulate
Locker Service"



Story on Page 23

Indian-origin professor suspended in California for supporting Gaza, sues university

(By our staff reporter)-An Indian-American professor of medicine at the University of California, Rupa Marya, was suspended for her social media posts about Israel's war in Gaza. The professor filed a lawsuit last week alleging that the varsity violated her freedom of speech by suspending her. Rupa Marya's social media posts included "expressing solidarity with the hospitals and healthcare workers that Israel was attacking in Gaza", NBC reported, citing court documents. Marya also alleged that she received rape threats for her comments on Gaza. The complaint stated that Marya "felt an obligation to speak out and did so using her X account".

Marya, identified as an expert in decolonial theory, was placed on leave in September 2024 and had her clinical privileges briefly suspended by the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) executive medical board following comments she made on X that questioned the impact of Zionism as "a supremacist, racist ideology" on healthcare, according to a report in The Guardian.

Without naming Marya directly, the



university subsequently issued a statement stating such comments were a "tired and racist conspiracy theory" that "Zionist doctors were a threat to Arab, Palestinian, South Asian, Muslim and Black patients, as well as the US healthcare system" and should be condemned, The Guardian reported.

"UCSF's January 6 statement accused Marya of promoting a "racist" and "antisemitic" "conspiracy theory".

The board called her a "possible imminent danger" and cited social media

posts, according to court documents. Her privileges were reinstated on October 15, NBC reported.

According to her attorney, Mark Kleiman, Marya was fired last month. Kleiman said she was fired "despite requesting a hearing, which she was entitled to".

RUPA MARYA RECEIVED RAPE THREATS: COURT DOCUMENTS

Firing Dr Marya doesn't only violate her

right to free speech, it threatens all of us (sic)," NBC quoted Kleiman as saying.

"We all need to urgently speak up against these kinds of attacks on our basic rights to advocate for justice, and we expect the Court will agree with us that Dr Marya's rights have been violated and must be remedied (sic)," Kleiman added. According to court documents, Marya received "rape and death threats" as well as "repeated harassment and threats" owing to her posts.

In November 2023, the dean of UCSF's School of Medicine informed Marya that her social media activity would be reviewed to determine if it breached university policies.

According to the court documents, "Her posts take aim at state policy and supremacist political ideologies, not at any religious or ethnic group."

The varsity's spokesperson declined to comment on the lawsuit, citing privacy laws. Marya completed her residency in internal medicine at the University of California at San Francisco in 2007, was subsequently offered employment and joined the faculty.

Not a right to visit US: Embassy's message amid Indian student handcuffing row



(By our staff reporter)-Following the handcuffing and deportation of an Indian student from Newark Airport in the United States, the US embassy in India has said that although the country continues to welcome legitimate travellers, they won't tolerate illegal entry, abuse of visas or violation of US law. It also said that there is no right to visit the United States. "The United States continues to welcome legitimate travelers to our country. However, there is no right to visit the United States. We cannot and will not tolerate illegal entry, abuse of visas, or the violation of U.S. law," wrote the US Embassy in India on X. The issue sparked off after a video of the handcuffing incident was shared on social media by a NRI who wrote that the student was treated

like a criminal by the officials. "I witnessed a young Indian student being deported from Newark Airport last night—handcuffed, crying, treated like a criminal. He came chasing dreams, not causing harm. As an NRI, I felt helpless and heartbroken. This is a human tragedy," he wrote on X.

According to social media user Kunal Jain, a social entrepreneur, the student was speaking in Haryanvi, insisting that he wasn't crazy, but the authorities were trying to make him look that way. "These children get their visas and get on a flight in the morning. For some reason, they are unable to explain the reason for their visit to the immigration authorities and are sent back in the evening flight tied up like criminals. Every day 3-4 such cases are happening.

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Deportee to India breaks free at Heathrow runway, caught and pinned down

A probe has been launched after an immigration detainee, due for deportation to India, escaped custody and ran across the tarmac of London's Heathrow Airport. A video of the incident surfaced on the internet. The man was chased by the airport security before being detained by the police. He was made to reboard his onward flight.

(By our staff reporter)- A probe has been launched after an immigration detainee scheduled for deportation from the UK to India broke free and was seen running erratically across the tarmac at Heathrow Airport in London. The man had escaped prior to boarding a commercial flight which was due to depart for India, according a report in the UK-based Daily Mail.

A video of the incident has surfaced on the internet, in which the man is seen running across the Heathrow tarmac, chased by a few airport staff. Reports stated the commotion went on for several minutes before the man was finally caught by security staff.

The incident came to light because it was captured by a plane spotter and posted on the YouTube channel, Big Jet



TV, The Guardian reported. The immigration detainee sprinted across the runway at Terminal 2 on Sunday.

A spokesperson for Mitie, which holds a Home Office contract for removing people from the UK, told the Guardian: "An investigation into the incident is underway. The individual was quickly

apprehended, reboarded the flight, and was handed over to the relevant authorities on landing".

The individual recording the event is heard questioning, "What's happening here? Why are there people running across the tarmac?"

After the detainee was stopped, the narrator added,

"What the hell was that all about? They are stopping aircraft taxiing as well".

In the video, a van can be seen pursuing him shortly after, and staff wearing high-visibility jackets manage to catch him. Soon after, a police van arrives to escort him away.

According to a report in The Daily Mail, the man was pinned to the ground as he was arrested by the police.

A Heathrow Airport spokesperson said there were no delays to flights and the incident was quickly resolved.

Sources from the Metropolitan Police confirmed their involvement in apprehending

the man, after which the airport returned to normal operations, according to the report in The Guardian.

AVIATION EXPERT RAISED SAFETY CONCERN ON HEATHROW AIRPORT

VIDEO

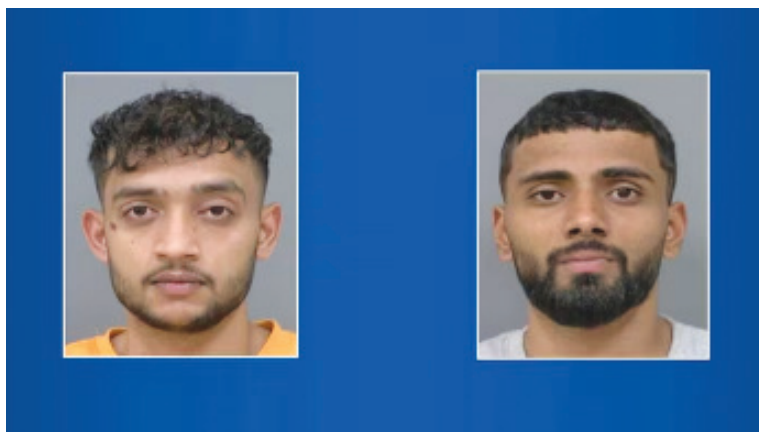
John Van Hoogstraten, aviation expert at Straten Consulting Services Ltd, explained that the airport's movement area includes the entire airside, where all activity, wildlife or people, must be monitored.

"The minute an unaccounted person is airside there's no protection about what happens next in operations. In these cases, aircraft have to cease operations. They will be told to stop immediately. Safety is paramount," The Guardian quoted Hoogstraten as saying.

"A jet blast is sufficient to severely injure, if not kill, a person. The reaction of a pilot trying to land a plane and seeing a person try to cross a runway can be devastating," he added.

Two Indian-origin men held for Sikh businessman's murder in Canada

Two 21-year-old Indian-origin men were arrested for their alleged involvement in the killing of an Indo-Canadian businessman in Mississauga last month. Harjeet Dhadda was shot dead amid concerns about rising extortion and violence targeting South Asian entrepreneurs in Canada.



(By our staff reporter)-Two 21-year-old Indian-origin men were arrested in connection with the murder of a 51-year-old Indo-Canadian businessman, Harjeet Dhadda, who was shot multiple times in a parking area in Mississauga, Ontario, on May 14. Dhadda, originally from Uttarakhand, had received multiple extortion threats, and his daughter blamed authorities for failing to prevent his killing.

Peel Regional Police (PRP) announced the arrests of two men, Aman and Digvijay, from Delta, British Columbia.

The Sikh businessman, originally from Uttarakhand, operated a trucking safety and insurance consultancy in Brampton, Ontario.

He had received multiple threats from extortionists and had reported the matter to the police.

Holding the Canadian government responsible for "failing to curb extortion and targeted violence", his daughter, Gurlin Dhadda, said that the community is outraged. "Why are innocent people left defenceless while the threats grow louder? When the authorities fail to protect us, what options do we have?" she said in a statement issued a day after her father's murder.

At the time of the murder, the police had called the incident "a targeted shooting".

On May 14, Dhadda, was approached by the suspect and shot multiple times while in a parking area near Tranmere Drive and Telford Way in Mississauga. The victim later succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital.

The suspects fled in a stolen vehicle, which was recovered

shortly after the incident, the police said in a statement issued on Tuesday.

Following an intensive probe, two suspects were identified and tracked to Delta, British Columbia. On May 28, PRP, with assistance from officers from the Delta Police Department, Abbotsford Police, Surrey Police, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, located and arrested the accused, the police said in the statement.

The accused appeared before a justice in Surrey, British Columbia, before being turned over to homicide detectives to be transported back to Ontario, to face charges of first-degree murder. Both accused persons attended a bail hearing on June 1 at the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton, the PRP said in the

statement.

PERSEVERANCE AND PARTNERSHIP LEAD TO ARRESTS

PRP head Nishan Duraipappah said the police teams remained focused and relentless throughout the investigation.

"This arrest is a testament to the unwavering perseverance and diligence of our homicide investigators. The strong collaboration with policing partners allows this family to take the next step toward justice for the loss of their loved one," the statement quoted PRP chief as saying.

"Despite the suspects' efforts to evade capture, our teams remained focused and relentless. This outcome sends a clear message — no matter how far you run, our teams will find you," Duraipappah added.

"Your Wife Is Indian":

Internet Slams US Politician Over Anti-Migration Comments Many users were quick to point out that Mr. Gill is married to Danielle D'Souza, daughter of prominent conservative commentator Dinesh D'Souza, who is of Indian descent.



(By Our Staff Reporter)- Representative Brandon Gill, a Republican serving Texas's 26th Congressional District, has sparked widespread controversy following a viral social media post where he criticised mass migration. The post, which has drawn significant backlash from users across platforms, featured a side-by-side comparison of California in the 1960s versus the present day, with the implication that immigration is responsible for what Mr Gill perceives as the state's decline. "California in 1960 vs California today. Mass migration has made

America unrecognisable," Mr Gill wrote on X while sharing two images. The first image depicted a serene 1960s beach scene with blonde-haired sunbathers, while another showed a dramatic moment from the LA riots, with a man waving a Mexican flag amidst flames. However, many users were quick to point out that Mr Gill is married to Danielle D'Souza, daughter of prominent conservative commentator Dinesh D'Souza, who is of Indian descent. Social media users pointed out this apparent contradiction, sharing family photos to drive the point

home.

One user wrote, "This is hella racist... Notice how you don't say illegal immigration or illegal migrants, you said 'mass migration', legal and illegal. See, this is why no likes y'all. Evil from the beginning, current events are just talking points with sprinkles of truth for the malice in you."

Another commented, "Your wife is first generation American and your father-in-law is an immigrant from India (and a convicted felon for his actions in America)."

Who is Danielle D'Souza Gill?

Danielle D'Souza Gill is an American author, commentator,

and conservative activist, born in 1995. She is the daughter of conservative political commentator Dinesh D'Souza and Dixie Brubaker. A Dartmouth College graduate, she has written books like 'YGod: An Intelligent Discussion on the Relevance of Faith' and 'The Choice: The Abortion Divide in America'.

She has been involved with the Women for Trump coalition and has appeared on networks like Fox News and Newsmax. Married to U.S. Congressman Brandon Gill since 2017, they have a daughter, Marigold, and live in Flower Mound, Texas.

Red alert for heatwave in Delhi for next 3 days, then a rain breather

Earlier on Monday, the weather department had upgraded its yellow alert to an orange alert for a heat wave across Delhi. Now, on Tuesday, a red alert has been issued as temperatures continue to rise.



(By our staff reporter)-After Monday's orange alert, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday issued a red alert for a heat wave in Delhi over the next three days as temperatures touch nearly 45 degrees Celsius in several places across the national capital.

On Monday, several parts of Delhi

recorded nearly 45 degrees for the second consecutive time this month.

According to official readings, Safdarjung registered 43.4 degrees Celsius, Palam recorded 44.3 degrees, Lodi Road saw 43.3 degrees, Ridge stood at 44.9 degrees, and Aya Nagar experienced the highest temperature at 45.3 degrees Celsius. These figures

mark an increase of 1 to 2 degrees compared to Sunday's temperatures. IMD had earlier forecast that temperatures in Delhi would hover in the 44-45 degrees Celsius category till Thursday, adding that evenings would offer little relief from the scorching heat. The heat wave will be followed by storms and rain over the weekend, according to information received from the weather department.

In Uttar Pradesh, a severe heat wave scorched 19 districts of the state on Monday, with Kanpur, Agra and Jhansi being the hottest. In these areas, the temperatures rose to nearly 46 degrees while the minimum temperature recorded was 29.4 degrees Celsius.

Along with the temperatures, humidity is also on the rise in both Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. On Monday, the maximum temperature was 2.3 degrees more than normal in UP.

According to the Meteorological Department, the heat will make people

more miserable for the next two days. The south-western wind coming through the hot sandy areas is increasing the temperature in the plains. In the next two days, the increase in day and night temperatures may continue.

"Temperatures in Delhi may cross 45 degrees on Tuesday and Wednesday and lead to heat wave conditions in Delhi," said IMD scientist Akhil Srivastava to news agency ANI.

Talking about the weather conditions in other parts of North India, he said that severe heat wave conditions is being observed in West Rajasthan and a red alert has been issued for the area.

Mercury levels also continued to rise in the Jammu region, with Samba and Jammu city recording a high of 43.9 and 42.7 degrees Celsius respectively on Sunday. The region has been reeling from an extreme heatwave for the past three days, with temperatures consistently rising above the 40-degree Celsius mark.

Will strike deep into Pak if provoked by terror attacks: Jaishankar's big warning

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is travelling to Europe a month after India launched Operation Sindoor in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, warned retribution against terror outfits.

(News Agencies)- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday warned that India would strike deep inside Pakistan if provoked with terror attacks. Accusing Pakistan of harbouring and training terrorists, Jaishankar said India would not tolerate the terror attacks, and there would be retribution.

Jaishankar, who is in Brussels as part of his week-long trip to Europe, reaffirmed India's policy of zero-tolerance against terrorism.

"We are not going to live with it. So our message to them is that if you continue to do the kind of barbaric acts which they did in April, then there is going to be retribution, and that retribution will be against the terrorist organisations and the terrorist leadership," Jaishankar told Politico on Monday.

"We don't care where they are. If they are deep in Pakistan, we will go deep into Pakistan," he added.

Tensions between India and Pakistan, the two nuclear-armed neighbours, escalated following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, which claimed 26 lives. India



responded by carrying out precision strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7.

On-ground hostilities, which lasted four days, concluded on May 10 after talks between the directors general of military operations from both sides led to an understanding to cease military actions. Despite the cessation of recent hostilities, Jaishankar warned that the underlying

issues remain unaddressed. He characterised Pakistan as "a country very steeped in its use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy. That is the whole issue." When questioned if the conditions that led to last month's outbreak of conflict were still present, he responded, "If you call the commitment to terrorism a source of tension, absolutely, it is." Regarding military losses, Jaishankar indicated that the relevant

authorities would address the matter at an appropriate time. He emphasised that India's fighter aircraft and missiles inflicted "far more extensive damage" on the Pakistani Air Force than vice versa, ultimately compelling Pakistan to seek peace.

"As far I'm concerned, how effective the Rafale was or frankly, how effective other systems were — to me the proof of the pudding are the destroyed and disabled airfields on the Pakistani side," Jaishankar said. He further asserted, "The fighting stopped on the 10th for one reason and one reason only, which was that on the 10th morning, we hit these eight Pakistani, the main eight Pakistani airfields and disabled them." He pointed to publicly available images on Google showing damaged runways and hangars as evidence. During his week-long tour of Europe, Jaishankar is scheduled to hold discussions with leaders from the European Union, Belgium, and France. These talks aim to bolster bilateral ties and reaffirm India's steadfast policy of zero-tolerance against terrorism.

'Shweta Khan Closely Linked...': BJP Shares Pic Of Pornography Case Accused With TMC Leaders



(By our staff reporter) Bengal Minister Arup Roy, Union Minister and West Bengal BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar on Tuesday alleged that the accused in the case related to torture and sexual assault of a woman in captivity in Howrah is linked to the ruling Trinamool Congress.

Majumdar shared the pictures of one of the two accused, Shweta Khan, with TMC leader Rajib Banerjee and West

Bengal Minister Arup Roy, Union Minister and West Bengal BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar on Tuesday alleged that the accused in the case related to torture and sexual assault of a woman in captivity in Howrah is linked to the ruling Trinamool Congress.

Majumdar shared the pictures of one of the two accused, Shweta Khan, with TMC leader Rajib Banerjee and West

and do the job of a bar dancer. The mother-son, identified as Shweta Khan and Arian Khan, have been absconding since the matter came to light. The victim is hospitalised in a critical condition and is battling for her life.

BJP Lashes Out At TMC

Majumdar slammed the TMC over the incident, flagging the absence of law and order and questioned the silence of

"feminists" in the Mamata Banerjee-led party.

"She's battling for her life. Meanwhile, Aryan & Shweta Khan are absconding. And what is @WBPOLICE doing? Busy shielding Wazahat Khan. But Silent on Nandini's case! Where are the so-called feminists of Trinamool now? Where are the candle marches? Why is Bengal's administration criminally silent on this barbarity? Because the Home Minister of Bengal is @MamataOfficial — and she has a long history of shielding such elements," the Bengal BJP chief posted on X. He further shared the pictures of Shweta Khan with two TMC leaders and alleged a "link" between them.

"In this case, one of the prime accused, Shweta Khan, is absconding — and is closely linked to @AITCofficial leader Rajib Banerjee and West Bengal Minister Arup Roy. They have been running such a criminal racket for years, but the Howrah Police

Commissionerate — loyal and sycophantic to the Chief Minister — claims to know nothing! And now, the mother and son are on the run, while the police remain completely incapable of catching them. Shame," he added.

