



The South Asian

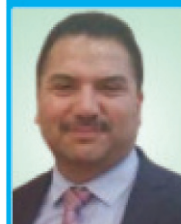


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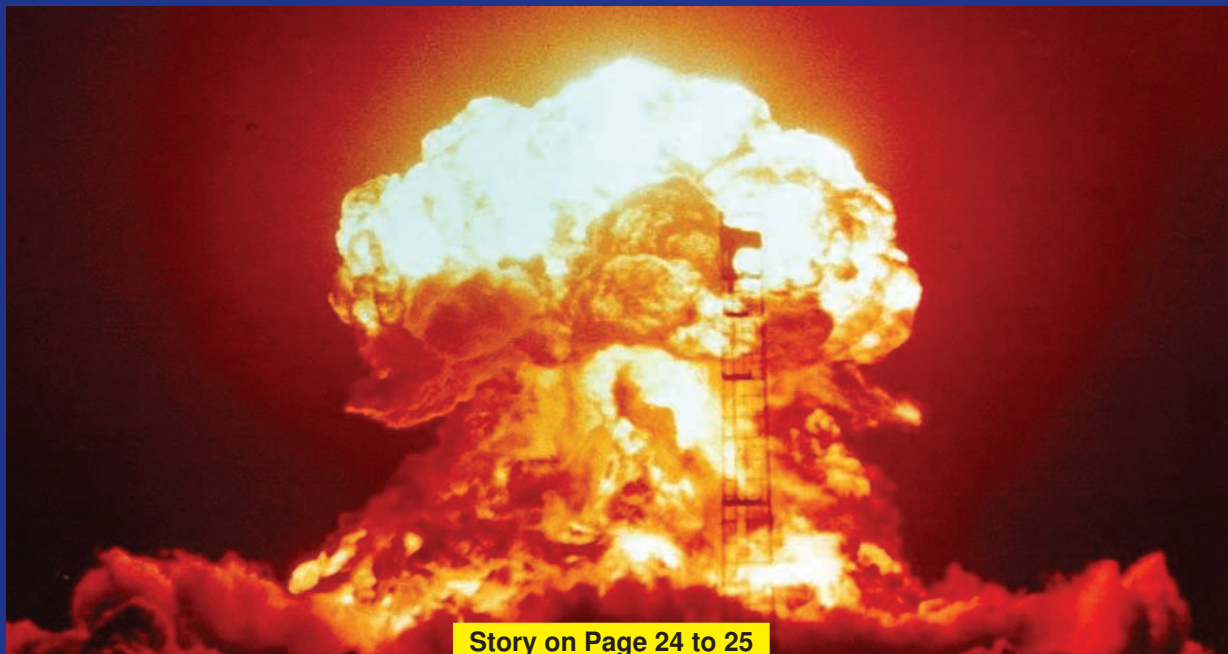
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PM Narendra Modi meets world leaders at G7 Summit in Canada

Canadian PM Mark Carney received Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he arrived at the venue of the G7 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta. Following this, PM Modi met world leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, Lee Jae-Myung, President of the Republic of Korea and others.



Prime Minister Modi held a bilateral meeting with his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney on the sidelines of the summit. He expressed gratitude for the invitation to the G7, saying, "I am very grateful to you for inviting India to G7 and I am also fortunate that I have got this opportunity to visit Canada once again after 2015 and connect with the people of Canada." He also stressed on the importance of India-Canada relations, noting, "India and Canada relations are very important in many ways. Many Canadian companies have investments in India. The people of India also have a huge investment on Canadian soil. Dedicated to democratic values, Canada and India will have to strengthen democracy together, will have to strengthen humanity."

Emphasising India's role on the global stage, PM Modi said, "India is the largest democratic country in the world. As the chair of the G20 Summit, India has taken many initiatives that are beneficial for the world. Today, there is a great opportunity to take the strong foundation that India has laid in the G20 in a new form towards its execution in the G7. India has always been willing to use this opportunity for global good and will remain so in future too."