What Did The Police Say?

"The accused woman and her son are absconding, and a search for them has been launched. We are trying to probe whether they were running any pornography film racket in the veil of running an event management agency," an officer of Howrah City Police said, news agency PTI reported. Sources in the police said that the accused woman, along with her son, was also running a film production house where "soft pornographic reels" were shot. "Initial probe has revealed that they used to lure young girls looking for employment under the pretext of a good salary and then force them to take part in films with pornographic content," the officer said.

Animal rights group Peta wants Telangana lab closed over cruelty allegations

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) India demanded that an animal testing facility in Telangana be closed, citing welfare violations. The group obtained video evidence of alleged abuse between 2021 and 2023.

(By our staff reporter) Animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) India has urged the central government to permanently shut down a registered animal testing facility in Telangana, citing chronic and grave violations of animal welfare laws.

In a letter addressed to Abhijit Mitra, Chairman of the Committee for the Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CCSEA), Peta India said it had obtained video footage, photos, and insider testimonies from former employees documenting the alleged abuse at the Mahabubnagar-based facility between 2021 and 2023.

The group urged the CCSEA to revoke the Palamur Biosciences Pvt Ltd registration and



rehabilitate all surviving animals. News agency PTI reached out to Palamur Biosciences for a reaction but did not receive a response.

In the letter, Peta India claimed the company kept nearly 1,500 beagles in a space designed for only 800, bred them far beyond recommended limits, and failed

to provide medical care even in cases of serious injuries and infections. The animal rights group alleged widespread noncompliance with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and CCSEA guidelines. Dogs were allegedly injected with test substances that caused abscesses, ulcers, and severe pain, with many left untreated. Some dogs

vomited large amounts of blood before dying, the letter said, citing whistleblowers. It also accused staff of rough handling, including kicking animals and slamming cage doors on their limbs, as seen on CCTV. The letter raised concerns about the company's treatment of minipigs and monkeys. It alleged that piglets born from an unlicensed minipig breeding were killed using painful intracardiac injections without sedation. Monkeys reportedly captured illegally from Rajasthan were kept in plastic bags during transport, and two tested positive for monkeypox. Despite the public health risk, the company allegedly proceeded with testing on the remaining animals. "These actions not only flout Indian animal welfare regulations but also pose

biosecurity and ethical risks," said Dr Anjana Aggarwal, PETA India's Scientist and Research Policy Advisor, who signed the letter. The company's practices are entirely out of step with global developments, such as the U.S. government's recent decision to phase out animal testing, the letter said. Citing recent announcements by the U.S. FDA and NIH promoting human-relevant alternatives to animal experiments, PETA India urged Indian authorities to take a similar path and start by ensuring the release of all animals from Palamur Biosciences to loving homes or recognised sanctuaries. PETA India offered to work with NGOs to assist with the placement and care of the animals. The CCSEA operates under the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

High Court ruling awaited for granting CID custody of accused in stampede case



"What is the urgency to take custody so immediately?" asked advocate Sandesh Chowta in the magistrate court.

The Magistrate's Court deferred the proceedings till the High Court decided on the matter regarding custody.

The judge also questioned the CID's urgency in the matter. "The petition questioning the arrest is still pending. What's the urgency for custody?" he asked

Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Jagadeesh, who responded, "Custody is required for investigation purposes."

The judge further remarked, "What can be done in just one day? Why this hurry?"

To this, the ASP stated that he needed to consult with the Advocate General (AG). Following discussions with the AG, the ASP requested a short adjournment from the High Court, which subsequently deferred the hearing for a while. During this time, the accused and CID officials waited outside the Magistrate's Court.

(News Agency)- The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Tuesday presented four individuals before the local magistrate court in connection with the stampede incident outside M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru which claimed 11 lives and left several others injured.

The accused — Nikhil Sosale, the marketing head of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB); three executives from DNA Entertainment Networks Pvt Ltd, Sunil Mathew, director and vice-president; Kiran Kumar, manager; and Shamanth SP, its decision.

ticketing official — were produced before the 1st Additional Sessions Judge Magistrate Court, as the CID sought nine days of custody for further investigation.

However, lawyers representing the four objected to the CID's request and filed a plea before the Karnataka High Court seeking a halt to extension. Advocate Sandesh Chowta, who represented Sosale in the High Court earlier, urged that they not be handed over to the CID until the High Court bench, led by Justice Krishna Kumar, delivered its decision.

Two ex-journalists arrested in Rs 65 crore extortion racket, cash in lakhs seized



(News Agency)-Noida police have arrested two individuals, including a former female anchor, in connection with a Rs 65-crore blackmailing racket on Tuesday.

The accused have been identified as Shazia Nisar and Adarsh Jha. They are accused of threatening officials of a private news channel and demanding a substantial sum of money through blackmail, leveraging false sexual harassment allegations.

During preliminary interrogation, it was revealed that Shazia Nisar had previously been employed as an anchor at a private news channel. Meanwhile, Adarsh Jha

worked as an anchor in the digital department of a separate media organisation.

According to the complaint filed with the police, the accused initially demanded Rs 5 crore, which they later escalated to Rs 65 crore. The police have obtained audio and video recordings of the threats made by the accused.

Following the complaint, Noida Sector-58 police initiated an investigation and subsequently arrested both Shazia Nisar and Adarsh Jha. A search operation was conducted at Shazia Nisar's residence, prior to the arrests, in which the police recovered Rs 34.50 lakh in cash.

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Russia-India On Shaky Grounds? Why India Needs To Become Truly Independent

Russia is one of India's longest-serving partners. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union signed a treaty of Friendship with India, which ultimately became the foundation of the relationship between both countries. After decades of trade and cultural exchange, a sense of camaraderie has developed between the citizens of both nations.

However, Russia's recent actions have raised eyebrows. First of which is the acknowledgement that US President Donald Trump played a personal and pivotal role in negotiating a ceasefire between India and Pakistan, a claim that India has vehemently denied. The second action is a bit more complex and is rolled up in history, international relations and regional tensions. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, now twice in a matter of weeks, has indicated that Russia is 'genuinely' interested in reviving the RIC (Russia-India-China) under the Troika format.

A Disputed Peacemaker and Eroding Trust

The Kremlin's public endorsement of Trump's assertion that he personally brokered a ceasefire between India and Pakistan following Operation Sindoor has landed a discordant note in New Delhi. Russian President Vladimir Putin's aide, Yury Ushakov, stated that the India-Pakistan conflict was resolved through Trump's "personal involvement", a claim repeatedly echoed by Trump himself, who even suggested he averted a nuclear disaster by leveraging US trade access as a bargaining tool.

India, however, has consistently and vehemently denied any third-party mediation. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar firmly rejected these claims, clarifying that the cessation of hostilities on 10 May occurred through direct communication via a hotline, initiated by the Pakistani army.

Similarly, Shashi Tharoor, leading an all-party delegation to the US, unequivocally stated that India had "never particularly wanted to ask anyone to mediate," stressing that mediation implies an equivalence between parties, which India rejects between a state fostering terrorism and a multi-party democracy exercising its right to self-defence. Russia's alignment with a narrative that undermines India's sovereignty and strategic autonomy on such a sensitive security matter casts a shadow over their long-standing partnership. Adding to it, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has also cancelled his planned trip to Russia.

Russia's Persistent Call Reviving a Dormant Troika

Against this backdrop, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's repeated calls for

the revival of the Russia-India-China (RIC) troika, citing significantly eased tensions between New Delhi and Beijing, appear left field.

The RIC format, established in 1996 to challenge US unipolarity, has been largely dormant since the deadly Galwan Valley clashes in June 2020. Russia perceives its revival as a step towards a multi-polar architecture and pan-Eurasian processes. Lavrov has expressed that Russia has a genuine interest in resuming ministerial-level meetings, asserting that "an understanding has been reached between India and China on how to ease the situation on the border".

Why the RIC Troika is Problematic for India

Lavrov's assessment of eased tensions, however, stands in stark contrast to India's ground reality. India's Army Chief, General Upendra Dwivedi, recently affirmed that border tensions persist, with a "degree of standoff" remaining and India maintaining its troop deployments along the Line of Actual Control, which indicates a clear lack of trust for China.

And he has been proven right. China's actions during the recent India-Pakistan conflict exposed a chilling dimension of the China-Pakistan nexus. Pakistan extensively employed Chinese weapon systems and manufactured jets in its retaliation, attacking Indian soil.

China provided significant strategic aid, including helping Pakistan reorganise its radar and air defence systems and adjusting satellite coverage over India during the critical 15-day period from the Pahalgam massacre to the start of large-scale fighting. This level of logistical and intelligence support is akin to being an accessory to a murder. It has led to a deep erosion of trust in India, cementing a two-front situation in its strategic planning.

Furthermore, China continues its territorial assertiveness with claims over Arunachal Pradesh and renaming 27 places as recently as May 2025, a move India calls preposterous and an attempt to alter undeniable reality. In addition, Beijing's consistent blocking of India's proposals at the UN Security Council to ban Pakistan-based terrorists implicated in major attacks against India, including the Pahalgam terror attack and 26/11, further highlights its deep-seated strategic alignment with India's primary adversary. For India, China's actions during the conflict, despite recent limited diplomatic thaws, underscore a paradoxical reality where attempts at normalisation are undermined by a deep-seated strategic alignment with a terror state fundamentally rendering any genuine cooperation impossible and solidifying the relationship as one of strategic rivalry.

By : Sohil Sinha
Courtesy News18.com

Is This How India Will 'Dehyphenate' Itself From Pakistan?

"The enemy is anybody who's going to get you killed, no matter which side he's on," said Yossarian, the 'hero' of Joseph Heller's 1961 cult classic Catch-22. This absurdly dark and hilarious novel, set during the Second World War, contains some of the most astute observations on war and peace, a theme for our times. Or all times. Apart from one's own commanders, like Colonel Cathcart of Catch-22, the enemy could also be suboptimal actions driven by fallacious estimations of self. While our armed forces, as commanded, demonstrated their professionalism and precision, the same has been seen as lacking from other quarters in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor. Despite India's consistent attempts at keeping the Kashmir issue out of the arena of international interference, Pakistan has doubled down on its efforts to the contrary and achieved at least some degree of success. India, regrettably, has also got 're-hyphenated' with Pakistan despite our government's forceful iterations that the victims and perpetrators of terrorism cannot be treated at par by the international community.

Pak Is No Match

The irony of the current situation is that India may have played some part in bringing this rehyphenation upon itself. Rather than setting the paradigm, India is seen as playing catch-up in its diplomatic oeuvre. Immediately after the high offices of the Pakistani government, including Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, embarked on their international mission to convince the world about India's alleged aggression, seven all-party committees were dispatched by India to different parts of the world. We are yet to see what such delegations have achieved for the long run, apart from generating newsy moments. As the world's fourth-largest economy, India has a stature that Pakistan can only aspire to achieve. Sharif's statement about India being more wary of the cost of war than Pakistan because the

latter is still in a struggling phase is darkly humorous and unintentionally ingenious. It doesn't behove a superpower like India to be following Pakistan's diplomatic footsteps. The soon-to-retire chief of the Florida-based United States Central Command, General Michael E. Kurilla, has recently called Pakistan a "phenomenal partner" whose value "will only increase as the Taliban continues to face security challenges within its borders". President Donald Trump, too, has been underscoring how the US values its "beautiful" relationship with both India and Pakistan, which have "great" leaders. Rather than dismissing this 'both-siding' as classic Trump balderdash, India should devise a robust plan to offset Pakistan's geopolitical arm-twisting of the West.

Pak's Sneaky Ways

The Afghanistan-Pakistan hyphenation is what has been driving the West's response to Islamabad's backing of the terror outfits in Kashmir and other parts of India. Pakistan has managed to convince the West, especially the US, of its indispensable status in eliminating actors that pose a direct threat to people and property in the Global North. India's renewed engagement with the Taliban, short of recognising them, has only limited potential to counter Pakistan's perceived value as a partner of the West to counter terrorist threats originating from Central and South Asia. The spectre of ISIS-K looms large on any Western attempt at holding Pakistan responsible for terror activities in India. Pakistan has utilised multilateral platforms, such as the UN, to its utmost benefit. Currently, as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, Pakistan serves as the Chair of the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee, Vice Chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee, and Co-Chair of two informal working groups.

By Nishtha Gautam
Courtesy NDTV.com



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The Calculated Diplomacy Behind PM Modi Accepting Canada's G7 Invite

By : Prosenjit Nath

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has confirmed he will attend the Group of Seven (G7) Summit in Kananaskis, Canada, later this month, following a personal invitation from newly elected Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. The development marks a surprising yet significant diplomatic thaw between New Delhi and Ottawa, whose ties had plummeted to historic lows in 2023.

This moment carries more than symbolic weight. It not only refutes speculation that PM Modi had been sidelined from the G7, a claim loudly echoed across some media corners, but also underscores a broader truth: global diplomacy is not conducted in 280 characters but through deliberate strategy, earned trust, and mutual interest. A High-Stakes Invitation

India is not a G7 member, yet it has become a regular guest at the summit since 2019, when France invited PM Modi to the table in Biarritz. That tradition continues, now under the stewardship of Prime Minister Carney, who extended a fresh invitation and held his first formal call with Modi, expressing a desire to host him in Canada and reinvigorate the "long-standing relationship" between their nations.

Coming just months after one of the worst diplomatic rows in India-Canada



history, this overture marks a notable pivot. Ottawa had accused India of involvement in the assassination of Canadian citizen and pro-Khalistan activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Vancouver in 2023 – an allegation New Delhi forcefully denied. The fallout was swift and severe: diplomatic expulsions, suspended visas, and a relationship pushed to the edge.

PM Modi's decision to attend the G7 now reflects a strategic rebalancing, one that serves not only India's global ambitions but also subtly signals Canada's interest in charting a new course.

Strategic Patience And Diplomatic Depth Diplomacy is often about optics, but it is always about intent. PM Modi's

acceptance of the G7 invitation, far from being an isolated gesture, signals that both countries may be ready to place dialogue above distrust. The Canadian statement itself acknowledged this shift, noting "continued law enforcement dialogue and discussions addressing security concerns" – a diplomatic euphemism that nonetheless indicates quiet progress on sensitive issues.

This is not to say the core disagreements, especially over the Khalistan issue, have vanished. They haven't. But the fact that both nations are willing to reopen channels of communication and revive diplomatic norms is a significant shift from last year's combative posturing. Strategic

patience, especially in the shadow of global realignments, is clearly winning over performative outrage.

Khalistan: The Inescapable Elephant

The Khalistan movement continues to be the most volatile fault line between India and parts of the Western world. While it enjoys fringe support abroad, especially in the diaspora, it has little political legitimacy within India and is considered a threat to national security. India has consistently urged countries like Canada, the UK, and Australia to take stronger actions against what it sees as extremist elements masquerading under the cover of free speech.

Canada, for its part, faces a delicate balancing act. It is home to the largest Sikh population outside India, many of whom are law-abiding citizens, while a few openly support Khalistan. With its liberal values and deep pluralism, Canada is structurally challenged in responding to India's repeated security concerns without appearing to stifle minority voices.

The way forward lies in nuance and sincerity – Canada recognising India's legitimate national security interests and India appreciating Canada's democratic compulsions. This is where "continued law enforcement dialogue" becomes more than just diplomatic filler; it's the hinge on which future stability rests.

Op Sindoor is the first battle in India's two-front war. A vicious pawn in a King's Gambit

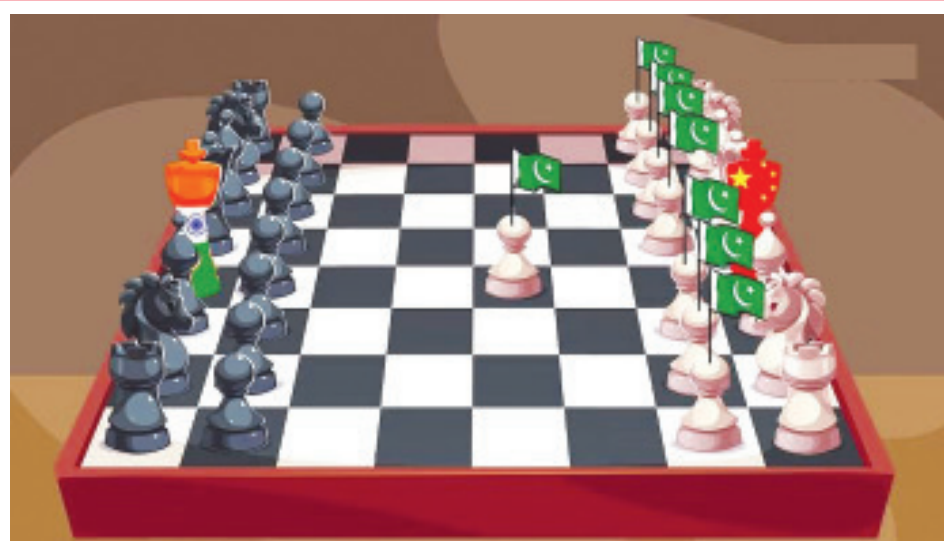
By SHEKHAR GUPTA

History gives every war a name. Officially, there's a pause, but the fighting lasted about 87 hours. Will it suffice for future generations for it to be listed merely as the 87-hour war?

I would, however, suggest a description, if not a sharp, hashtag-worthy name. What we've seen just now is the opening move in a two-front war. You could call it a trailer. It's just the early moves in a long-drawn war of wits, nerve, and military muscle. How do I explain this more succinctly?

For once, I would avoid the temptation of the usual trope, a cricketing analogy. I'd leapfrog to chess instead. Since the Pakistanis started this with Pahalgam and fought with Chinese equipment, technology and guidance, think of them as holding the white pieces. And since the side with the white pieces makes the opening move, see this as that familiar move called PK4 in the past, and e4 now.

This means moving the pawn in front of the king two squares ahead, inviting the



rival to counter the move. This move can lead to several different strategies, some as exotic sounding as The Italian Game, Scotch Game and Ruy Lopez. The description I find more suitable is The King's Gambit, since it's more aggressive and can lead to multiple tactical options. The two of them, Pakistan and China, are playing this together. And they have moved a pawn forward. Pakistan is in the front, the

pawn, powered by the king and the queen, their cavalry and counsels in the back, read China. They wait for India's move now.