Prime Minister Modi also held a bilateral meeting with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, marking their first meeting since Chancellor Merz assumed office in May 2025. PM Modi expressed appreciation for the German government's condolences following the tragic plane

crash in Ahmedabad. The two leaders agreed that terrorism continues to pose a significant threat to global peace and stability. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Prime Minister Modi thanked the German Chancellor for Germany's strong expression of solidarity with India in its fight against terrorism. "Delighted to hold talks with Chancellor Friedrich Merz on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Canada... We will keep working together in areas like counter-terrorism and striking down on terror financing," PM Modi tweeted.

On the sidelines of the summit, Prime Minister Modi met Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum. Randhir Jaiswal described the interaction as a significant step forward in India-Mexico ties. "Boosting India-Mexico warm and historical ties. This was the first meeting between the two leaders," he wrote on X. The two leaders explored avenues to deepen cooperation in trade, pharmaceuticals, science and technology, digital innovation, and discussed key global and regional issues, particularly those relevant to the Global South. PM Modi later tweeted, "Had a very good meeting with President Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico."

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and Dr. Raj Bhayani Honor Healthcare Achievers of New York



(By our staff reporter) New York: New York City Mayor Eric Adams, in collaboration with the Healthcare Advisory Council, honored the Healthcare Achievers of New York during a solemn ceremony at the iconic Gracie Mansion in New York City on June 9, 2025. Hosted by Eric Adams in partnership with Dr. Raj Bhayani, president of the Federation of Indian Physicians Association, the event was attended by over 150 prominent community, business, and healthcare leaders from across the

New York tri-state region, representing Indian, Bangladeshi, Afghanistan, Jewish, Spanish, as well as Americans and Caribbean communities. Mayor Eric Adams honored 13 healthcare leaders in New York, representing diverse areas of healthcare, such as physicians, pharmacists, pharmaceutical industries, Practice managers, and entrepreneurs in healthcare, along with people who are doing charitable health activities in the New York region for their accomplishments and contributions to the nation.

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Indian-origin among 18 held in towing scam targeting South Asians

Canada's Peel Regional Police arrested 18 individuals, including Indian-origin people, linked to a Brampton-based organised crime ring tied to towing. The group, investigated under "Project Outsource" launched in 2024, allegedly used violence and staged collisions for extortion and insurance fraud, mainly targeting South Asian businesses.

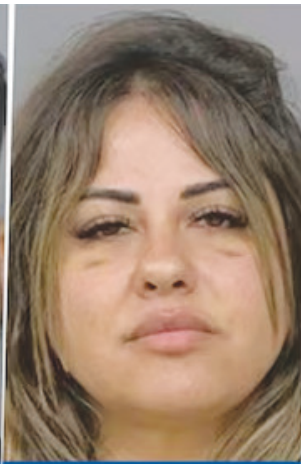
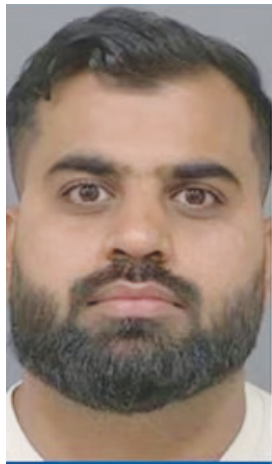
(By our staff reporter)- Over a dozen Indian-origin individuals were arrested by Canada's Peel Regional Police (PRP), and over CAD \$4.2 million (approximately Rs 2.5 crore) in assets were confiscated after dismantling a Brampton-based organised crime network tied to the towing industry.

PRP Chief Nishan Duraipapp said the investigation began following a rise in violent extortion threats, mainly targeting South Asian business owners.

Duraipapp stated that the criminal network used violence to threaten and extort drivers, and also staged vehicle collisions to defraud insurance providers.

The violence included arson, threatening online messages, and drive-by shootings. The Globe and Mail quoted Duraipapp as saying.

The investigation was launched



amid a surge in violent extortion threats against the South Asian community, according to the police chief.

The individuals charged include Inderjit Dhami (38), Paritosh Chopra (32), Gurbinder Singh (28), Kulwinder Puri (25), Parminder Puri (31), Inderjit Bal (29), Varun Aul (31), Ketan Chopra (30), Pawandeep Singh (25), Dipanshu Garg (24), Rahul Verma (27),

Karan Boparai (26), Mankirat Boparai (22), Simar Boparai (21), Jovan Singh (23), and Abhinav Bhardwaj (25).