Complacency is no plan. The clock is running. The flurry of stories (in the newspapers; you'd never catch us citing any TV channel on this) inform us that now the armed forces have also been following the practice of setting up a "Red Team," a group of sharp officers

tasked with thinking and responding like the enemy. Think for a moment like your Red Team. What will it do next? Our basic premise is that while we have fretted over our two-front predicament, we never really thought it would come to pass at the same time. In 1962, the Pakistanis stayed out, although not unconditionally. They demanded negotiations on Kashmir which duly began under US-British pressure. And in 1965 and 1971, Kargil and onwards, the Chinese mostly kept away. This first move of the pawn two squares ahead of the king shows this has now changed. A two-front war is on. Except, the Chinese see no need to fight it directly. They have an able and willing proxy in Pakistan. They will keep selling it enough cutting-edge hardware to keep it on a par with India if not ahead in some specific areas, like possibly 5th-generation fighters within a year. Their satellites and other ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) resources will be at their ward's disposal, and real-time advice on tap.

India asserts, Pak deflects: Tale of two narratives in Washington after Operation Sindoor

What played out in Washington was more than a series of bilateral meetings. It was a tale of two nations, heading in opposite directions.

Two important missions in a week for India: while Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla is set to fly on Axiom's private space mission on June 10, another Indian expedition has just wrapped up in Washington, DC — a strategic one rather than a scientific one. Over the past weeks, in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, an all-party delegation of Indian lawmakers, diplomats, and strategic thinkers descended upon the capital of the United States.

For far too long, India's response to cross-border terrorism has been measured, calculated, and at times, at least from the West's perspective, conveniently easy to overlook. Not anymore. This time, India made it abundantly clear: terrorism will be named, sponsors will be exposed, and retaliation will not be cloaked in ambiguity.

The Indian delegation's meetings weren't symbolic tick-box diplomacy. They were substantive, high-level, and unapologetically pointed. From engagements with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the House Armed Services Committee, senior senators from both Democratic and Republican ranks, and US Vice President JD Vance, India's presence was heavy, and its messaging, unmistakably sharp.

Assert, not plead

India didn't come to plead for support. It came to assert its geopolitical standing. As the world's fourth-largest economy, a strategic partner in Indo-Pacific stability, and a responsible democracy, India arrived in Washington, DC, with a simple truth: while it exports coders, astronauts, and innovation, Pakistan, decade after decade, has exported only extremism.

At the National Press Club, where India's sharpest minds, including Dr Shashi Tharoor and Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu, took the stage, the story was laid out with brutal clarity. Terror networks that operate under different banners, like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, often trace their roots back to Pakistani soil. These are not old accusations; they are well-documented facts. Osama bin Laden didn't appear in Abbottabad by accident. The killers of Wall Street Journal journalist Daniel Pearl didn't just disappear — they were sheltered. The 2008 Mumbai attacks,



which killed six American citizens, were orchestrated by groups that still operate openly in Pakistan today.

And while India was building partnerships, Pakistan was attempting to mount a desperate diplomatic counteroffensive. A parallel delegation led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the political heir to a dynasty that symbolises both Pakistan's tragedy and dysfunction, landed in DC with a familiar playbook: downplay, deflect, and deny. But the international reception this time was different: colder, more sceptical.

Notably, Congressman Brad Sherman, a senior member long involved in US-South Asia relations, used his meeting with Bhutto not to placate, but to publicly demand action against terror groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed, underlining how far Pakistan's credibility has deteriorated.

Some Indian critics were quick to suggest that New Delhi's diplomatic push in the US was reactive, that it followed rather than led the narrative. They asked: Should India have preempted Pakistan's visit with an earlier engagement? Perhaps. But diplomacy is not theatre. It is momentum and memory, and come Thursday, India had seized both.

At a high-profile dinner hosted at Indian House, the symbolic epicentre of India's diplomatic presence in the US, the full weight of India's soft power was on display. Eighteen members of the US Congress, senior White House staff, and prominent members of the Western press, including Wolf Blitzer of CNN, gathered not for formality, but for frank dialogue. It was a show of respect. It was a signal of India's elevated status in the US policy ecosystem.

And just when the week seemed to be winding down, India pulled one more diplomatic lever. On Friday, the

delegation met with Deputy Secretary of State Landau, one of US President Donald Trump's most seasoned players, who reaffirmed US support for India's counter-terror response. This wasn't a nod. It was strategic alignment.

Two nations, two narratives

What played out in Washington was more than a series of bilateral meetings.

It was a tale of two nations, heading in opposite directions.

One, a rising democratic power, reaching for the stars, sending astronauts aboard private missions, innovating in technology, and commanding a leadership role in global South politics. The other, a failing state, ruled by dynasts and generals, addicted to strategic blackmail, and clinging to the outdated weapon of terrorism-by-proxy. One showed up with moral authority, economic weight, and strategic vision. The other showed up with excuses, blame, and a fading last name. India's message in Washington was not just about Pakistan. It was also about India's evolving posture on the world stage. New Delhi is shifting toward strategic clarity that calls out state sponsors of terror, demands reciprocal partnerships, and refuses to play second fiddle in multilateral spaces.

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Can Bangladesh trust Yunus's April 2026 poll promise?

As murmurs of public support were amplified by Yunus's camp, Bangladesh's interim government finds itself under pressure from political parties and the military to hold elections this year, not delay democracy.

By Subir Bhaumik

As Bangladesh's interim government head Muhammad Yunus walked out after offering Eid prayers at the National Mosque in Dhaka, some in the crowd shouted that he should stay in power for five years and pay no heed to the "dalals" who want early elections. Within hours, the video of the incident was all over social media, especially after Yunus's press secretary, Shafiqul Alam, shared it on Facebook. Alam wouldn't have done this without Yunus's approval. The Yunus coterie's enthusiasm in publicising this minuscule event, passing off a dozen slogan-shouting admirers as "the wish of the people", raises questions about making a mountain out of an astroturfed molehill. It also reinforces doubts about Yunus's real intent. The day before Eid, he said in a national address that elections would be held in early April 2026.

Stance of key political parties

All parties, except the Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies, as well as the National Citizens Party, want elections to be held by December this year. The former says it is okay with polls in April next year, while the latter still casts aspersions on the possibility of fair polls under the present Election Commission. The most vocal proponent of conducting elections this year is the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which is now poised to win.

BNP leaders like party spokesperson Salahuddin Ahmed have said Yunus's plans for April don't "fulfil the aspirations of the nation". Smaller parties close to the BNP have joined Salahuddin in raising concerns about an April election, saying that's when the country holds school-leaving exams involving lakhs of students. It also immediately follows the holy month of Ramzan and Eid, when campaigning would be undesirable.

The Awami League, which may not be able to contest the next elections, unless the Election Commission changes its decision, has alleged that plans to conduct polls in April are a ruse. "Yunus has made an April fool of the nation," said Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader. "When the nation approaches the election date, Yunus may use the possible difficulties now raised by the political parties to further postpone the polls."

Illegality of interim government

Sources close to General Waker say the army chief remains acutely conscious of two factors: one, there is no constitutional basis for the interim government, and two, that he, more than anyone else, will be held accountable for the failures of



the interim government and the unseemly controversies generated by it. The very political parties General Waker consulted with to create the interim government are now pushing him to get Yunus to organise the polls soon and step down. There is no provision in the Bangladesh Constitution for an interim government, the creation of which in August last year was justified by the Doctrine of Necessity. General Waker is acutely aware that this "necessity" cannot be stretched too far.

The demand for early elections has also gained support because of the interim government's abject failure in maintaining law and order. An Indian human rights group, the Rights and Risks Analysis Group, has detailed the murders of at least 121 Awami League activists since August last year. Bangladeshi news reports suggest that nearly 3.5 lakhs have been arrested, most of them Awami League supporters, many on trumped-up charges.

Yunus's confidante, Nahid Islam, wants polls delayed because of the uncertain law and order situation. The Nobel laureate has said Bangladesh faces a war-like situation and whipped up the bogey of Indian hegemonism, all to justify delayed polls.

'Stay for five years'

The Army and political parties are apprehensive because the Yunus coterie has made no secret of its desire to stay on for five years by insisting that reforms and justice are as important as holding elections.

General Waker likely insisted on polls by December because he began doubting Yunus's real intention after his Home Adviser, Lt Gen Jahangir Alam Chowdhury (retired), said during a visit to Sylhet that people wanted them to stay in power for five years. Before that, Sarjis Alam, one of the founders of the newly formed National Citizens Party and a former member of Yunus's advisory council, said that a "statesman

like Yunus should run the country for five years".

Sarjis Alam belongs to the core leadership of the July-August 2024 agitation, which Yunus himself described as "meticulously planned" during his visit to the Clinton Foundation last year. Yunus, in fact, introduced one of the student leaders, Mahfuz Alam, who remains on his advisory council, as the "mastermind" of the agitation.

Immediately after General Waker's renewed pitch for elections by December this year, one of his advisers, Syeda Rezwana, challenged the army chief and said, "People have put us here not just to hold elections but to bring about reforms and ensure justice to the victims of fascism."

July declaration

The student-youth brigade and Islamist groups like the Jamaat-e-Islami, who spearheaded the agitations last year, have said they are putting together the July Declaration to embody the spirit of the revolution in governing the country. This declaration, possibly designed as a revolutionary proclamation, will perhaps seek to supplant the existing constitution. BNP leaders say that Yunus's promise for polls in April 2026 is perhaps a bait to get them to sign the July Declaration and then pave the way for a national government based on negotiated power-sharing rather than an elected government. Such a government can not only bring down President Mohammed Shahabuddin Chuppu but also get his chosen successor to sack the army chief and other service chiefs supporting him.

Directionless drift: Why Congress struggles to lead Opposition

The Congress has lost three national elections in a row. And if one saw some shadow of a recovery in 2024, it was despite the party and not because of it.



Sandeep Shastri

Every time the Congress party takes a decisive step forward, it subsequently appears plagued by indecisiveness. And this is often coupled with infighting, overconfidence, and needless bravado. What makes the situation more complex for the party is being out of power at the Centre for over a decade and unable to retain power in states. Further compounding this already complicated situation is the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, which never loses an opportunity to launch a sustained attack on the Congress, which is often met with an unplanned, half-hearted, and strategically inadequate response.

The Congress has lost three national elections in a row. And if one saw some shadow of a recovery in 2024, it was despite the party and not because of it. The BJP fumbled in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Yet, it seamlessly shifted the narrative from an anticipated 400+ victory to a clear National Democratic Alliance majority. There was precious little done by the Congress party to alter this narrative.

The BJP was quick to review and course correct when it came to Haryana. On the other hand, the Congress demonstrated overconfidence and did not check infighting. This resulted in it snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. In Maharashtra, the Maha Vikas Aghadi was a leaderless alliance while the BJP manoeuvred to set the agenda for the

Mahayuti and contest a majority of the seats. Allying voter list manipulation after the results reflects the Congress party's organisational weakness. It failed to raise the issue before voting, when there was scope to fix it.



It is therefore worth looking at both the party's organisational challenges and its inability to drive the political narrative in its favour. The former is plainly visible, becoming more apparent as it starts getting used to being out of power at the national level. The devastating defeat of the party in 2014 and limited recovery in 2019 were an indication of its directionless drift.

Its inability to reach triple digits in the 2024 elections, despite the BJP's electoral retreat, mirrored the organisational ineffectiveness that it

faced on the ground. At the national level, the transfer of the party presidency from Sonia Gandhi to Rahul Gandhi did little to galvanise the party. Rahul Gandhi's resignation after the 2019 defeat saw a moment for a searching

second look at organisational reform. After inordinate delays and phases of indecisiveness, the party went on to elect a leader from outside the Gandhi family. The election of Mallikarjun Kharge as the party president had its share of political drama.

Initially, it appeared as if the new party president was bringing a consensus style to decision-making. But the sustained role of the Gandhi family in this process continues to be a matter of intense debate. There was often a lack of clarity on the role of Rahul Gandhi in the party.

His Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodi Nyay Yatra did shore up his political capital, but questions about his consistent and continuous involvement in party matters remained. After the 2024 polls, Rahul Gandhi becoming the Leader of the Opposition and his sister Priyanka winning the Wayanad seat he vacated, saw a categorical return of the Gandhi family to the political centre stage.

Sitting in the Opposition for over a decade has done little to boost the vigour and enthusiasm of the party organisation. The legendary High Command did not appear to be fully in command. And open rebellion against the party leadership became commonplace. The Hemanta Biswa Sarma episode, the departure of Jyotiraditya Scindia and Ghulam Nabi Azad, the rebellion by Ashok Gehlot, and most recently, Shashi Tharoor's stand are all reflections of this trend. On another level, infighting in the state units of the party has become more frequent and even when in power in a particular state, the party finds it difficult to keep its flock united. Sitting in the Opposition, the party has been unable to drive the political narrative. In fits and starts, it takes the initiative, only to soon fall silent and let the BJP steal the spotlight. The latest examples are the caste census and the all-party delegation of leaders sent abroad to explain India's position and present the broader context of Operation Sindoor. Its inability to build on the momentum created by the INDIA coalition during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls is yet another case of not being able to lead and set the agenda. The fact that questions about the continued relevance of the INDIA coalition are being raised — not merely by the coalition partners but by Congress leaders themselves — is a reflection of this trend. This has made it easy for the BJP to continue its efforts to isolate the Congress within the Opposition and lead a sustained attack against it.

At the end of the day, the Congress crisis is a lack of clarity on the way forward. Its organisational ineffectiveness has been capitalised on by its principal opponent. It is fast conceding its role as the principal Opposition to the BJP to other parties. Responding to the political narratives set by others has become the norm. This directionless drift needs to be stemmed if the party wants any kind of future.

Russia-India On Shaky Grounds? Why India Needs To Become Truly Independent

By : Sohil Sinha

Russia is one of India's longest-serving partners. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union signed a treaty of Friendship with India, which ultimately became the foundation of the relationship between both countries. After decades of trade and cultural exchange, a sense of camaraderie has developed between the citizens of both nations.

However, Russia's recent actions have raised eyebrows. First of which is the acknowledgement that US President Donald Trump played a personal and pivotal role in negotiating a ceasefire between India and Pakistan, a claim that India has vehemently denied. The RIC format, established in 1996 to challenge US unipolarity, has been largely dormant since the deadly Galwan Valley clashes in June 2020. Russia perceives its revival as a step towards a multi-polar architecture and pan-Eurasian processes. Lavrov has expressed that Russia has a genuine interest in resuming ministerial-level meetings, asserting that "an understanding has been reached between India and China on how to ease the situation on the border".

Why the RIC Troika is Problematic for India

Lavrov's assessment of eased tensions, however, stands in stark contrast to India's ground reality. India's Army Chief, General Upendra Dwivedi, recently affirmed that border tensions persist, with a "degree of standoff" remaining and India maintaining its troop deployments along the Line of Actual Control, which indicates a clear lack of trust for China.

And he has been proven right. China's actions during the recent India-Pakistan conflict exposed a chilling dimension of the China-Pakistan nexus. Pakistan extensively employed Chinese weapon systems and manufactured jets in its retaliation, attacking Indian soil.

China provided significant strategic aid, including helping Pakistan reorganise its radar and air defence systems and adjusting satellite coverage over India during the critical 15-day period from the Pahalgam massacre to the start of large-scale fighting. This level of logistical and intelligence support is akin to being an accessory to a murder. It has led to a deep erosion of trust in India, cementing a two-front situation in its strategic planning.

Furthermore, China continues its territorial assertiveness with claims over Arunachal Pradesh and renaming 27



places as recently as May 2025, a move India calls preposterous and an attempt to alter undeniable reality.

In addition, Beijing's consistent blocking of India's proposals at the UN Security Council to ban Pakistan-based terrorists implicated in major attacks against India, including the Pahalgam terror attack and 26/11, further highlights its deep-seated strategic alignment with India's primary adversary.

For India, China's actions during the conflict, despite recent limited diplomatic thaws, underscore a paradoxical reality where attempts at normalisation are undermined by a deep-seated strategic alignment with a terror state fundamentally rendering any genuine cooperation impossible and solidifying the relationship as one of strategic rivalry.

India's Path to True Independence

India's foreign policy has long been characterised by strategic autonomy, a delicate balancing act that Russia often misconstrues, particularly regarding India's participation in the Quad. While Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov has alleged that the US and Quad are coercing India into anti-China military operations, India maintains that Quad is a diplomatic partnership for maritime security and a free and open Indo-Pacific, not a military alliance targeting China.

India's neutrality on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, including abstaining from UN resolutions, and Prime Minister Modi's concurrent engagements with both Western and Russian leaders, underscore its commitment to multi-alignment rather than outright alliance with any single power bloc. India has continued to buy crude oil despite sanctions on the sale of Russian Crude oil, underlining the relationship that both these nations share.

Despite Russia retaining a degree of strategic trust and remaining a key defence supplier, the recent diplomatic gaffes and the push for a problematic RIC revival might force India to re-evaluate its foreign policy foundations. China's continued support for Pakistan's military capabilities and its diplomatic protection of Pakistan-based terrorist organisations means that the India-

China relationship cannot evolve beyond a transactional one, fraught with underlying tensions. While economic interdependence with China is substantial, highlighted by a significant trade deficit and reliance on Chinese components, India's strategic imperatives, including managing a potential two-front situation, necessitate strengthening diverse partnerships, especially in its South-South axis.

Russia's actions are jarring, from endorsing a disputed ceasefire narrative to advocating a troika with an actively hostile China. It pushes India to prioritise its own security and strategic interests with even greater determination. India must continue to strengthen partnerships with countries across the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Southern Hemisphere, and position itself as a leader of the Global South. India's challenge now is to navigate this complex geopolitical landscape by becoming truly independent, resisting global geopolitical headwinds that compromise its core security interests, and forging a path ensuring its long-term stability and growth.

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Greta Thunberg's sailboat symbolism only hurts the cause she seeks to propound

Greta Thunberg's Gaza sail mission may have made waves online, but it raises serious questions about the purpose, consistency, and impact of symbolic activism in a complex conflict zone.