"A large number of the extortions we have been investigating over these years can be attributed to this criminal organisation and those associated with it," Duraipapp said at a news conference, according to a report in CBC.

Last month, three Indian-origin men were arrested in Brampton after they fired shots inside a business establishment in the city to extort money, according to PRP.

Additionally, a 51-year-old Indo-Canadian businessman, Harjeet Dhadda, was shot multiple times in a parking area in Mississauga, Ontario, on May 14. Dhadda, a native of Uttarakhand, had been

targeted with several extortion threats, and his daughter held authorities responsible for not preventing his death.

PROJECT OUTSOURCE WAS LAUNCHED IN 2024

In July 2024, "Project Outsource" was launched to investigate a criminal organisation believed to be behind a significant number of extortion incidents and related acts of violence, according to a statement issued by the police on Monday. Several suspects were found to be associated with towing companies operating under the names Certified Roadside and Humble Roadside. Investigators uncovered evidence that these individuals were engaged in insurance fraud by staging vehicle collisions, and using threats, assaults, and firearms to exert control over local towing operations, the statement added.

Indian-origin professor wins Godel prize for breakthrough in computer science research

Indian-origin professor Eshan Chattopadhyay, along with David Zuckerman, won the 2025 Gödel Prize for their 2016 paper, 'Explicit Two-Source Extractors and Resilient Functions'. The IIT-Kanpur alumnus solved a major open problem in his field. The Godel Prize honours groundbreaking research in theoretical computer science and is one of the field's most prestigious accolades.



WHAT IS RANDOMNESS EXTRACTION?

Imagine you're flipping a weird coin that is not perfectly fair — sometimes it favours heads, sometimes tails. The result is still unpredictable, but not evenly so. Randomness extraction is the process of turning that weak, messy randomness into clean, strong, and fair random bits — like those from a perfect coin toss.

The technique generates truly random numbers using less computing power than previous approaches, potentially boosting security for everything from credit card payments to military communications.

WHO IS THE INDIAN-ORIGIN PROFESSOR?

Chattopadhyay completed his PhD at UT Austin before joining Cornell University, where he now works on pseudorandomness,

circuit complexity, and communication complexity, according to the University of Texas.

In addition to the current honour, Chattopadhyay received a Sloan Research Fellowship in 2023, a National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER award in 2021 and an NSF Computer and Engineering Research Initiation Initiative award in 2019.

Chattopadhyay conducted postdoctoral work at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton and the Simons Institute for the Theory of Computing at the University of California, Berkeley. He earned his PhD at the University of Texas at Austin in 2016 and his BTech at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur in 2011, both in computer science, according to Cornell University.

The work was originally published in the proceedings of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) symposium on Theory of Computing (STOC) in 2016, where it received the Best Paper award, and later in the Annals of Mathematics in 2019, according to Cornell University.

With applications in complexity theory and cryptography, techniques introduced in the paper opened new approaches to long-standing problems in pseudo-randomness and explicit constructions.

Expressing his happiness, Chattopadhyay said, "This recognition is truly an incredible honour. The Gdel Prize has celebrated some of the most beautiful and foundational work in our field. It feels surreal and deeply gratifying that our paper is being placed in that category."

(By our staff reporter)- Eshan Chattopadhyay, associate professor of computer science at Cornell University, and David Zuckerman, professor of computer science at the University of Texas, have been awarded the 2025 Godel Prize for their research paper, "Explicit Two-Source Extractors and Resilient Functions". The paper showed how to turn two poor-quality random sources into one

strong, reliable one—key for making secure, trustworthy computer systems.

The Godel Prize is a top honour in theoretical computer science, given each year, sometimes shared, by ACM SIGACT and the European Association for Theoretical Computer Science. Named after famous logician Kurt Gdel, it recognises one research paper for its exceptional and lasting contribution to the field.

Khalistanis plot 'ambush' during PM Modi's Canada visit

Khalistani separatists in Alberta staged an "ambush" protest during PM Narendra Modi's G7 visit, shouting violent slogans. The anti-Modi rallies in Calgary drew Canadian media attention, but many journalists also praised PM Mark Carney's decision to invite Modi, viewing it as a signal that Canada is beginning to push back against separatist pressure.



Khalistani extremists gathered in Kananaskis, Alberta, to stage what they called an "ambush" protest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is in Canada to take part in the G7 summit. PM Modi is currently on a four-day, three-nation tour covering Cyprus, Canada, and Croatia. For the second leg of his

tour, he reached Canada today.

During his stay in Canada, he is expected to hold bilateral meetings with Mark Carney. PM Modi will also hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Germany, Italy, and Ukraine on the sidelines of the summit.

Canadian journalist Daniel Bordman,

stated prior to PM Modi's visit, a group of Khalistani separatists in Calgary staged intense anti-Modi protests, calling on Canadian PM Mark Carney to "kill Modi politics," and US President Donald Trump to "kill India politics", and going even so far as to call for an attempt to "Balkanise India".

Bordman also said some protesters also stomped aggressively on the Indian flag and tore it.

He also said that amid the clamour, three microphones blared simultaneously, each one competing for attention. Incoherent shouting filled the air, while someone stomped aggressively on an Indian flag — an old staple of these protests, said Bordman.

As per Bordman, the extremists also made a new anti-Modi song. He added that the song pushed the lines of what is acceptable in Canada.

In the video, a man can be seen tearing what appeared to be an Indian Tricolour.

According to another Canadian journalist, Mocha Bezirgan's post on X, Sikhs for Justice, a banned organisation in India, is calling for putting an end to "PM Modi's politics".

Earlier this month, the independent journalist Bezirgan was allegedly assaulted and threatened by a group of pro-Khalistan activists in Vancouver while covering their rally.

Viral videos also showed Khalistani protesters involving anti-India rhetoric, drawing sharp criticism from the Sikh Community back home.

Indo-Canadians nabbed for smuggling Rs 300 crore cocaine into Canada from US

(By our staff reporter)-Several Indo-Canadians were arrested by Canada's Peel Regional Police (PRP) on June 6 in connection with the seizure of 479 kg of cocaine worth CAD \$50 million (approximately Rs 299.3 crore). A total of nine people, which included several individuals of Indian descent, were arrested while they were trying to smuggle cocaine into the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), from the US. The drug bust, according to the police, is the largest one in the department's history. The seizure marked the conclusion of PRP's Project Pelican, a year-long investigation launched in June 2024 that focused on a network of commercial truck drivers smuggling cocaine into Canada through US border crossings in Michigan, according to a statement issued by the police on Tuesday, June 10. The nine people were arrested following multiple raids and now face 35 criminal charges related to drug offences and firearms. As of June 6, the nine accused who have been arrested are: Arvinder Powar (29), Manpreet Singh (44), Gurtej Singh (36), Karamjit Singh (36), Sartaj Singh (27), Shiv Onkar Singh (31), Sajith Yogendrarajah (31), Tommy Huynh (27), and Philip Tep (39). The accused will soon be appearing for bail at the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton.

FIRST MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH WAS ACHIEVED IN

FEBRUARY

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) intercepted a commercial truck at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, which led to the seizure of 127 kg of cocaine concealed in the trailer and the arrest of the driver. According to Toronto-based tabloid newspaper, The Toronto Sun, the seizure was made on February 11. A second bust took



place at the Blue Water Bridge near Sarnia, where authorities discovered an additional 50 kilograms of cocaine. Additional seizures were also made across the GTA in connection with commercial trucking by the Peel Reserve Police, some of which included individuals in possession of loaded firearms at the time of arrest, according to the statement. Following multiple raids in different jurisdictions in Ontario, the nine men were arrested and charged, reported The Toronto Sun.