By Madhura Naik

In an era where global crises demand sincerity and strategic coordination, the optics of activism often seem to overshadow its substance. A recent example is the high-profile sailing expedition undertaken by Greta Thunberg and other activists, purporting to deliver aid to Gaza. While the effort has been amplified through carefully curated media coverage, it raises fundamental questions about the effectiveness, intent, and selective moral compass of such initiatives. To begin with, the symbolism of a small sailboat navigating international waters in the name of humanitarian aid must be questioned in terms of logistical reality. Can such a vessel realistically deliver meaningful assistance to Gazans amid a catastrophic humanitarian crisis? Given the scale of need in Gaza, where basic infrastructure is



decimated and aid must be coordinated at scale through secure land or maritime corridors, a recreational sailboat can carry little more than symbolism. If the primary concern was actual relief, one must ask: why not charter a larger vessel, coordinate with recognised humanitarian organisations, and ensure aid delivery through proper diplomatic channels? Moreover,

activism that fails to consistently uphold universal human rights undermines its credibility. While we hear vociferous condemnation of Israeli actions in Gaza, there is often a deafening silence from these same circles about the unspeakable atrocities of October 7, where civilians were massacred at the Nova music festival, women were raped, children

were kidnapped, and hostages, over 120 of whom remain in Gaza, continue to suffer without global outcry from these "human rights" champions. Is selective outrage not the most dangerous form of moral relativism? Then there is the matter of misinformation. Claims circulated by some activists that Israeli drones were "harassing" their vessel in Greek waters were promptly debunked. They quickly turned around and said, "The involvement of Greek surveillance drones raises serious concerns that Greece may be cooperating with Israel in a way that facilitates or enables illegal acts, potentially implicating Greece in violations of international law!" This pattern of misleading narratives, often spread through well-edited content on social media, contributes not to justice but to polarisation and distortion.

Loss Angeles! How A Crazy Wokeism Connects America And India

By : Rahul Shivshankar

The sword arm of the hard Left has drawn an arc of incendiary violence across Los Angeles, California. What you're seeing on the smoking boulevards of the traditionally liberal American city is but a snapshot of the wildfire of recent confrontational leftist activism. This isn't just discontent. It is an anarchical mobilisation masquerading as discontent. Every fiery munition set off by the agitators is part of a deliberate machination to bash Washington DC into moral submission.

It's true. Donald Trump's administration has not exactly been above reproach. It has, after all, been provocatively referring to America's immigration problem as a "war for the future of civilisation". Nonetheless, the effect—a full-fledged Leftist Intifada against US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents—isn't doing any favours to the liberal cause either. Judging from the unjustifiable violent overreaction to the ICE-led crackdown against illegal immigration, you would have thought that the agency was behaving like a modern-day incarnation of the infamous Gestapo. ICE agents aren't rounding up illegals and packing them off to be processed in concentration camps. To be

sure, ICE agents in California are apprehending bona fide illegal immigrants, some with long and notorious criminal history sheets. Surely, there is little moral justification for preventing the Trump-led federal administration from doing its primary duty: securing the nation's borders. Every unchecked border crossing quietly unravels the thread of sovereignty that holds a nation together. Isn't it often said that "Demography is Destiny"? Though a petulant populist, sympathy will accrue to President Trump on this one. Americans, cutting across ideological and political lines (as borne out by polling percentages), see illegal immigration as striking at the heart of fairness. It is easily observed that illegal immigration rewards rule breakers while lawful citizens wait. There's also the fact that illegal immigration burdens local communities first, straining schools, hospitals, and wages. No wonder, then, that an increasing number of Americans, especially the not-so-well-to-do, at a time when economic prospects are seen to be receding, are aligned with the common-sense view that a porous border is not compassion but an invitation to "cultural invaders" and "economic parasites".

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Operation Sindoor: United abroad, divided at home

When an all-party meeting is called to discuss Operation Sindoor, the prime minister doesn't even attend it. Now, when a special session is demanded on the post-Pahalgam situation, the government ignores the plea. When debate is strangled, democracy is weakened.

By Rajdeep Sardesai

It has taken a horrific terror attack and an 87-hour-long military operation against Pakistan for India's right-wing army to confer a certificate of 'nationalism' to the Hyderabad MP and AIMIM MP, Asaduddin Owaisi. For years, Owaisi's strident politics was demonised by the BJP as representing 'anti-national' sentiment. Wearing his distinct religious identity on his sherwani made him an 'enemy' figure for those whose politics revolves around 'othering' the Indian Muslim.

Today, the same Asaduddin Owaisi is being feted as a 'patriot' for aggressively espousing India's case on Pak-based terrorism in global fora. The articulate Hyderabad MP's politics haven't changed: he has on several previous occasions also taken on Pakistan and the two-nation theory. Only his oversized image as a staunch Indian Muslim opponent of the BJP meant that he is easily typecast as an advocate of narrow Muslim



interests and little else. This is no image makeover, only a reflection of a post-Pahalgam political environment which remains divisive and hyper-partisan at home but united and consensual abroad.

Take also Home Minister Amit Shah's recent remarks in West Bengal where he accused the Mamata Banerjee government of 'vote bank politics' over Operation Sindoor. The TMC, like most opposition parties, has been mostly supportive of the Modi government on the 'war' with Pakistan. While Shah was

addressing BJP workers in Kolkata, TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee was spewing fire against Pakistan's army state as part of an all-party delegation in East Asia. And yet, with elections in Bengal less than a year away, the home minister's rabble-rousing speech was designed to sound the election bugle. A 24x7 politician, Shah is less home minister and more BJP karyakarta when on the campaign trail. Also look at the chaotic state of the Congress party, India's principal opposition. Soon after Pahalgam, the party announced

that it would 'fully support' any action taken by the Modi government to protect the country's 'national interest'. And yet, when the party's four-time Thiruvananthapuram MP, Shashi Tharoor endorses Operation Sindoor, he is instantly branded by local Congress leaders as having become the 'super-spokesperson' of the BJP. While an eloquent Tharoor in Washington DC, leading another all-party delegation, refutes the charge that US President Donald Trump pushed India to agree to a

ceasefire, Rahul Gandhi at a party rally in Bhopal accuses the prime minister of having 'surrendered' to the White House occupant. The confusion within its ranks is only glaringly apparent in the conflicting voices.

Switch now to the BJP, India's dominant party of power. When Operation Sindoor was launched, the party's official social media handle released a video lampooning the Congress while accusing Dr Manmohan Singh of being a 'weak' prime minister who they claimed failed the country after 26/11. Strangely, its voluble MP Nishikant Dubey is part of an all-party team abroad, but that hasn't stopped him from putting out a series of acerbic tweets accusing Congress prime ministers dating back to Jawaharlal Nehru of 'selling' India's interests. From calling Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge a 'gaddar' (traitor) to dubbing Rahul Gandhi a 'Pakistani agent', the BJP's media machine has repeatedly targeted the Congress leadership.

Money can't buy love, Elon Musk is the latest in Silicon Valley to learn this

As US President Donald Trump puts it — it is over between him and Elon Musk. And Musk has likely learnt, probably again, that all the money in the world is not enough to buy love.

By Javed Anwer

In Silicon Valley, people often wonder about this. Why does the rest of the world hate us, they ponder. Every time I am in Silicon Valley and whenever I meet its brilliant engineers, I get this sense. The sentiment runs across the rank and file. From CEOs to product managers, they all wonder why the rest of the world does not love them. Of them all, Elon Musk probably feels it most acutely. So much so that he has often been parodied for his yearning, which the world became aware of after his interview with The Rolling Stones around eight years ago. One such parody is by The Onion, which brings out its "Please Like Me" article, which it posted on Musk in 2022, almost every week on social media. Poor Elon. Rich like an African



king of yonder days, but poor nevertheless. Last year, after spending some serious money, and giving his time and energy, to help Donald Trump get into the White House again, Musk probably thought that finally he was home. That he was at last liked and loved by people who mattered. He campaigned for, and with, Trump on the US presidential election trail. He was a

frequent guest at Mar-a-Lago, the private residence of Trump and his family. When Trump started giving shape to his administration last year after his win, he did so with the full involvement of Musk. When he moved into the White House, Musk got an office in the White House and control of DOGE, which essentially gave him the ability to put fingers in every pie.

It seemed that Musk and Trump were a pair inseparable, that theirs was a bond forged into the fires of trials and tribulations. And yet, the affair lasted less than a year. So, what is the problem? Why can't Elon Musk and his Silicon Valley cohort find love from the rest of the world? It's the story of many Silicon Valley biggies. Mark Zuckerberg ran into it around ten years ago, when he realised that the world didn't love him. First, he tried to throw money at the problem. It didn't get him much love or likes. It's only recently, and that too not all that much, that he has turned into a likeable guy, thanks to his smart PR and a curated image of the guy-next-door. Bill Gates, influential no doubt, is not someone who is loved all that much by the rest of the world.

For Jeff Bezos, it is the same. The list is long but the story is short: all that money and yet it doesn't buy the Silicon Valley honchos any love.

The problem is that love, metaphorically speaking, is a finicky thing. Salman Rushdie talked of the beginning and end of a love story in his book *Two Years, Eight Months*. And while he was writing about romantic love, it is true for every kind of affection. "At the beginning of all love, there is a private treaty each of the lovers makes with himself or herself, an agreement to set aside what is wrong with the other for the sake of what is right. The voice of doubt is stilled," he wrote. The love story ends when, after a while in the future, for reasons one, two or many, this "secret treaty looks like folly."

Why China engages in diplomacy of silence on Pakistan

China has used diplomacy of silence on the India-Pakistan issue for decades. Even as Pakistan deployed several Chinese weapons against India during the recent conflict, Beijing, by not supporting Islamabad publicly, reinforced its aspirations -- a power broker that shapes the politics of the Asia-Pacific, and an arms supplier.

By Anand Singh

Beijing recently declined to comment on the performance of Chinese missiles used by Pakistan in the recent conflict with India. This may seem like a routine diplomatic brush-off, but the silence speaks volumes.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China is the world's fourth-largest arms exporter, and publicly acknowledging the substandard performance of Chinese weapon systems might have affected China's growing defence export ambitions, particularly in western Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

Though widely known, any public acknowledgement of arms supplies to Pakistan could have also drawn criticism from India and international watchdogs, for "indirectly" fuelling conflict in South Asia by strengthening Islamabad.

Notably, Pakistan is among China's oldest and most consistent arms clients, with strategic cooperation between the two deepening after the Sino-Indian war of 1962. According to SIPRI data, over 81% of Pakistan's arms imports between 2020 and 2024 came from China.

During the recent military conflict between India and Pakistan, the latter deployed a slew of Chinese weapons, such as the HQ-9 and HQ-16 air defence systems, PL-15E long-range air-to-air missiles, J-10CE and JF-17 fighter jets, among others.

But now India is calling out this military nexus on global platforms. During India's diplomatic outreach to key international partners, which included UN Security Council members, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, part of a delegation to the Americas, took this up in Bogota, Colombia.

"Defence is a polite word. Much of it is not for defence but for attack," said Tharoor, referring to Chinese arms supplied to Pakistan.

Beijing has always been an impudent, assertive neighbour — one which refuses to acknowledge responsibility or comment on arms supplies to Pakistan, even as it continues open and unrepentant defence dealings with Islamabad.

Beijing's diplomacy of silence on the issue is a bid to portray its multiple roles: that of a military supplier, a so-called neutral diplomatic voice on paper, and a dominant regional player in the Asia-Pacific region.

Despite being described as Islamabad's "all-weather friend", Beijing has historically avoided overtly backing Pakistan during escalations with India.



In fact, it has only issued direct warnings once — in the 1965 India-Pakistan War, (on September 16, 1965), when it threatened India to dismantle all military installations on or over the China-Sikkim boundary within three days or face "serious consequences". The Indian Express reported, quoting documents accessed from the United States State Department archives and declassified Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) files. During the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, China took a more cautious line, calling the "happenings in Pakistan" an internal matter that should be resolved by the Pakistani people, without foreign interference.

During the 1999 Kargil War, China urged restraint from both India and Pakistan, and avoided blaming either party — a stance well-documented by many defence analysts.

The latest example of this diplomacy of silence came during the monthly defence ministry media briefing that was held in the last week of May 2025, when Chinese defence ministry spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang played down the reports of India recovering an unexploded PL-15E, a radar-guided beyond visual range missile, stated to be the most advanced rocket of its kind produced by China.

Xiaogang merely commented that the missiles in question were "export equipment" that had been "displayed at exhibitions globally". He added, "India and Pakistan are neighbours that cannot be moved away", and urged both sides to exercise "calm and restraint".

Notably, he reiterated China's willingness to play a "constructive role" in preserving regional peace — a language mirroring Beijing's official stance during previous Indo-Pakistani tensions in 1971 and 1999.

Now, Beijing is neither confirming nor denying such claims about its defence systems during the latest India-Pakistan clash.

There are many layers to this silence. Defence expert Major General Yash Mor (Retired) says, "China has long described its relationship with Pakistan as 'higher than mountains, deeper than seas, and sweeter than honey'. Meanwhile, deep-seated distrust issues also persist between India and China, particularly in the aftermath of the Doklam standoff of 2017 and the Galwan clashes of 2020-2021. And China's cartographic assertions, such as its claims over parts of Arunachal Pradesh, underscore ongoing tensions. But there were de-

escalations at the LAC at the same time." "One must note that China does not actively position itself against India on matters like cross-border terrorism or India-Pakistan relations. However, Beijing was displeased with India's abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. India's opposition to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passing through POK has also caused some friction — though India's opposition was limited to formal protests only," Major General Yash Mor (Retired) tells India Today Digital.

But the idea behind the silence, as many experts agree, may be its commercial interests. "China prefers to operate quietly, focusing on building alliances rather than making grandiose statements. The Chinese leadership maintains a measured and restrained approach, rarely issuing public remarks. Its state-controlled media offer little insight, and when statements do emerge, they typically pertain to dealings with the US or QUAD-related matters. As part of its broader strategic relationships, China supplies weapons to several countries, including Pakistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh.



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Riots, bullets, National Guards: What's happening in Los Angeles and why?

(News Agency)- Protests continue in Los Angeles and several other parts of the US as Trump deploys additional troops to control the crowd of civilians. On Monday, a line of National Guard troops with Homeland Security officers behind them surrounded the federal buildings as people yelled, "Free them all!" and "National Guard go away."

Torched vehicles, angry protesters, National Guards and flying bullets - the streets of Los Angeles are witnessing unprecedented chaos after anti-Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on June 6 spiralled into riots. The protests, which started as an expression of anger following the arrests of hundreds of people in broad daylight as part of an anti-immigration crackdown, continue to escalate.

Protesters and security personnel



demonstrators. Police are using flash-bangs, tear gas, pepper balls, rubber bullets and beanbag rounds, as well as more traditional gear such as batons, as per CNN. The protests are now not limited to just LA and similar demonstrations

Mission neighborhoods.

WHY RIOTS IN LA?

It all began on June 6 when 'routine raids' by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) spiralled into something far more ominous. Federal agents swept through Los Angeles, detaining 121 individuals from restaurants, stores and apartment buildings.

By the afternoon, protesters had gathered, holding signs and chanting "Set them free!". The police responded with force. Tear gas was fired and flash-bang grenades exploded. The peaceful demonstration transformed into a battlefield and Trump ordered deployment of National Guard members.

TRUMP DEPLOYS TROOPS

Trump wrote on Truth Social, "If Governor Gavin Newsom, of California, and Mayor Karen Bass, of Los Angeles, can't do their jobs, which everyone knows they can't, then the Federal Government will step in and solve the problem, RIOTS & LOOTERS, the way it should be solved!!!"

In response to the protests, Trump

threatening to mobilise active-duty Marines if protests continued. The first National Guard troops arrived in areas of Los Angeles on Sunday, including Paramount and the downtown area.

On Tuesday, about 700 Marines were activated to help protect federal personnel and property. Trump mobilised another 2,000 National Guard members, doubling his initial deployment of those troops. The latest order brings the total number of guards put on federal orders for the protests to more than 4,100.

The level of escalation is completely unwarranted, uncalled for, and unprecedented — mobilizing the best in class branch of the US military against its own citizens," California Governor Gavin Newsom said.

After backlash, Trump defended the move on Monday, saying, "The city would have been completely obliterated if we hadn't sent in the Guard."

On Monday, Trump said that the protesters in Los Angeles "are insurrectionists," appearing to adopt a rationale that could allow him to invoke the 1807 Insurrection Act and use active-duty U.S. military personnel to deal with protests.

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

Donald Trump invoked Title 10 of the US Code, a federal law defining the role of the US Armed Forces, in his June 7 order to federalise members of the California National Guard. Section 12406 of Title 10 permits the president to deploy National Guard units into federal service in specific circumstances, including invasion, rebellion, or if the president deems regular forces insufficient to enforce US laws.

It says, whenever—

(1) the United States, or any of the Commonwealths or possessions, is invaded or is in danger of invasion by a foreign nation;

(2) there is a rebellion or danger of a rebellion against the authority of the Government of the United States; or

(3) the President is unable with the regular forces to execute the laws of the United States; the President may call into Federal service members and units of the National Guard of any State in such numbers as he considers necessary to repel the invasion, suppress the rebellion, or execute those laws. Orders for these purposes shall be issued through the governors of the States or, in the case of the District of Columbia, through the commanding general of the National Guard of the District of Columbia.



clashed as the Trump administration escalated the federal response, deploying the Marines and more National Guard troops to California. The weekend of clashes led to about 150 arrests, and the police fired munitions that left protesters and journalists injured.

As the situation looks far from over, Trump defended his move despite backlash from California and LA. In fact, he doubled the number of national guards. Soon after, California took the matter to court for "unlawful abuse of power". Four days since the peaceful protests began, the 'City of Angels' remains on edge. **WHAT'S HAPPENING?**

Protesters and police are facing off in Los Angeles with police using flash bangs and rubber bullets to disperse crowd. Thousands of national guard members have been deployed to control the unrest. Protests rocked Los Angeles for a fifth day on Tuesday, with law enforcement firing rubber bullets and flash-bangs into the crowd as they clashed with

have popped up in other areas.