TWO SEMI-AUTOMATIC FIREARMS ALSO

RECOVERED: PEEL REGIONAL POLICE

"Altogether, PRP seized 479 kilograms of bricked cocaine, with an estimated street value of CAD 47.9 million. They also recovered two semi-automatic firearms," the PRP statement read. PRP Chief Nish Duraipappah said organised crime groups thrive by exploiting border vulnerabilities, which poses a significant risk to public safety. "Organised crime continues to exploit borders and pose serious threats to public safety. However, we remain firmly committed to working with our partners to protect our communities and enhance safety in our region and beyond," Duraipappah said at a news conference held on Tuesday, Canada-based news channel, CBC, reported. Earlier this year, Toronto Police, during Project Castillo, intercepted 835 kg of cocaine worth an estimated \$83 million on the streets that was destined for Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), according to a report in the Toronto Sun. At a January news conference, Toronto Superintendent Paul MacIntyre, of the Organised Crime Enforcement Unit, said that the drugs originated in Mexico and travelled through the US via transport truck and were linked to the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), a Mexican crime syndicate. The smuggling of drugs from the US into Canada via trucks through land ports has been a persistent issue.

Who Is Amritpal Mehro? He Has Threatened 2 More Influencers After Killing 'Kanchan Kaur Bhabhi'



(News Agency)- A fresh wave of fear has swept through Punjab's online community after two popular social media influencers received chilling threats, just days after the murder of Kanchan Kumari, a popular social media influence also known as 'Kamal Kaur Bhabhi'. She was found murdered in an abandoned car at a parking lot near Adesh University in Bathinda on June 9.

In an email sent by Amritpal Singh Mehron—who has already claimed responsibility for Kumari's killing—influencers Deepika Luthra and Simarpreet Kaur alias Preet Jatti were warned to "think twice before stepping out of their homes," prompting heightened

police protection. According to police, Mehron fled to the UAE soon after the crime. Following the threats, the Amritsar Police's cyber cell has registered a case against Amritpal Singh Mehron and deployed security personnel for influencer Deepika Luthra. A police guard has been posted outside her residence, and an investigation is underway to trace the emails and mobile numbers used to issue the threats.

In a video directed at Deepika Luthra, Amritpal ominously stated that parking is not limited to Bathinda and it is "not necessary that a body will be found every time", as he indirectly referred to Kanchan

Kumari's body being left in her car. Other social media influencers have also faced threats, prompting the arrest of Ramandeep Singh from Patiala, whose account was used to send threatening messages.

Who Is Amritpal Singh Mehron?

Amritpal Singh Mehron, the mastermind behind Kanchan Kumari's murder, is the leader of the 'Kaum De Rakhe' group. A Nihang Singh and resident of Mehron village in Moga, Punjab, he has a background in non-medical studies and a diploma in diesel mechanics from ITI, Moga. In 2014, he contested elections from the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar). Mehron has a history of legal issues, including charges under Section 427 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for damaging idols in Amritsar, and other charges for voluntarily causing hurt, wrongful restraint, criminal intimidation, and unlawful assembly in Barnala district. Additionally, a separate case has been registered against him at Dhanaula Police Station in Barnala district under IPC Sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (wrongful restraint), 506 (criminal intimidation), 148 (rioting while armed with deadly weapons),

and 149 (unlawful assembly with a common objective). Punjab Police have now registered a case against him for threatening to kill Amritsar-based influencer Deepika Luthra. The ongoing threats have prompted many social media influencers in Punjab to live in a state of fear.

What Do We Know So Far?

Police arrested two men—Jaspreet Singh (32) of Moga and Nimratjit Singh (21) from Tarn Taran—in the Kanchan Kumari case on June 13. During interrogation, the duo claimed they killed her for allegedly sharing 'vulgar content' that, they said, offended community sentiments. Further investigation revealed a larger conspiracy. According to SSP Amneet Kondal, Amritpal Singh Mehron, a Moga resident who fled to the UAE after the murder, had masterminded the plot months in advance. Mehron and his associates had been monitoring Kanchan's routine, her car, and social media activities. He lured her to Ludhiana under the pretext of a car promotion event. On June 9, the group picked her up, pretending to take her for vehicle repairs in Bathinda. Once there, she was killed in her own car.

Air India Cancels Ahmedabad-London Flight Over 'Aircraft Unavailability'; Delhi-Paris Too Called Off

Air India flights, scheduled to depart for London from Ahmedabad and for Paris from Delhi, were cancelled on Tuesday due to technical issues.