In Mexico City, protesters staged a demonstration outside the US Embassy, calling for an end to sweeping



immigration raids across the border. Thousands of people marched through San Francisco's Civic Center and

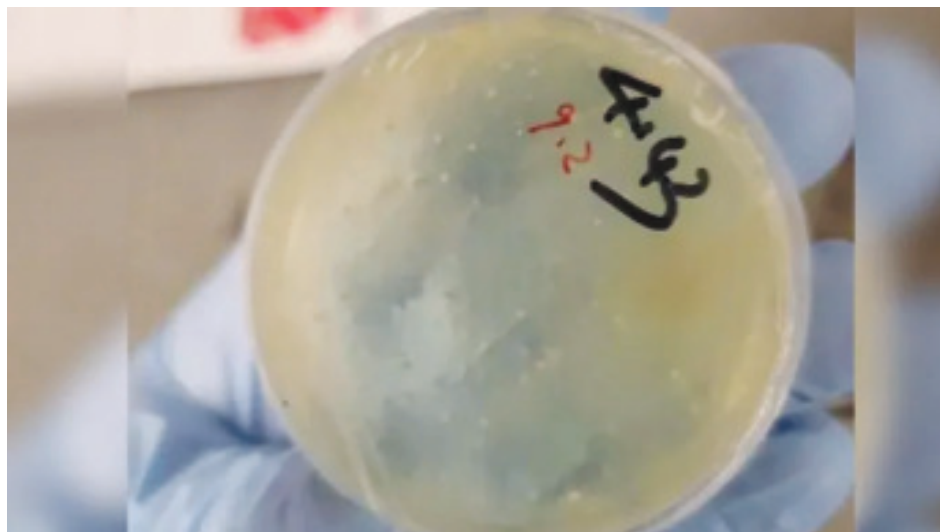
signed a memorandum deploying 2,000 National Guard troops to Los Angeles, with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth

Biological smuggling: US arrests Chinese scientist linked to Wuhan lab

(News Agency) - Chinese Ph.D. student Chengxuan Han was arrested in Detroit for allegedly smuggling roundworm-related biological materials into the US and lying to federal agents, amid growing scrutiny of CCP-linked researchers. A Chinese national and Ph.D. student from Wuhan has been arrested and charged in the US for allegedly smuggling biological material related to parasitic roundworms and providing false information to federal authorities about the shipments.

Chengxuan Han, a researcher at Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, was taken into custody by the FBI upon arrival at Detroit Metropolitan Airport on June 8. According to federal prosecutors, Han faces charges of smuggling goods into the US and making false statements -- both felony offences.

"Yesterday, Detroit arrested a second Chinese national on charges of smuggling biological materials into the US and lying to federal agents," wrote Kash Patel, FBI director on X (formerly Twitter). "This individual is Chengxuan



Han, a citizen of the People's Republic of China and a Ph.D. student in Wuhan, China. Han is the third PRC-connected individual charged on similar allegations in recent days."

Federal charging documents allege that Han sent four packages from China to contacts at a University of Michigan lab, each containing biological material related to roundworms -- a classified material that requires special import permits under US law. One of the packages, authorities say, was concealed

inside a book.

HAN ACCUSED OF LYING, WIPING DEVICE BEFORE ENTRY

Upon landing in Detroit, Han allegedly denied knowledge of the packages and failed to disclose their contents. Prosecutors also revealed that Han had erased data from her electronic devices just days before her arrival -- a move investigators view as a deliberate attempt to obstruct the inquiry.

"Upon arriving at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport on June 8, Han allegedly made

false statements to federal officials regarding the packages she had previously mailed -- and had erased her electronic device just days prior," Patel noted. "In a follow-up interview, Han admitted to sending the packages and lying about their contents."

Authorities confirmed this case is part of a broader federal crackdown on illegal biological material trafficking by individuals with ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), particularly those embedded in US academic institutions.

Han is now the third Chinese researcher in recent weeks to be charged in Michigan with similar allegations. Last week, Yuning Jian, a University of Michigan researcher, and her boyfriend, Zunyong Liu, were charged with smuggling a dangerous crop-destroying fungus into the US -- a move the FBI described as "an attack on America's food supply."

"This case is part of a broader effort from the FBI and our federal partners to heavily crack down on similar pathogen smuggling operations, as the CCP works relentlessly to undermine America's research institutions," Patel wrote.

Kidnapped on international waters: Greta Thunberg after Israel deports her



(News Agency) - Greta Thunberg on Tuesday accused Israel of kidnapping her and her fellow pro-Palestinian activists in international waters, saying she declined to sign a document stating she entered the country illegally prior to being deported.

Speaking in the arrivals section of Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport after being deported from Israel, the Swedish activist said she and her team had broken no laws, and called for the immediate release of the activists still in Israel. "I was very clear in my testimony that we were kidnapped on international waters and brought against our own will into Israel," she said. She laughed off criticism from US President Donald Trump, who had described her as an angry person, saying:

"I think the world needs a lot more young angry women to be honest, especially with everything going on right now." Thunberg, 22, arrived in Paris a day after the Israeli navy prevented her and a group of fellow pro-Palestinian activists from sailing to Gaza. Israeli forces boarded the charity vessel as it neared Gaza early on Monday, trying to break through a years-old naval blockade of the coastal enclave, and seized the 12-strong crew, including Thunberg. Thunberg denied her mission to deliver aid to Gaza by breaking through a years-old naval blockade of the coastal enclave was a PR stunt, saying a previous effort in a larger boat was ended after the vessel was bombed.

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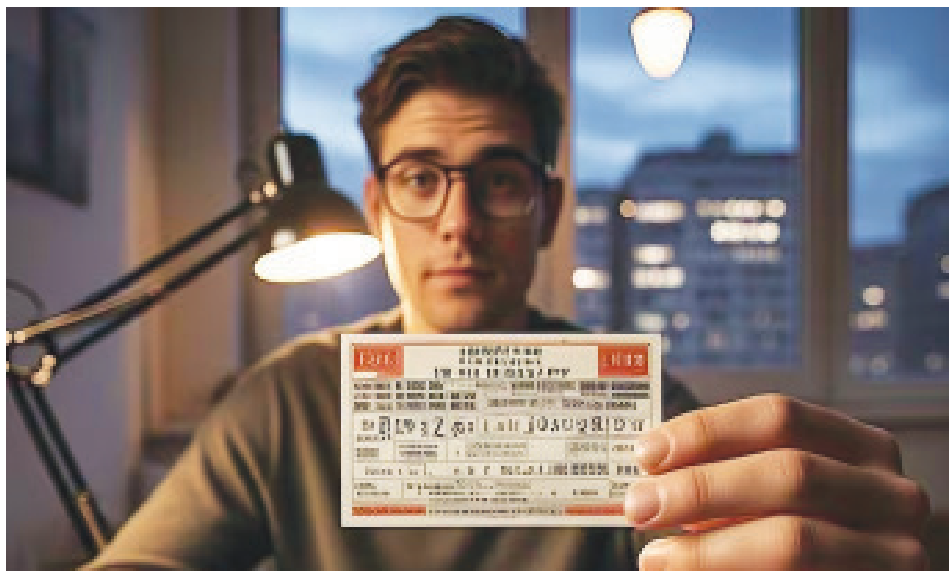
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Hit the jackpot, lost the girl: Canada man sues ex over missing \$3.6 million

A Canadian man claims his girlfriend vanished with a \$3.6 million lottery prize after collecting it on his behalf. He is now suing her for allegedly ghosting him and cutting off all contact.

A man in Canada has filed a lawsuit claiming his longtime girlfriend disappeared with his lottery winnings after he asked her to collect the prize on his behalf, as reported by the New York Post. Lawrence Campbell alleged he bought the winning ticket, worth \$3.6 million, but was unable to claim the prize himself because he had lost his wallet and identification. He said he trusted his girlfriend, Krystal McKay, to collect the money, as they were in a "loyal, committed and promising romantic partnership," his lawyer told CTV News.



The couple had been dating for a year and a half and were living together at the time, according to Campbell.

McKay received the check. Campbell claimed she suddenly vanished and failed to return to the hotel room they had been sharing.

"He set out to visit a few of her known spots where she would party and, sure enough, after some investigation, he found her in bed, with another guy," Campbell told CTV News.

"She ghosted him, refused to take his calls or answer his messages, she blocked him on her social media accounts, and even took out a protection order," he added. Campbell is now suing McKay in an attempt to reclaim the lottery winnings.

However, things took a dramatic turn less than two weeks after

Trump unveils \$1,000 govt-funded accounts for newborns: What to know

President Trump has proposed a plan to give every newborn in the US a \$1,000 investment account, calling it part of "One Big Beautiful Bill." These Trump accounts aim to grow with the market and help build wealth over time.

US President Donald Trump on Monday unveiled a new federal initiative that would provide every newborn American with a \$1,000 government-funded investment account -- a signature component of what he calls "the One Big Beautiful Bill."

The accounts, branded as "Trump Accounts," aim to foster long-term financial growth for the next generation and are already drawing support from some of the country's top business leaders. "This is a pro-family initiative that will help millions of Americans harness the strength of our economy to lift up the next generation," Trump said at a White House event. "They'll really be getting a big jump on life, especially if we get a little bit lucky with some of the numbers and the economy."

BABY ACCOUNTS WITH LIMITS

The accounts would be seeded at birth with a one-time \$1,000 government contribution and grow tax-deferred, tracking a broad stock index. Parents and guardians could contribute an additional \$5,000 annually. The accounts will be privately held and accrue interest until the child turns 18. The bill would require at least one parent to produce a Social Security number with work authorisations, meaning US citizen children born to some categories of



immigrants would be excluded from the benefit. But unlike other baby bond programs, which generally target disadvantaged groups, this one would be available to families of all incomes.

While Trump hailed the proposal as a "pro-capitalist answer to inequality," experts were quick to raise concerns, especially as the program comes amid proposals by Trump-aligned lawmakers to cut programs that directly support low-income families. "The rise and fall of nations occurs when you

have a wealth gap that grows, when you have people who lose faith in the system," said Brad Gerstner, a Silicon Valley investor who helped craft the proposal. "We're not agentless. We can do something."

However, experts say the accounts are more symbolic than transformative. Assuming a 7% annual return, the \$1,000 seed investment would grow to roughly \$3,570 over 18 years — a meaningful boost, but not a game-changer for children growing up in

poverty. The program is drawing mixed reviews from social advocates. While some applaud the intent to build generational wealth, others argue that Trump Accounts won't help families facing food insecurity, homelessness, or lack of health care today. "Having children have health care, having their families have access to SNAP and food are what we really need the country focused on," said Shimica Gaskins of End Child Poverty California.

Why Mexican flags are being waved in LA protests

The Mexican flag has become an emblem of the Los Angeles protests that began on June 7, sparked by immigration raids under the Trump administration. As the flag is seen everywhere, there is a reason why many protestors are using it in the protests. Here's why.

(News Agency)- The green, white, and red-striped flag of Mexico has become a striking symbol in the ongoing protests that erupted in Los Angeles on June 7. These demonstrations began in response to the Trump administration's immigration crackdown, which saw Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducting workplace raids, resulting in 40 arrests in LA alone.

From detention centres to the Sheriff's office, Mexican flags are being raised by protestors across the city. This is not merely an act of rebellion, it carries a broader significance.

For many, the flag represents pride in their roots and solidarity with immigrants. "They're the children and grandchildren of immigrants," Chris Zepeda-Milln, an LA-based professor, told The New York Times. "We're not going to let you make us be ashamed of where our parents and grandparents came from," he added.

In the past, immigration protests often encouraged demonstrators to wave American flags to show alignment with American values.

The Trump administration has labelled these recent protests — with their prominent displays of the Mexican flag — as acts of "insurrection".

Yet for many in Los Angeles, the flag's presence at these demonstrations



reflects something more personal and historical.

MEXICANS IN LA: A LONG HISTORY

Los Angeles's roots are deeply entwined with Mexican history, long before it became part of the US.

Originally settled in 1781 by the Pobladores, a group of 44 settlers of mixed Indigenous, African, and Spanish heritage under Spanish governor Felipe de Neve, the region was called El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles.

After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, the area became part of the Mexican republic and flourished as a pueblo with a ranching economy and

vibrant mestizo culture.

It wasn't until the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that California was ceded to the United States, with Los Angeles incorporated as a US city in 1850.

Job contracts sponsored by the US government in World War I and agricultural labour shortages associated with World War II brought on waves of Mexican immigration to Los Angeles.

People of Mexican descent comprise one-third of LA.

These flags also evoke the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 70s, when

activists like Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta used cultural symbols, such as the Mexican flag, to fight for civil rights, labour protection, and representation.

The 1970 Chicano Moratorium, a massive anti-Vietnam War protest in LA, saw thousands waving these emblems as acts of cultural pride and resistance. RAISING A FOREIGN FLAG IN THE US: CONCERNS

Not everyone views the waving of foreign flags during US protests favourably. Arizona Republic columnist Phil Boas recently warned that young protesters may be unintentionally alienating potential allies.

"I understand the energy and enthusiasm of youth, but cooler heads in the Latino community in Phoenix and Los Angeles might want to stage an intervention," Boas wrote earlier this year. "It may feel good to wave a Mexican flag in MAGA's face, but you are not appreciating what a turn-off that is to many Americans who are not MAGA."

In contrast, Gustavo Arellano, a columnist for the Los Angeles Times, defended the practice. "Waving a foreign flag at protests is good trouble — a sign for the brave to rally together and stand tall against a commander-in-chief who understands nothing but chaos."

11 dead in Austria school shooting, suspect killed himself

At least 11 people, including the suspect, were killed in a shooting at a school in Austria's Graz. The suspect's body was found in the washroom, local media reported.

(News Agency)- At least 11 people, including the suspect, were killed and several others injured in a shooting at a school in the Austrian city of Graz, local media reported.

The suspect, a student, killed himself and was found in the washroom, UK-based Independent reported, citing Austrian state media ORF. He opened fire in two classrooms at the Borg Dreierschutzengasse high school and police said bullying could have prompted him to carry out the crime.

Graz Mayor Elke Kahr, quoted by Austrian news agency APA, said many injured had also been taken to hospital following the shooting at the school, which she called a "terrible tragedy".

Police said a major operation began around 10 am (local time) after gunshots were heard inside the school. Students and teachers were among those seriously injured in the shooting, according to ORF. A local police



spokesperson said the area had been secured. People had been evacuated from the school and relatives of the victims and pupils were being cared for,

he said.

"There is no further danger to the population, but there are several dead," he told Austrian television.

A video on social media showed police cars rushing to the spot following the shooting, while another showed people and police vehicles at the site. According to Austrian police, the school building was searched by authorities and the area was cordoned off.

The husband of a teacher who was barricaded in a classroom with her students during the shooting said his wife heard several gunshots, Krone newspaper reported.

Parents of students who escaped were allowed to see their wards while the injured were being given medical attention.

The shooting occurred ahead of the tenth anniversary of the Graz shooting on June 20, 2015, which left three people dead.

Modi's G7 visit: Can India, Canada reset strained ties?

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Canada for the G7 summit presents a rare opportunity for high-level bilateral engagement after ties were marred by tensions and mistrust over killings of Sikh activists.



© Sean Kilpatrick/AP/picture alliance

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Canada next week after he was invited by his Canadian counterpart, Mark Carney, to attend the Group of Seven (G7) leaders' summit, from June 15 to 17, in Kananaskis, Alberta.

Carney extended the invitation to the Indian premier despite strained ties between the two countries.

India is not a member of the G7, which comprises Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

But New Delhi has been invited to the grouping's summits since 2019, reflecting India's growing geopolitical and economic significance.

"India is the fifth-largest economy in the world, the most populous country in the world and central to supply chains," Carney told media last week.

This will be Modi's first visit to Canada since 2015.

"As vibrant democracies bound by deep people-to-people ties, India and Canada will work together with renewed vigor, guided by mutual respect and shared interests. Look forward to our meeting at the summit," Modi said in a statement.

Chance to reset ties?

Political analysts in India have said Modi's visit will likely offer a chance to reset ties with Canada.

Relations between the two countries have deteriorated since Canada accused

agents linked to the Indian government of carrying out the assassination of 45-year-old naturalized Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a longtime campaigner for the creation of a separate homeland for Sikhs carved out of India.

New Delhi has dismissed the allegations as "absurd" and "preposterous." The row strained India-Canada ties so much that both sides expelled each other's diplomats in 2023 and 2024.

But there have been expectations of a thaw in ties since Carney replaced Justin Trudeau as Canada's prime minister in March.

Meera Shankar, a former Indian envoy to the US, said Modi's trip will "hopefully mark the beginning of a reset in India's relations with Canada, which have plummeted in recent years over the Canadian allegations on the Nijjar case and India's belief that Canada indulges Sikh extremism directed against India." She stressed that both sides have much to gain "if the relationship is stabilized, especially in a volatile world."

India and Canada share strong trade and people-to-people ties, with bilateral commerce amounting to around \$9 billion in 2023 and Canadian pension funds cumulatively investing around \$55 billion in India.

Canada is also home to nearly 2 million members of the Indian diaspora, who make up about 5% of the country's total

population. The North American nation is also a top destination for Indian students pursuing higher education, alongside the US.

Unresolved issues and likely impact on ties

Despite both New Delhi and Ottawa seemingly making efforts to repair ties, the unsolved investigation into the assassination of Nijjar remains.

Furthermore, Canada is home to the world's largest Sikh diaspora community, with about 800,000 people. The community includes activists for "Khalistan," a fringe separatist movement seeking an independent state for the Sikh religious minority carved out of Indian territory.

New Delhi has demanded stricter action against the Khalistan movement, which is banned in India.

Canada, on the other hand, has accused India of carrying out a broad campaign targeting Sikh activists on Canadian soil, which Ottawa says has included intimidation, threats and violence.

Against this backdrop, Carney's invitation to Modi drew sharp criticism from fringe Canadian Sikh groups. Protests are expected to take place during Modi's visit.

Nevertheless, David Mckinnon, a former Canadian diplomat, believes Carney made the right decision by inviting Modi to the G7 summit.

"The politics of this decision in Canada,

and particularly within the Liberal Party, were not easy, but Carney made the right choice. It's also notable that the leader of the opposition, Pierre Poilievre, quickly welcomed it," he told DW.

Mckinnon said, however, that it's too early to say that everything is back to normal between the two sides.

"A big outstanding question is whether this trip leads to a mutually agreeable off-ramp from the allegations of Indian government interference in Canada, including involvement in the Nijjar murder, and India's allegations about Khalistani activities in Canada," he underlined.