According to the details, the Air India flight AI 159 had arrived from New Delhi to Ahmedabad and was scheduled to take off to London. This was the second Ahmedabad to London Air India flight to have encountered a technical glitch, after another one crashed near the Ahmedabad airport on June 12, killing 241 of 242 onboard.

However, in a statement, Air India denied reports of the Ahmedabad to London flight being cancelled due to technical reasons, and said it was cancelled because of the unavailability of the aircraft, instead. In an official statement, Air India said, "Flight AI159 from Ahmedabad to Gatwick has been cancelled today due to the unavailability of the aircraft, resulting from airspace restrictions and additional precautionary checks, leading to longer than usual turnaround of aircraft, and not due to any technical snag as claimed."

"We regret the inconvenience caused



to our passengers and have made alternative arrangements to fly them to their destination," it added.

On Monday, another of the carrier's flights was cancelled after facing delays caused by operational issues, eventually leading to the expiry of the crew's duty time.

News agency ANI quoted sources and reported that Air India's flight AI2493 from Mumbai to Ahmedabad was

supposed to be operated by an Airbus A321-211 aircraft (VT-PPL).

Early on Tuesday, an Air India flight from San Francisco to Mumbai suffered a technical glitch in one of its engines.

All passengers on the flight were asked to deplane at the Kolkata airport, where the flight had arrived for a layover.

On Monday, an Air India Express flight

from Delhi to Ranchi was diverted back to the national capital shortly after taking off, due to a suspected technical issue.

Before that, an Air India flight returned to Hong Kong shortly after takeoff due to a midair technical issue.

Air India said in a statement that the New Delhi-bound plane landed in Hong Kong safely and was undergoing checks "as a matter of abundant precaution." Airport Authority Hong Kong said in a separate statement that flight AI315 returned to the southern Chinese city's airport around 1 pm. Meanwhile, four days after the deadliest crash in the country in three decades claimed 270 lives, 119 victims have so far been identified through DNA matching with their family members, authorities said.

They also said that the mortal remains of 76 of them, including that of former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, were handed over to their families.

The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner (AI171) crashed into some buildings in the BJ Medical College campus and burst into flames moments after it took off from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport.

Air India Crash: How Gujarat's Famed Disaster Management Abilities Proved Invaluable



(NewsAgency)-A routine afternoon on June 12 turned chaotic when reports of a major plane crash near Ahmedabad airport emerged shortly after 1.41 pm. The response that followed showcased Gujarat's impressive emergency preparedness, with the state machinery acting with urgency, precision, and humanity. Moments after the first distress call was received, Gujarat's 108 Emergency Medical Services

sprang into action. Four ambulances were dispatched immediately, with the first arriving at the site in just three minutes. By 2.10 pm, 31 ambulances had reached the location. "In no time, 176 victims, including survivors and injured, were transferred to nearby hospitals," top government sources informed CNN-News18. The crash site's proximity to the 108 EMS

supervisory office—about 50 meters away—facilitated a swift response. According to EMRI Green Health Services chief operating officer (COO) Jashvant Prajapati, supervisor Satinder Sandhu heard the crash and quickly alerted the command centre, initiating a multi-agency response involving the police, fire, and disaster response teams. "In just ten minutes, 31 ambulances were at the site. That level of rapid

mobilisation reflects strong training and interagency coordination," Prajapati noted. The 108 EMS team handled over 25 emergency calls, deploying 80 personnel, including paramedics and support staff, to manage the situation. Additionally, 25 ambulances remained on standby late into the evening.

The efforts extended beyond immediate rescue operations. Medical and forensic teams across Gujarat sprang into action. A contingent of 140 doctors was mobilised from neighbouring districts to conduct post-mortems. "Starting at 4.30 pm on June 12 and continuing through the night, post-mortem operations went on non-stop until 5 am the next day," state officials reported. In just 12 hours and 30 minutes, most autopsies were completed, with nearly all required DNA samples collected. Hospitals, including Sola Civil Hospital in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar Civil Hospital, and health centres in Kheda, Anand, Mehsana, and beyond, coordinated seamlessly. Forensic specialists and dental

surgeons worked together to ensure the timely identification and dignified handover of remains to grieving families.

Gujarat's health minister Rushikesh Patel praised the medical team's efforts, stating, "Salute to the service commitment of civil staff... Congratulations and best wishes to the staff of Ahmedabad Civil Hospital for their dedicated work in saving the life of a passenger who fortunately survived the Ahmedabad plane crash by providing proper and timely treatment."

As Gujarat mourns the loss of many of its residents, the resilience of its institutions and the compassion of its personnel stand out. From first responders to hospital teams, the focus remained steadfastly on human dignity and swift, sensitive care. State home minister Harsh Sanghavi commended the rescue efforts, stating, "A commendable effort by the rescue teams. This is a shining example of swift response and deep commitment to saving lives."

Gangster Kala Jathedi Requests 6-Hour Parole To Become Father, Court Gives IVF Permission But...

In a striking judicial development, a Delhi court has permitted jailed gangster Sandeep alias Kala Jathedi to undergo a key medical procedure related to in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) while in Tihar Jail, but denied his request for a six-hour parole to facilitate it. Kala Jathedi, a notorious gangster lodged in Tihar in multiple extortion cases, had filed an application before the court seeking interim parole. His counsel, Advocate Rohit Kumar Dalal, argued that the parole was essential due to the time-sensitive nature of IVF.

Dalal submitted that Jathedi's wife, Anuradha Chaudhary, also known in criminal circles as 'Madam Minj' and facing serious charges herself, was undergoing assisted reproductive treatment at a private hospital in Gurugram. He claimed that a fresh semen sample was medically required for embryo



fertilisation, a process that is "time-sensitive and non-deferrable". The court, while not convinced to allow parole, did acknowledge the biological urgency of the matter. In an order passed on June 9, Additional Sessions Judge Deepak Wasan ruled in favour of allowing the IVF process to proceed within the jail premises under medical supervision.

"The applicant and his wife want to preserve their lineage by giving birth to a child to

secure their family tree," Judge Wasan stated, as quoted in the official court order.

According to ANI, the judge further noted, "The present application stands partly allowed and on June 14 between 6-7 AM, the concerned treating doctors from hospital shall visit the jail premises... and collect the semen samples of the accused in the jail. Privacy must be maintained... and aseptic manner must be followed before and after collection."

The court had earlier sought

medical opinions from both AIIMS and RML Hospital. In their responses, both institutions confirmed that semen collection for IVF could be safely conducted within the confines of Tihar Jail. The AIIMS report, in particular, stated that the sample must be transferred to the IVF lab in Gurugram, where the wife is undergoing treatment, within 60 minutes of collection. In line with this, doctors from the treating private hospital were permitted to enter Tihar Jail to collect the sample. The court emphasised that the entire process must occur under the supervision of jail authorities, with due regard to the accused's privacy and medical protocol. Advocate Dalal reminded the court that Jathedi had previously been granted six-hour parole in March 2024 to solemnise his marriage to Anuradha at a heavily guarded ceremony held at Dwarka Banquet Hall. He argued that his client had

honoured all conditions of that parole, posing no risk of misuse or breach of law.

However, the judge did not find this precedent sufficient to extend parole again. Citing security and procedural concerns, the court denied interim custody parole, choosing instead to accommodate the IVF process within the jail itself. Kala Jathedi, a high-profile figure in the Delhi-NCR crime world, is incarcerated in several extortion and gang-related cases. His wife Anuradha, who once had associations with slain gangster Tillu Tajpuria, has also been implicated in serious criminal activities.

The couple tied the knot on March 12, 2024, a union that itself had required judicial approval and tight security arrangements. The marriage took place under a six-hour parole window granted by the court, now referenced in their bid for reproductive assistance.

Jharkhand Shocker: Newly-Wed Woman Poisons Husband To Death, Arrested



Expressing displeasure with the marriage, she stated that she did not like her husband at all and would not live with him.

However, family members from both sides tried to persuade her to continue living with her husband and save the marriage. Further a panchayat was also held on June 5, following which she returned to her marital home with Budhnath.