Focusing on mutual interests

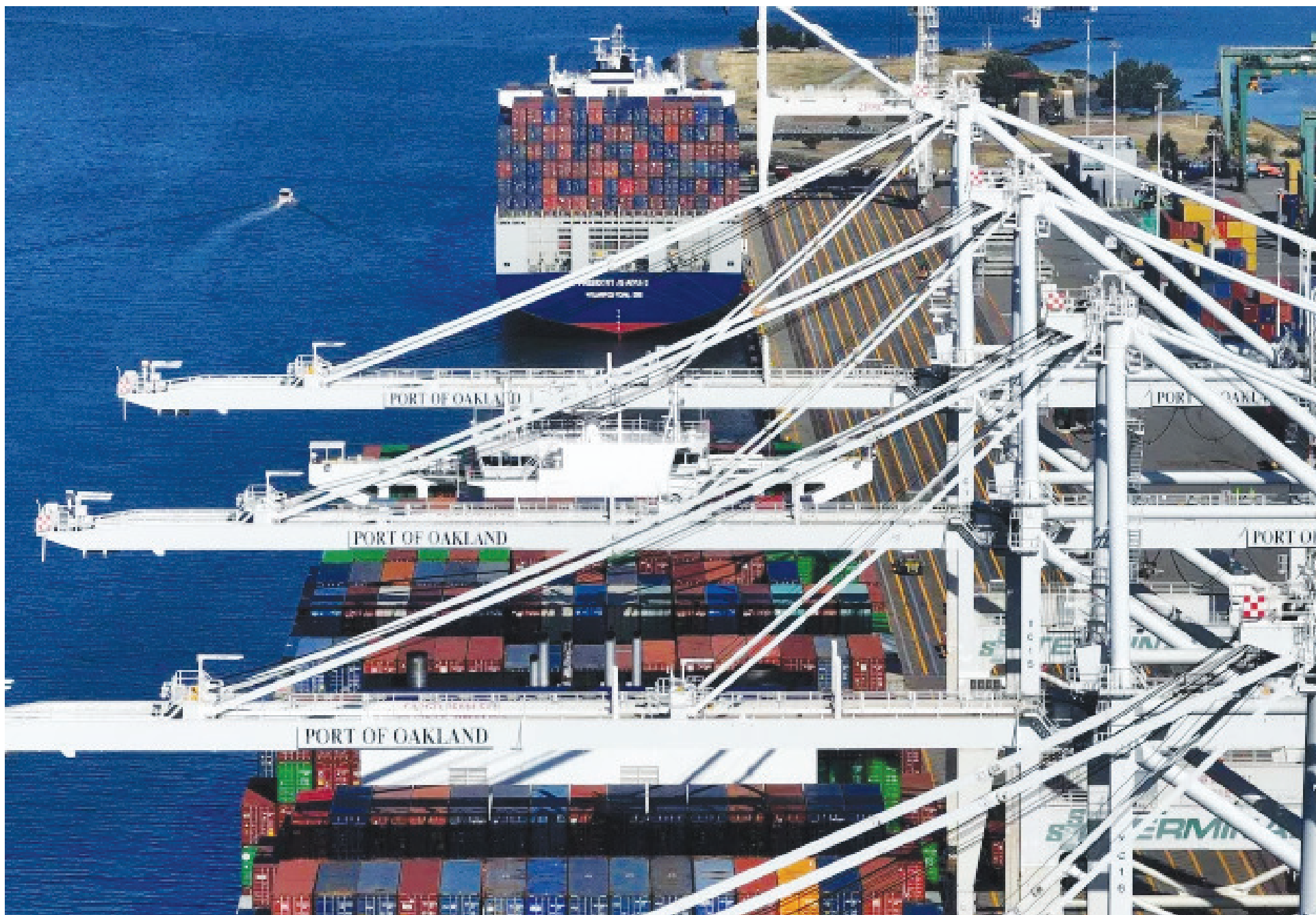
Last month, India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and his Canadian counterpart Anita Anand spoke to each other over phone and discussed ways to deepen the bilateral economic cooperation and advance shared priorities.

Ajay Bisaria, India's former high commissioner to Canada, said Modi's presence at the G7 summit offers a chance to stabilize the bilateral partnership, putting an economic and geopolitical focus on ties.

"It always presents a strategic opportunity for Modi to discuss the global commons like climate, trade, supply chains and the broader development agenda with the developed world," said Bisaria.

Trump tariff revenue soars 78%. Who's paying them?

President Trump has been promising his tariffs will help make America more prosperous.



There's already evidence that tariffs are helping the government's bottom line. The federal government collected \$68.9 billion in tariffs and excise taxes during the first five months of the year, according to Treasury Department data collected by the Bipartisan Policy Center.

That's a 78% increase from the same period a year ago. Much of the additional revenue came in April and May, after Trump imposed tariffs of at least 10% on nearly everything the U.S. buys from other countries. But whether the tariffs are making Americans more prosperous is another question. The tariff windfall isn't coming out of thin air. Nor is it being paid by foreign governments, as Trump often argues. Tariffs revenue is coming from Americans' pockets.

The tariffs are mostly being paid by American businesses and families.

"It's a tax on the backs of people who are importing either raw materials or, in my case, wine," says Patrick Allen, a Columbus, Ohio-based importer who sells French wine throughout the

country. "And eventually it gets built into the price everybody is paying for goods."

If tariffs stick, they can shave off trillions in federal debt.

There's a silver lining: The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected that if Trump's tariffs were to remain in place for a full decade, they could shave \$2.8 trillion off the federal debt.

The White House touted that forecast as a partial answer to the additional debt that would be racked up by the president's tax cuts in the sweeping Republican bill that passed the House last month.

But the CBO also acknowledged that the tariffs will result in higher inflation this year and next, as well as slower economic growth.

The overall drag on the economy is hard to estimate, because the U.S. hasn't had tariffs this high since the Great Depression era. But some experts think the damage could be substantial.

"Some are forecasting larger impacts and potentially pushing us into recession," says Shai Akabas, vice president of

economic policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center. "We won't know until we see the fallout."

Thousands of jobs cut in manufacturing. A survey from the Institute for Supply Management suggests tariffs are a substantial drag on the manufacturing sector, which cut 8,000 jobs last month.

"Most suppliers are passing through tariffs at full value to us," a purchasing manager of a chemical factory said in the report. "The position being communicated is that the supplier considers it a tax, and taxes always get passed through to the customer."

One big issue for business owners: cash flow.

For importers like Allen, tariffs are also a cash-flow challenge, because he has to pay the tax in advance, before making any sales. "Say if I order \$100,000 of wine from France, if there's a 20% tariff, I'll have to pay \$20,000 to get the wine out of customs before I sell a bottle," Allen says. Trump initially announced a 20% tariff on imports from the European Union. He later reduced that to 10% for a 90-day period, but has since threatened to

increase the tariff on European goods to 50%.

Allen would typically be ordering wine now to sell in the fall and the run-up to the Christmas holidays. But many of his customers are sitting on their hands because they have no idea what the tariff will be.

"Importers are afraid. They don't know when the other shoe is going to drop," Allen says. "We're going to be out of stuff on the shelves. But the thing is, all of those out-of-stocks on the shelves represent money we would have been making that we won't be making."

Customs broker Margie Shapiro used to pay tariffs in advance for her clients and collect the money later, which was possible when the average tariff rate was under 3%. With today's much higher levies, she can't front the cost any more and importers are having to make those payments themselves.

"If you throw a monkey wrench into it like this, a lot of people are probably going to go out of business," Allen says. "At the very least, I have wine I can drink here to soothe myself."

Air India crash: What may have gone wrong? A commercial pilot's first analysis



Early analysis of flight visuals from the ill-fated Air India AI171, which crashed shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad, has raised serious questions about the aircraft's configuration and possible technical malfunctions during its final moments.

Visual analysis indicates that as the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner departed, its landing gear remained extended and its wing flaps were fully retracted—an extremely abnormal situation for the critical initial climb phase. Standard operating procedure for the 787 calls for flaps to be set at 5 (or higher) for takeoff, then gradually retracted only as the aircraft accelerates and gains altitude. The landing gear is normally retracted once a positive rate of climb is established, usually within seconds after liftoff and well before reaching 600 feet. Visual evidence shows the landing gear began retracting briefly, but the pilot quickly extended it again, likely realising a loss of thrust or power. The aircraft appeared to suffer a power failure just moments after takeoff.

Another plausible scenario is that the landing gear became stuck in the down position, possibly due to a mechanical or hydraulic failure. In

such a situation, the crew might have attempted to retract the flaps early to reduce drag and gain speed, as extended gear and flaps together would create excessive drag and severely limit climb performance. However, retracting flaps too soon at low altitude and low speed is highly risky, as it reduces lift and increases stall risk. Despite these issues, the aircraft's flight path did not show significant yawing or

rolling, suggesting the pilots retained some control authority. There is speculation of right rudder input, which could indicate a left engine failure, but this alone does not explain the unusual configuration of gear down and flaps up. In normal operations, both the gear and flaps should not be in these positions at such a low altitude.

The combination of extended landing gear and retracted flaps at 600 feet is

highly irregular and points toward a possible cascading technical failure or a sequence of emergency actions by the crew in response to a malfunction. The final loss of altitude and apparent stall likely resulted from insufficient lift and excessive drag, leaving the crew unable to recover before impact. Investigators will focus on these anomalies as they analyse flight data and cockpit recordings in the coming days.

Mumbai Auto Driver's US Consulate Locker Service Shut Down After Viral '₹5–8 Lakh Earning' Claim

An autorickshaw driver- who claimed to earn between ₹5 to ₹8 lakh a month by running a bag storage service outside the US Consulate in Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC)- has been forced to shut down operations following police intervention.

The driver gained viral attention after a LinkedIn post by Lenskart's product leader Rahul Rupani described how he safely handed over his bag to the man for ₹1,000 after being denied entry into the consulate with it. With no official locker facility available nearby, the

driver had turned the logistical problem into a business opportunity- parking outside the consulate and offering to safeguard bags for visa applicants unable to take belongings inside. Rahul Rupani estimated the driver served 20–30 customers a day resulted in earnings of ₹20,000 to ₹30,000 daily. Rahul Rupani estimated the driver served 20–30 customers a day resulted in earnings of ₹20,000 to ₹30,000 daily. Mumbai Police summoned the auto driver and 12 others running similar operations near the consulate. A senior officer from

BKC police station told Hindustan Times that the service violated security protocols, especially as parking is restricted around the high-security diplomatic premises. Police said none of the drivers had permission to offer locker services or store items in shops nearby. Officials warned that storing unverified personal belongings without authorization could pose significant security risks, as per the report. The locker service has now been halted and police have issued warnings against restarting such operations in the area.

India's Poverty Decline Stuns The World

For long, India was considered a country of snake charmers. A country which the colonisers thought would crumble under the weight of its own problems as a free nation, destined to hold a begging bowl before the world. A country which, in the eyes of many Western observers, simply did not have what it takes to become a developed nation in a short span of time. Today, India is proving the naysayers wrong as it continues on the path of economic development with one landmark goal in mind—to fully develop by 2047. While the world faces continuing economic uncertainties, India is reinforcing its position as a global bright spot. The evidence for this turnaround is not anecdotal; it is backed by rigorous data from global institutions. Consider what the World Bank has revealed in its latest report. Even after raising the poverty line to a more realistic \$3 per day to reflect inflation and purchasing power parity, India has managed to lift an astonishing 171 million people out of extreme poverty in the last 10 years. To put that number in perspective, it is more than the entire population of Russia.

In 2011-12, over 27 per cent of India's population languished in extreme poverty. Today, that figure has shrunk to just 5.3 per cent, which is a remarkable turnaround for hundreds of millions of ordinary Indians. The cherry on top? India's poverty alleviation efforts are yielding results across demographics and regions, addressing long-standing structural inequalities. For example, rural extreme poverty fell dramatically from 18.4 per cent to 2.8 per cent, while urban extreme poverty came down from 10.7 per cent to just 1.1 per cent. Crucially, the rural-urban poverty gap narrowed from 7.7 percentage points to 1.7 points, indicating that the fruits of development are not being hoarded by a few urban centres but are reaching the hinterlands. This is a sign of inclusive, balanced and socially equitable growth.

This progress is the outcome of a deliberate and focused strategy for poverty alleviation. The approach under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been clear: empower people to stand on their own feet, while also providing a



robust safety net to support them for as long as necessary. This ensured a sustainable and lasting exit from poverty. This potent model of welfare with empowerment has set a new global benchmark. The government's free food grain programme, which supports 800 million individuals, acted as a critical safety net against economic shocks, especially during the pandemic, ensuring basic food security on a scale the world has not seen before. The use of technology like Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) has been pivotal in ensuring these benefits reach the intended recipients directly, plugging leaks that historically plagued welfare schemes. Of course, this would not have been possible without the financial inclusion of crores of Indians with the formal banking sector, which was one of the first things PM Modi set out to do when he took office. In fact, India's achievement becomes all the more significant when placed in a regional context. While India has made significant strides, the situation in Pakistan offers a stark contrast. According to the World Bank's latest projections, nearly

45 per cent of Pakistan's population lives in poverty, with 16.5 per cent in extreme poverty. The Bank's April report noted that the country's 2.6 per cent economic growth, hampered by high inflation and debt, "remains insufficient to reduce poverty". It projects the poverty rate to stand at 42.4 per cent in FY25, which translates to an additional 1.9 million people falling into poverty this year alone. The divergent paths of the two nations, born from the same history, could not be more evident.

Yet, this achievement is often not fully appreciated within India itself. The prevalence of misinformation, particularly on social media, can project a distorted image of the country that overshadows real progress. This is a moment that calls for critical thinking and an objective assessment of the facts. It is a civic responsibility to look beyond curated outrage and seek primary sources. If an international body like the World Bank can analyse the data and see clear evidence of large-scale poverty reduction, then it is certainly information worth considering for Indians at large.

The push for development and welfare has been comprehensive, touching every aspect of a dignified life. It includes providing access to toilets through the Swachh Bharat Mission, enhancing connectivity with a robust network of new roads and railways, and expanding access to clean cooking gas with the Ujjwala Yojana. It is about providing homes for millions through the PM-Awaas scheme, ensuring electricity reaches every village, offering a healthcare safety net with Ayushman Bharat, and encouraging small-scale entrepreneurship through the Mudra Yojana. India is helping its people shift from dependency to dignity. Apart from being a social victory, this is a profound economic catalyst as well. Lifting 171 million people out of poverty means creating 171 million new consumers and potential producers. As families move beyond subsistence, they begin to participate more fully in the economy. They buy soap, clothes, and mobile phones. They save for their children's education. They aspire to own a two-wheeler. This surge in

domestic demand creates a virtuous cycle of production and consumption. This is happening at a pivotal moment, when there is a renewed focus on Indian manufacturing. Initiatives like "Make in India" and the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes are designed to turn India into a global manufacturing hub. But any such ambition requires a vast, capable, and aspirational workforce. The millions who have recently escaped poverty are that workforce—factory workers, logistics handlers, and the small-business owners of tomorrow. Their improved health and access to education make them more productive, and their newfound economic security makes them active participants in national growth. The strategic alignment of social welfare policy with economic ambition is creating a powerful engine for progress. The old and tired image of India is being replaced by the reality of a nation making measurable and life-altering progress.

By Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra
As seen on News18.com



'Why Did Osama Bin Laden Feel Safe In Pakistan?'

Jaishankar's Strong Message On Terrorism, Pahalgam



(By Our Staff Reporter) New Delhi : External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, in Brussels, made a strong case against terrorism in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam attack and the subsequent Operation Sindoor.

Speaking to Euractiv, he said terrorism wasn't merely an India-Pakistan issue and the world needs to understand that. "Let me remind you of something – there was a man named Osama bin Laden. Why did he, of all people, feel safe living for years in a Pakistani military town, right next to their equivalent of West Point?" he said. "I want the world to understand – this isn't merely an India-Pakistan issue. It's about terrorism. And that very same terrorism will eventually come back to haunt you." "India has the longest-standing grievance – our borders were violated just months after independence, when Pakistan sent in invaders to Kashmir. And the countries that were most supportive of that? Western

countries." "If those same countries – who were evasive or reticent then – now say 'let's have a great conversation about international principles', I think I'm justified in asking them to reflect on their own past."

'INDIA MORE TRUSTWORTHY THAN CHINA'

During his visit, Jaishankar met European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the EU's foreign affairs chief Kaja Kallas. "India – a nation of 1.4 billion – offers skilled labour and a more trustworthy economic partnership than China...I just met with several European companies in India that have chosen to set up there specifically to de-risk their supply chains. Many companies are becoming increasingly careful about where they locate their data – they'd rather place it somewhere secure and trustworthy than simply go for efficiency. Would you really want that in the hands of actors you don't feel comfortable with?"

'NOT UNINVOLVED IN UKRAINE-

also not uninvolved."

Responding to criticism over India's refusal to join sanctions against Russia, he said, "We have a strong relationship with Ukraine as well – it's not only about Russia. But every country, naturally, considers its own experience, history and interests."

'DEEPENING INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP IN MULTIPOLAR WORLD'

"Multipolarity is already here. Europe now faces the need to make more decisions in its own interest – using its own capabilities, and based on the relationships it fosters globally."

"I hear terms like 'strategic autonomy' being used in Europe – these were once part of our vocabulary."

"The EU is clearly a major pole in the global order – and increasingly an autonomous one. That is precisely why I'm here: to deepen our relationship in this multipolar world." Reacting to the EU's climate policies, particularly the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), Jaishankar expressed clear opposition. "Let's not pretend – we're opposed to parts of it. We have very deep reservations about CBAM and we've been quite open about it. The idea that one part of the world will set standards for everybody else is something which we are against."

RUSSIA CONFLICT'

"We don't believe that differences can be resolved through war – we don't believe a solution will come from the battlefield. It's not for us to prescribe what that solution should be. My point is, we're not being prescriptive or judgemental – but we are



Elon Musk says some of his social media posts about Trump 'went too far'



Days after the very public breakup of President Trump and his former adviser Elon Musk, the latter appears to be doing damage control.

"I regret some of my posts about President [Trump] last week," Musk posted on X, his social media platform, just after 3 a.m. ET on Wednesday. "They went too far." Trump has been active on social media early Wednesday, but has not responded publicly to Musk's apology. However, in a previously recorded podcast interview with the New York Post that aired on Wednesday morning, Trump said he had "no hard feelings" towards Musk.

"I don't blame him for anything but I was a little disappointed," Trump said, adding that he had not "thought too much about him in the last little while."

When asked if he could forgive Musk, Trump said "I guess I could," but that "my sole function now is getting this country back to a level higher than it's ever been." The president told NBC News on Saturday that he has no desire to repair his relationship with Musk, saying he assumed it was over.

"I'm too busy doing other things," Trump said, adding, "I have no intention of speaking to him."

Trump was critical of Musk in that interview, saying the tech billionaire had been "disrespectful to the office of the president."

But Trump also appeared to soften some of his stances. He said he hadn't given

any more thought to his earlier threat of canceling Musk's companies' federal contracts or investigating Musk's immigration status, as Trump ally Steve Bannon had publicly suggested. Meanwhile, Musk quietly deleted some of his more inflammatory tweets from the previous week, including posts endorsing a call for Trump's impeachment, linking Trump to the files of the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and saying Trump's tariffs would cause a recession this year.

Trump said on Monday that he had no plans to discontinue Musk's Starlink satellite internet system that was installed at the White House despite security concerns — though may move his Tesla, which he bought in March, off-site. And he told reporters he would not have a problem if Musk called.

"We had a good relationship, and I just wish him well — very well, actually," Trump said. A clip of the exchange was posted to X, where Musk responded with a heart emoji.

The alliance that was

The two had enjoyed a close relationship since 2024, when the tech billionaire poured almost \$300 million into backing Trump's reelection campaign.

Musk went on to join the new administration as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), becoming the public face of its controversial efforts to reshape the federal government even as government lawyers

downplayed his role in court filings.

Musk's whirlwind 130 days as a special government employee were marked by legal setbacks, clashes with Cabinet members and scant evidence to support DOGE's claims of significant savings. His own business empire took a financial hit, with Tesla's first-quarter profits plunging 71% compared to the same period in 2024.

Musk announced his departure from the government in late May, citing the end of his "scheduled time" in the position. At a final Oval Office press conference on May 30, Musk stood next to Trump as the president praised him as "one of the greatest business leaders and innovators the world has ever produced."

But things soured quickly in the days that followed, fueled by Musk's public criticisms of the president's sweeping domestic policy bill, known as the "big, beautiful bill." Musk wasted no time railing against what he called the "disgusting abomination," saying it would increase the federal budget deficit and undermine DOGE's cost-cutting efforts.

Trump and Musk's war of words Social media sniping ensued.

Musk said Trump would have lost the election without his support, while Trump wrote that the "easiest way to save money" in the budget would be to terminate Musk's federal subsidies and contracts, referring to Musk's companies including Tesla and SpaceX.

Then Musk claimed without evidence that

UPDATE

Musk called Trump before conveying 'regret' for some of his posts about him, say sources. Donald Trump and Elon Musk are mending fences. But the president could not resist the opportunity to take a swipe at the Tesla CEO when he signed a resolution blocking California's electric vehicle mandate.

At a bill signing event at the White House, Trump invoked his high-profile former aide: "Now I know why Elon doesn't like me so much."

"Which he does actually, he does," Trump added before he moved on.

Trump and the wealthy businessman have been sparring over a separate piece of legislation: the GOP's tax cut bill, which passed the House at the end of May and is pending before the Senate.

Trump's Justice Department has not released the full Jeffrey Epstein files because Trump is in them — an allegation that Trump denied and called "old news" in a Saturday interview with NBC News. While the White House did not directly comment on those allegations, press secretary Karoline Leavitt issued a statement denouncing the "unfortunate episode from Elon" and accusing him of opposing Trump's bill because "it does not include the policies he wanted."

'This isn't an isolated incident': Trump's show of military force in LA was years in the making

Donald Trump is targeting Los Angeles, the biggest city in deep-blue California – a sprawling metropolis shaped by immigrant communities that the president described on Tuesday as a “trash heap” – with a show of force many years in the making. After his first term, Trump expressed regret for not taking a more heavy-handed approach to the 2020 protests over George Floyd’s murder by police. So when demonstrations against his immigration crackdown erupted last week in Los Angeles, he turned to the playbook he wished he had used then – federalizing the national guard and deploying hundreds of US marines to confront what Democratic officials insist was a manageable situation, escalated by a president who the state’s governor, Gavin Newsom, has warned is increasingly behaving like a “dictator”. It’s the made-for-TV clash Trump has been waiting for: visually gripping scenes of unrest in a Democratic-run city furious over his administration’s mass deportation agenda. “Chaos is exactly what Trump wanted, and now California is left to clean up the mess,” Newsom



said on Twitter/X. Trump has said he “would have brought in the military immediately” if he could redo 2020. And, former defense secretary Mark Esper told NPR in 2022, Trump asked if protesters could be shot. “Can’t you just shoot them, just shoot them in the legs or something?” Trump asked, according to Esper. The showdown in Los Angeles brings together longtime overlapping goals of the Trump regime: bringing state and local officials to heel; trying to tap as many resources as possible for his deportation program; and going after protesters who speak or act against him, all while stretching the boundaries of legality. Sending troops into an American city to stifle largely

peaceful protests is a “test case” that, depending on how it plays out in Los Angeles, could be a strategy the administration replicates in other cities, said Sarah Mehta, the deputy director of government affairs at the ACLU. “This isn’t an isolated incident,” she said. “I think what we’re seeing in Los Angeles is this culmination of several weeks of incredibly aggressive immigration policing, the federal government asking the military to get further involved in immigration enforcement, including the transportation of unaccompanied children and attention and riot control, and then on top of that, again, these really targeted attacks against cities and states

that are not going along with Trump’s aggressive deportation regime.” Karen Bass, the mayor of Los Angeles, said her city was being used as a proving ground for how the federal government might exert its authority over other local governments that resist the president’s agenda. “I feel like we are part of an experiment that we did not ask to be a part of,” she said, speaking at a press conference in downtown Los Angeles on Monday. While Trump sows chaos in the streets, the mayor said, the city’s immigrant communities were gripped by a “level of fear and terror” over the administration’s escalating enforcement efforts, with some undocumented workers staying home and mixed-status families afraid to attend school graduation ceremonies. In January, Trump returned to power with what he says is a popular mandate to carry out the largest deportation campaign in US history. Amid growing frustration over the pace of removals, the White House is turning to increasingly forceful tactics, including stepped up raids on workplaces. On Friday, scattered protests

broke out in response to a series of immigration sweeps, in some instances by federal agents wearing tactical gear, at businesses across the Los Angeles area. Newsom and Bass said local and state law enforcement were fully capable of handling the demonstrations, but as images of cars on fire and clashes with police spread online, the Trump administration ignored the state’s wishes and brought in the national guard – an extraordinary move that state officials said brought even more protesters into the street over the weekend. Then on Monday, a day of larger, mostly peaceful protests, Trump ordered additional national guard troops and hundreds of US marines to the city. “We will liberate Los Angeles and make it free, clean and safe again,” Trump vowed, in a speech to soldiers at Fort Bragg on Tuesday. Democratic cities, in particular, have long drawn Trump’s ire. On the campaign trail, he frequently pointed to liberal cities, painting them as hellscape devoid of capable leadership that would be better run with him in White House.

The Guardian view on Trump and deportation protests: the king of confected emergencies

Donald Trump will celebrate his birthday with a North Korean-style military parade costing tens of millions of dollars this weekend. He has gratefully accepted the early gift of the demonstrations, which have spread across the country, with more scheduled for Saturday. The president’s immigration crackdown spurred overwhelmingly peaceful protests in Los Angeles. Ordering in troops, over the governor’s head, then inflamed the situation and allowed the agent of chaos to portray himself as its nemesis once more. Mr Trump has diverted attention from his rift with Elon Musk, the stalling of his “big, beautiful” tax and spending bill, the court-ordered return of the wrongly deported Kilmar Ábrego García and the impending impact of



tariffs. But underlying the manufactured crisis is a deeper agenda: reigniting fear of undocumented migrants, delegitimising protest, and thus expanding his power. Migrant families, and those who have

taken to the streets to support them, are portrayed as “animals” and the perpetrators of “invasion and third-world lawlessness” – requiring Mr Trump to amass more might to protect America. Gavin Newsom, the Democratic

governor of California, rightly described this as an assault on democracy. As he noted, “authoritarian regimes begin by targeting people who are least able to defend themselves. But they do not stop there.” Due process has been discarded. American citizens are among those being swept up in raids. Mr Trump has said that Mr Newsom himself should be arrested. Stephen Miller, the White House deputy chief of staff, calls the protesters “insurrectionists” – though his boss, of course, pardoned the actual insurrectionists of the January 6 Capitol attack. Mr Trump’s tactics are familiar in both the broad and narrow sense. In his book *On Tyranny*, published in 2017, the historian Timothy Snyder urged readers

to listen for “dangerous words” such as “emergency” and reminded them that “the sudden disaster” requiring the suspension of freedoms “is the oldest trick in the Hitlerian book”. Mr Trump drew a bleak portrait of American carnage in his inaugural speech and described himself as “the only thing standing between the American dream and total anarchy”. Since his re-election he has declared emergencies to push through tariffs, loosen energy regulations and ramp up deportations. His methods are transparent – and sometimes blocked by courts – yet still effective. For his supporters, each rock thrown, each billow of smoke, is fresh evidence of the menacing “other” encroaching upon their home.

Breaking: Female Star Foolishly Assumes She's An Equal - On Deepika-Vanga Clash

By Ishita Sengupta

In an industry notorious for headlessly moving from one weekly release to another, Bollywood's guarded diplomacy was disrupted by two news pieces last month. An actor exited a popular franchise, prompting the co-actor to sue him for crores of rupees. And then, reports of a famous actress dropping out of an upcoming film started swirling in media circles. None of these are extraordinary events, but in the curated times we have come to inhabit, where perception is reality, disagreements unravelling in the public domain felt rare - reminiscent of a time when celebrity spats and reunions were documented for posterity. This feeling of nostalgia was sealed when the embittered filmmaker criticised the said actress on social media. The year is 2025, but who can tell?

In the early weeks of May, several media outlets reported that Deepika Padukone was to play the female lead opposite Prabhas in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's upcoming pan-India film, Spirit. What seemed like a conjecture awaiting confirmation fell through spectacularly in the next couple of days. The same websites carried a follow-up. Padukone was no longer part of the project. Multiple reasons were cited: her alleged ask of Rs 40 crore with profit sharing, refusal to work for more than six hours and speaking Telugu dialogues. The filmmaker deemed these demands "unprofessional" and dropped her.

The Usual Vanga Script

Although the actress issued no statement before or after the news broke out, Vanga took only two days to confirm Tripti Dimri as the female lead of his film. Fan clubs fought it out on social media and Vanga struck again. He took to X and put out a more elaborate comment, this time accusing Padukone of playing "dirty PR games" and leaking the plot of the film. "I put years of hard work behind my craft & for me, filmmaking is everything. You didn't get it. You won't get it. You will never get it," read a part of his tweet. No names were mentioned, but the identity was laid bare. Maintaining silence still, Padukone shared a short clip on her Instagram, talking about the importance of being authentic. It was from an event she attended, but fans were quick to point out that Vanga was the target audience.

Since then, noise around the matter has only amplified. Social media is clogged with opinions; a journalist who had extensively reported on Spirit, including some extraneous plot details, had to



tweet that his reportage was informed by his own sources and not anyone's PR. The incident has assumed such dramatic inflexions that it could be straight out of Vanga's films, all of which feature volatile male protagonists unable to handle rejection. Sample the premise: slighted by a woman, man rages in public.

Media, on the other hand, is busy assigning sides. In promotional events, actors and directors are being queried about the feasibility of working shorter shifts, and many (including actor Ajay Devgn and filmmaker Mani Ratnam) are rallying behind the practice. The consensus is this: Padukone is a young mother (having birthed her daughter in September last year) and right in seeking work-life balance.

Only Love For Men

But gauging the rationality of her requirements feels superfluous. Nothing Padukone asked for hasn't been asked before. Top actors in Hindi cinema, as do elsewhere, have stakes in the film's earnings in addition to their fees. The arrangement works on the assumption that being brands themselves, they confirm returns. Equally familiar is the conversation around time. Many Bollywood actors openly speak about the stringency - or not - of their schedules. Akshay Kumar's early-morning shifts and his co-actors working around it is a widely known fact, as is the one that Shah Rukh Khan arrives late on sets.

On chat shows, particulars of their routine are shared as anecdotes. Kumar is lauded for being disciplined, while Khan is treated with an indulgence one would reserve for a child. The adoration remained undimmed even when the actor brought in Atlee, who hitherto made Tamil films, to direct Jawan (2023). Khan, also the producer, spoke in

Hindi, as did Nayanthara, a superstar down south. The Telugu and Tamil versions were simultaneously released, but his portions were dubbed. Granted, a filmmaker is within their rights to be specific about their wants of an actor, but such a plethora of precedents normalises Padukone's demands, revealing them to be reiterations. Then what makes the actress "unprofessional" and her male counterparts agreeable? Presumably her gender.

It's The Market, Silly

The Hindi film industry, like most workspaces, is deeply stratified. Gender disparity manifests in women having less screen time, being offered decorative roles and paid less than the male protagonists. Exceptions exist, but in the last couple of years, Bollywood has leaned on hyper masculinity with fuller force. Every time actresses have spoken up against the system and narratives prioritising men, 'well-meaning' actors and producers have argued that it all boils down to bankability and market forces. In an old interview, Aamir Khan had famously said that the day an actress can fill in more seats than him, she will be paid more. Bringing together a pan-India superstar and a global icon, albeit not the first time, Spirit could have been the litmus test.

Remember Padmaavat?

Padukone is the brightest star today in the firmament of Indian cinema. In her close to two-decade career, the actress has achieved everything there is to be achieved. Films headlined by her have done exceptional business, and so have those in which she featured with other actors. She has been consistently successful for a decade; she has been successful even when others around her haven't. In 2018, her lone face featured on the poster of Sanjay Leela

Bhansali's Padmaavat, a practice so rare that it only made sense when reports confirmed she was paid more than the two male leads. The film earned approximately Rs 550 crore worldwide, a practice that Padukone's later outings have only perpetuated. For instance, her last three features have done business of Rs 2,000 crore and more.

She also endorses a litany of national and international brands. She is the brand ambassador of global luxury brands like Cartier and Louis Vuitton, and in 2022, served as one of the jury members at the Cannes Film Festival. All this might read like Wikipedia entries, but they affirm her indisputable market viability.

For context, this is the actress who put forth certain demands and a filmmaker known for appeasing the bruised male egos of the country, turned her down. Padukone, with her enviable box office record and extensive appeal, asked for things that men have been asking for decades, and Vanga, maker of three films comprising one remake, was unhappy enough to be vocal about it. The discourse, therefore, should be less about dissecting the morality or technicality of Padukone's wants, and more about discussing the possibility of women wanting things. The question should not be if the actress, with a baby at home, was right in wanting to work for six hours and be paid for extra labour, but if there will ever be a right time for actresses to want things? How much more successful do women need to be for their demands to be deemed adequate and not excessive? More crucially, is inequality a problem that can be solved or a reality being actively glossed over?

None Of This Matters

If there is inherent prejudice in the way things unfolded, it only intensified when Vanga outraged in public. His complaint of Padukone and her PR disclosing the plot of Spirit, though impossible to ratify, holds little water. All that is known is that it will be an A-rated action film, which is as much a spoiler for a Vanga project as is John Abraham playing a male saviour in his next outing.

But in the larger picture, none of this matters. Not the veracity of his claims, nor the specificity of Padukone's contract. Their names don't matter and nor does the fate of Spirit. What is critical is this fresh but not by any measure the first evidence of bias in an industry that allows women to break the glass ceiling but not shatter it; enjoy their success but not earn dividends on it.

The year - I keep forgetting - is 2025.

BJP Manifesto: Promise Versus Reality

BY Derek O'Brien

June 9 marks exactly one year since Narendra Modi and his Council of Ministers were sworn in. Before the elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) published a 69-page manifesto. Here are 15 promises from the BJP Manifesto 2024. What is the reality in 2025.

1. Promise: Expanding our efforts to protect garib ki thali (page 11).

Reality: According to the World Bank, 7.5 crore Indians earn less than Rs 225 per day. The poorest 5% spend Rs 68 per day. A vegetarian thali costs Rs 77.

2. Promise: Empowering the neo-middle class (page 13).

Reality: Between 2014 and 2024, household liabilities have doubled, while net financial savings have fallen to one of their lowest levels in the last 50 years.

3. Promise: Creating high value jobs (page 14).

Reality: Since 2021, more and more people have been pushed towards agriculture. Currently 46% of the workforce is engaged in agriculture. Nearly three out of five people are self employed, which experts call 'not the best form of employment'.

4. Promise: Participation of women in the workforce (page 15).

Reality: Between 2018-23, the proportion of women engaged in employment-related activities rose by just 2.3 percentage points. Time spent on employment-related activities increased by just 10 minutes over five years. The



labour force participation rate for women remains half that of men.

5. Promise: Implementing the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Bill) (page 16).

Reality: BJP has 13% women MPs in Lok Sabha. The Bill was passed in 2023. However, it was linked to the Census which is slated to be conducted in 2027. Post Census, the delimitation exercise will be held. It is only after both of these, that the Bill can be actually implemented. When? Anybody's guess.

6. Promise: Strengthening PM KISAN (page 22).

Reality: 30 farmers commit suicide every day. Between 2018-23, real wages declined annually by 0.4% in rural areas, while agricultural wages saw an annual growth of just 0.2%. The suggestion made by a Parliamentary Committee to increase funds under PM Kisan to Rs

12,000 has been ignored.

7. Promise: Global manufacturing hub (page 42).

Reality: The value added by the manufacturing sector declined from 12.3% of GDP in 2023 to 4.5% in 2024, falling below 2014 levels. Over the past two years, only one in ten individuals have been employed in manufacturing. Between 2015 and 2024, the number of manufacturing MSMEs grew just over 2%.

8. Promise: Expansion of kavach train protection system (page 45).

Reality: In four years, Kavach has been installed in just 2% of routes and less than 1% of locomotives. At the current rate of progress, the implementation of Kavach across the Indian Railways network could take a few decades to complete.

9. Promise: Expanding bullet trains (page 46).

Reality: The government announced the bullet train project in the railway budget 2014 with an estimated expenditure of 60,000 crore. 11 years later, after spending more than Rs 71,000 crore, less than half the project has been completed.

10. Promise: Expanding expressways and ring roads (page 47).

Reality: In 2017, the government sanctioned 34,800 km under Bharatmala Pariyojana. However, only about half of this has been completed. Nearly 25% of the project has not even been awarded as yet.

11. Promise: Developing airports for seamless connectivity (page 48).

Reality: 114 routes have been discontinued even before they completed three years. 619 routes were operationalised of which half are currently operational under UDAN.

12. Promise: Combating corruption (page 54).

Reality: In the last decade, only two convictions have been made out of 193 cases against MPs, MLAs, and political leaders by the ED. In the last 11 years, a total of 5297 cases were filed by ED. Only 47 were taken to court for trial. For every 1000 cases filed, accused were found guilty in only seven cases.

13. Promise: Strengthening AIIMS (page 57).

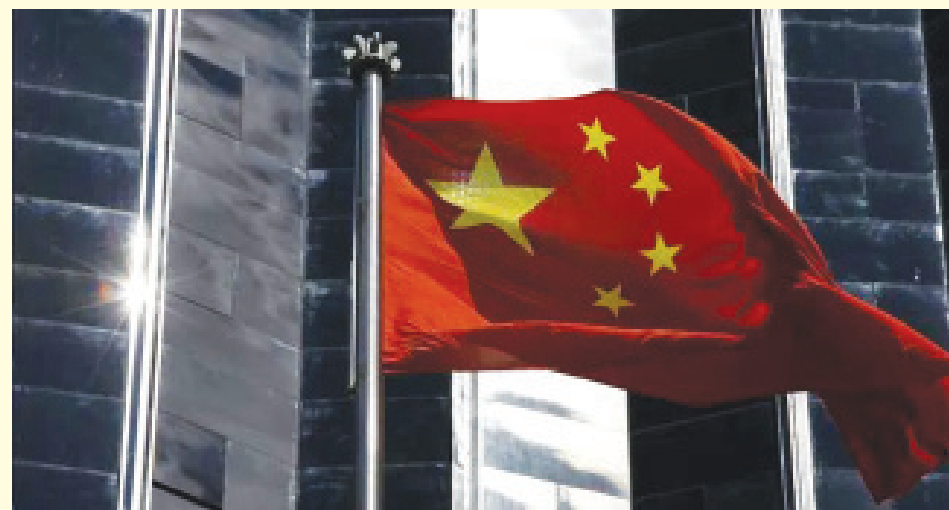
Reality: 18,737 positions are vacant in AIIMS hospitals across India. More than 2200 of these positions are related to faculty.

How China Has Been Blocking India's UNSC Actions Since The 2000s

By Aishwaria Sonavane

In the India-Pakistan strategic dynamic, China has emerged as an inextricable third actor, turning a bilateral rivalry into a triangular matter. While military escalation in the subcontinent does not align with Beijing's strategic interests, its pro-Pakistan leanings often manifest on international platforms. Most recently, China blocked the designation of The Resistance Front (TRF), an alleged offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), following the 2025 Pahalgam attack. This move reflects a longstanding pattern: China has consistently complicated New Delhi's diplomatic efforts to isolate Pakistan-based groups in global forums.

As India seeks broader consensus on counterterrorism designations, particularly at the UN Security Council (UNSC), China has frequently intervened by blocking or delaying the listing of individuals affiliated with anti-India groups such as LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). A "technical hold" in the UNSC sanctions process allows a member state to indefinitely delay



designation without a formal veto. For decades, China has exploited this to delay, if not deny, sanctions on Pakistan-linked terror architecture without triggering a diplomatic confrontation.

The symbolic framing of China-Pakistan relations, famously described by former Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani as "higher than mountains, deeper than oceans, stronger than steel, and sweeter than honey", for now has translated into sustained strategic cover for Pakistan on the international stage.

Chinese media's description of terrorism in India, such as the Pahalgam attack, as a case of "shooting" by local gunmen against civilians, further supports the Pakistani narrative of the conflict.

'Technical Holds'

China's pattern of using "technical holds" in the UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee can be traced to the early 2000s. After the 2001 Indian Parliament attack, India began pushing for international sanctions against Pakistan-based outfits. While China supported the designation of

groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks, it remained reluctant to target individuals associated with these anti-India groups, most notably JeM chief Masood Azhar, who was finally listed in 2019. India's first formal request to enlist Azhar came in 2009, following the Mumbai attacks and was followed up in 2016, 2017, and 2019. While international pressure eventually influenced this reversal after two decades, the exclusion of any reference to the Pulwama attack in the final listing allowed China to maintain that Azhar's designation was based on his long-standing links to terrorism rather than a specific attack on India.

Over time, the Pathankot attack of 2016 and the Pulwama suicide bombing in 2019 resulted in intensified Indian diplomatic efforts targeting Pakistan-based terrorist leaders and groups. All efforts were impeded by China's technical holds, despite co-sponsorship by France, the UK, and the US. At large, this trend continues.

A Case For Decency

By Manoj K. Jha

At my first job at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, a colleague used to often say that when reason fails, people turn to intimidation. Even after three decades, this simple yet immensely clarifying thought has stayed with me. Each time I see people increasing their decibel label in conversation, that word of wisdom from my former colleague echoes a timeless truth: when people fail to win through ideas, they try to dominate through hectoring and violence.

We seem to have forgotten that in a decent society and a deliberative democracy, persuasion is won through reason, evidence, and thoughtful exchange of ideas. Increasingly, we have devolved into a society where force and intimidation have come to supplant reason and logic. The shift from reasoned debate to confrontational rhetoric is not just a failure of civility, it also marks the erosion of intellectual engagement itself. When arguments are no longer grounded in facts or ethical reasoning, and instead hinge on personal attacks, outrage, or coercion, the entire fabric of democratic conversation begins to unravel.

Age of Unreason

In a decent society and healthy democracy, political leadership is expected to be rooted in deliberation, critical engagement, and an openness to consensus in the face of complexity. However, the increasing tendency of political leaders to derive rhetoric, strategies, and even policy positions from the volatile ecosystem of social media threatens the foundational ideals of democratic governance and civilisational values. The algorithms that drive social media platforms are designed to create echo chambers and amplify polarising content. When political leaders align themselves with such content, knowingly or otherwise, they risk deepening social divisions, delegitimising dissent, and crowding out marginalised voices. The public sphere, ideally a space for reasoned contestation of ideas,



becomes instead a battlefield of binary choices and emotional misuse.

At its core, democracy is meant to be slow, deliberate, and dialogic. It thrives on institutional debates, public reasoning, policy scrutiny, and the patient building of consensus. Social media, by contrast, rewards immediacy, emotion, and amplification. Algorithms favour sensationalism, not subtlety, outrage, not nuance, sound, and not substance. In such a terrain, public discourse often devolves into a contest of who can shout the loudest or trend the fastest, rather than who can lead with wisdom and integrity.

When discourses on any public platform are shaped by such dynamics, it becomes reactive rather than reflective. Quick takes, outrage-driven trends, and polarising soundbites replace thoughtful debate, informed policymaking, and reasoned dialogue. In the process, democratic discourse gets reduced to viral content, eroding the space for critical thinking. Leaders who pick up trending hashtags, memes, or outrage-inducing posts often bypass institutional mechanisms of consultation, debate, and scrutiny. This not only accelerates the trivialisation of serious public issues but also encourages populist posturing over meaningful policymaking and demonising the 'other', who are,

essentially, part of us. As a result, both public reason and democracy stand to lose.

Closing of Spaces

The civil society space is not any different. Drawing on Thomas Blom Hansen and Neera Chandhoke, the capture of civil society in India reflects a complex process whereby autonomous civic spaces have become increasingly subordinated to state power and hegemonic political projects. Chandhoke reveals how the state exercises control not merely through direct coercion but through more subtle mechanisms that co-opt and neutralise civil society organisations. Hansen's work on India's illiberal democracy complements this by showing how supposedly democratic deepening has actually facilitated the capture of civic institutions by exclusionary forces. This capture manifests in a divided and hierarchical civil society that has denied the marginalised their voice, while privileged sections of civil society become complicit in maintaining existing power structures. The result is a civil society that appears vibrant on the surface but has lost much of its transformative potential, functioning more as an auxiliary to state power than as a genuine space for democratic contestation and social change.

The approach even in the political community is to shout down the opposition rather than good faith

engagement. The united opposition has shown at many instances, most recently and prominently in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, that it wants to work with the government in a constructive manner. However, these overtures are often met with dismissive rhetoric and partisan attacks that prioritise scoring political points over addressing substantive policy concerns. This pattern of response not only undermines the democratic process but also squanders opportunities for bipartisan collaboration that could lead to more effective governance and better outcomes for citizens. In such an environment, democratic institutions are weakened, civic trust is battered, and the very idea of democratic maturity is cast aside in favour of populism. The dangers emanate from the fact that in an age of digital immediacy, where attention spans are short and outrage trends by the hour, people's perceptions are increasingly shaped by the volatile ecosystem of social media platforms.

Digital Distancing

The proliferation of apps, dashboards, and digital interfaces creates distance between people and meaningful political engagement. As governance increasingly moves online through various service delivery platforms, citizens are subtly recast as customers rather than participants in a democratic

process. This shift becomes especially clear when digital systems fail or exclude certain populations and instead of mobilising politically to demand accountability, affected individuals file complaints or seek alternative service providers, much like dissatisfied consumers. Digital distancing represents a fundamental shift in how citizens relate to governance and politics.

For a diverse democracy like India, this digital distancing poses existential risks to social cohesion and constitutional governance. In these algorithmically-curated spaces, genuine dialogue gives way to performative derision, legitimate dissent is branded as disloyalty, and politics devolves into a theatre of perpetual conflict. The platforms' reward systems prioritise provocative content over informative discourse, fundamentally altering the rhythm of political engagement. They replace the deliberative tempo of constitutional responsibility with the frenetic pace of viral content cycles. This transformation undermines the quality of democratic discourse while distancing citizens from the patient, collaborative work of building a pluralistic society. Citizens become passive consumers of political spectacle rather than active participants in democratic governance.

Dozens of states sue to block the sale of 23andMe personal genetic data

Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia on Monday filed a lawsuit in bankruptcy court seeking to block the sale of personal genetic data by 23andMe without customer consent. The lawsuit comes as a biotechnology company seeks the court's approval to buy the struggling firm. Biological samples, DNA data, health-related traits and medical records are too sensitive to be sold without each person's express, informed consent, Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield said in a news release about the lawsuit. Customers should have the right to control such deeply personal information and it cannot be sold like ordinary property, it said.

23andMe customers use saliva-based DNA testing kits to learn about their ancestry and find long-lost relatives. Founded in 2006, the



company also conducted health research and drug development. But it struggled to find a profitable business model since going public

in 2021. In March it laid off 40% of its staff and filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the Eastern District of Missouri, raising concerns about the safety of customer data. Regeneron Pharmaceuticals said last month it aimed to buy the company for \$256 million. Regeneron said it would comply with 23andMe's privacy policies and applicable law. It said it would process all customer personal data in accordance with the consents, privacy policies and statements, terms of service, and notices currently in effect and have security controls in place designed to protect such data. A court-appointed, independent consumer privacy ombudsman was due to examine the proposed sale and how it might affect consumer privacy and report to the court by Tuesday.

Warner Bros. Discovery to be split, as Zaslav retreats from grand ambitions



Warner Bros. Discovery chief executive and president David Zaslav yielded to the reality of the digital age and to the skepticism of Wall Street investors on Monday by announcing he would split the company into two: one focusing on streaming, the other on its cable networks.

Zaslav will lead the streaming and studios company, which will include HBO Max and the Warner Bros. movie and television studios. The cable business, including CNN, TBS, TNT and Discovery, is to be run by the current corporation's chief financial officer, Gunnar Wiedenfels.

"The cultural significance of this great company and the impactful stories it has brought to life for more than a century have touched countless people all over the world. It's a treasured legacy we will proudly continue in this next chapter of our celebrated history," Zaslav said in announcing the split.

"By operating as two distinct and

optimized companies in the future, we are empowering these iconic brands with the sharper focus and strategic flexibility they need to compete most effectively in today's evolving media landscape."

Under Zaslav, the new digital company will seek to continue building subscribers in countries around the world for its own streaming service while creating content for its bigger competitors - Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime.

Debt weighs down Zaslav's ambition The break-up represents a collapse of Zaslav's ambitions and aspirations for the mega-media company.

Just three years, two months and one day ago, Zaslav completed the acquisition of Warner Media in a deal valued at \$43 billion to create Warner Bros. Discovery. He said the combined company would have the scale and caliber of offerings to compete with digital streaming giants. It didn't. That deal required taking on more than \$50 billion in debt. While a significant amount has been paid off, much remains.

WWDC 2025: From iOS 26 to Liquid Glass, here is everything Apple announced while you were sleeping



If you missed the WWDC 2025 keynote overnight, you missed quite a lot. Apple used its annual developer conference to unveil a sweeping redesign and a whole new set of software upgrades across all its platforms. Headlining the event was the launch of the "Liquid Glass" design system, Apple's most significant visual update since iOS 7. With the new design, Apple now brings a consistent, more translucent look to iOS, iPadOS, macOS, watchOS, tvOS, and visionOS.

You may have also missed: All operating systems are now synchronised with the same version number 26. So we now have iOS 26, iPadOS 26, watchOS 26, and even macOS 26 (dubbed macOS Tahoe, sticking to its tradition of place names). The public beta version of the new updates will be available next month, and the stable release will likely happen in September along with the launch of iPhone 17 series. The developer beta version of these updates is already

available now.

But that's not it. Last night's event was full of big and small updates. Let us have a quick look at everything that was announced at WWDC 2025.

Liquid Glass design for the Apple ecosystem

Apple's Liquid Glass interface, as the name suggests, has a glass-like transparency, specular highlights, and subtle motion-based effects inspired by its Vision Pro headset. Additionally, notifications, widgets, control panels and even icons now have a glassy finish, with many elements reacting to light and motion.

iOS 26: Big changes

iOS 26 brings the most visible changes to Apple's most-used product: the iPhone. Beyond the shiny new visuals, the update introduces a unified Phone and FaceTime experience with new features like Call Screening and Hold Assist. The latter keeps your call active in the background and notifies you when someone finally answers.

Detective Sherdil trailer: Diljit Dosanjh is Sherlock in whodunnit set in Budapest

Actor Diljit Dosanjh is playing a detective for the first time in his upcoming film 'Detective Sherdil'. The trailer for the whodunnit set in Budapest was released on June 10, 2025. Diljit plays the titular role in the mystery-thriller.

The trailer begins with the murder of a billionaire played by Boman Irani in Budapest, Hungary. Diljit, as Detective Sherdil enters the crime scene alongside his co-investigator Natasha, played by Diana Penty. He then comes across several family members who are possible suspects in the business-tycoon's murder.

Apart from the confusing plot about the killer, 'Detective Sherdil' also depicts Diljit's flamboyant, witty charm as he calls himself 'Sherlock' for the West and 'Byomkesh' for Indians. The two-minute, 36-second trailer brings a gripping game of deceit, where every suspect harbours a secret, and each new revelation flips the story on its head.



The film's director, Ravi Chhabriya, reflected on the blend of mystery with dark humour. He said in a statement, "The trailer of 'Detective Sherdil' is just the beginning. There's a lot more madness waiting to unfold! It's been a crazy ride, and having someone like Diljit Paaji on board was honestly a game-changer."

While praising Diljit and his acting prowess, he further said, "From day one,

I knew we needed a detective who could balance charm, wit, and a bit of swagger, and Diljit brought all of that and more. The way he got the character to life; and gave it a pulse, a whole new energy that made our vision feel more real."

Diljit, while expressing his excitement about playing a detective, said, "Playing Detective Sherdil has been fun for me. The character quirks and this attitude is something that I have tried differently.

Hope audiences enjoy this character and the film." Diana shared insight about working on a mystery-thriller and said, "Natasha is one of the most grounded characters I've played—she's sharp and lives with logic, structure, and precision. So, throwing her into the chaos of this case was so much fun to explore. What I loved about 'Detective Sherdil' was the tone—clever, edgy, unpredictable."

"Working with Ravi Chhabriya was special—he's clear, collaborative, and gives actors space to really own their characters. And doing this with such a stellar cast, on a platform like ZEE5 which is all about bold, diverse storytelling, was just the cherry on top," she added.

'Detective Sherdil' also features Ratna Pathak Shah, Chunky Panday, Sumeet Vyas, Banita Sandhu, Kashmira Irani, and others in crucial roles. The film was created by AAZ Films and Offside Entertainment; presented by Maurya Entertainment Production.

The film will be available for streaming on ZEE5 from June 20.

Let bygones be bygones: Karan Johar on fallout and patch-up with Kartik Aaryan

Filmmaker Karan Johar reacted to his 2021 fallout with actor Kartik Aaryan. He reflected on sorting out differences and collaborating on their new romantic comedy 'Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri'.

Filmmaker Karan Johar recently opened up on his 2021 fallout with actor Kartik Aaryan. Karan reflected on his patch-up with Kartik and how both of them moved on by sorting out their differences. He also praised the actor's talent and their upcoming collaboration 'Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri'.

Karan commended Kartik's work-ethic and called him "a very connective big star." The filmmaker mentioned that the actor also had "great instinct on screenplay" in an interview with Bollywood Hungama and said, "I think we internally discussed it, worked it out and let bygones be bygones. Kartik is an immensely hardworking actor and a very connective big star today who has a wide audience space." "He has a great instinct on screenplay. He and I met, collaborated and decided to come together — it was all lovely," he added.

Karan emphasised that the film industry is like a family where people may have differences. He further said, "I have had, he's had issues with each other,



but it's a tiny industry, which I call a family. I believe that in a family, kabhi kabhi gile shikwe ho jaate hain (sometimes complaints and misunderstandings happen), but I think good people want to make good films, create good content and, as I said, we don't sweat the small stuff — we have a larger vision to look at."

Previously, Dharma Productions had announced 'Dostana 2' in 2019 with

Kartik and Janhvi Kapoor. The filming of the project came to a standstill due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. The production house later announced that the cast would be reconsidered, confirming Kartik's exit.

Reports of a fallout between Karan and Kartik also surfaced later. However, the duo buried the hatchet and now the latter will feature in Dharma Productions' 'Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri'

opposite Ananya Panday.

The romantic comedy is directed by Sameer Vidwans, who also helmed 'Satyaprem Ki Katha', starring Kartik and Kiara Advani.

'Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri' will be released in theatres on February 13, 2026. Kartik has also been signed for Dharma Productions' fantasy-adventure 'Naagzilla'. The film is scheduled to release on August 14, 2026.