Later on June 14, the couple visited Ramanujan market in Chhattisgarh.

IANs report citing police reported that the wife allegedly convinced Budhnath to buy pesticide from the market under the pretext that she needed it for agricultural use. It is alleged that on the night of June 15, she mixed the pesticide into her husband's food. Budhnath was found dead the next morning after he failed to wake up. His body was sent for post-mortem examination and the cause of death can be confirmed once the report is received. Further investigation into the death is underway.

(News Agency)-A newly-wed woman was arrested for allegedly poisoning her husband to death in Garhwa district in Jharkhand. This comes on the heels of Meghalaya honeymoon murder case in which accused Sonam Raghuvanshi allegedly killed her husband Raja Raghuvanshi.

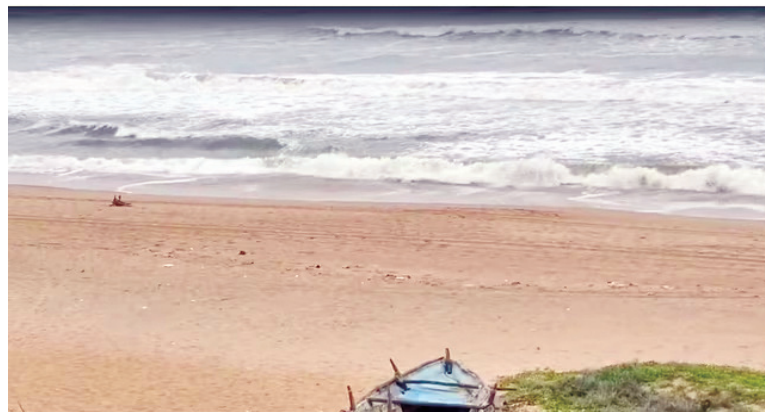
The woman killed her husband, Budhnath Singh, just 36 days after their wedding. The accused wife has been identified as Sunita (22), daughter of Raghunath Singh of Vishunpur village in Chhattisgarh's Ramchandrapur police station area.

Sunita was arrested on Monday evening and was being sent to judicial custody. Budhnath Singh was a resident of Bahokundar village under Ranka police station limits.

News agency IANS citing police reported that the matter came to light after the victim's mother, Rajmati Devi, filed a police complaint accusing her daughter-in-law of murder. Singh and Sunita tied the knot on May 11 this year.

As per IANS report, trouble erupted in their married life the day after the wedding when Sunita returned to her parental home.

Lover Tied Up, Undergraduate Student Gang-Raped By 10 At Odisha Beach



(News Agency)-A 20-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped by 10 people in Odisha's Bhubaneswar. The incident happened at a seaside in Ganjam district's Gopalpur area. The incident came to light after a case was registered at Gopalpur police station after the survivor, an undergraduate student of a private college, lodged a First Information Report (FIR) on Monday. The incident happened on Sunday night when the woman, who lives in a private mess along with three other women, went to the beach along with her boyfriend, who is her classmate, on the occasion of Raja festival. The woman, in her complaint,

alleged that when they were sitting at an isolated place, a group of 10 people approached them, detained her boyfriend and took turns to rape her.

All 10 accused in the crime were arrested, according to the police. "All the detained persons are adults, and we are interrogating them from various angles," the police said. Another senior police officer said that the detained persons were not locals and had visited the beach on the occasion of the festival.

Police also said the medical test of the survivor and the detained persons would be conducted as part of the investigation.

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PM Modi In Canada: India's Firm Diplomacy Pays Off As Carney Clears Up Trudeau's Mess

A thaw is underway between India and Canada. PM Modi's patient yet firm stance has made Canada blink, with Mark Carney making all the right moves. With Trudeau out of the picture, and Khalistani influence marginalised, this icy-diplomatic front has finally warmed up, making for a highly memorable G7 summit. Prime Minister Modi's arrival in Alberta—his first visit to Canada in nearly a decade—coincided with the G7 summit held in the pristine setting of Kananaskis, nestled in the Canadian Rockies. While a rattled group of Khalistani protesters tried to make noise, they ultimately failed to overshadow the real story: a significant diplomatic shift between New Delhi and Ottawa.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's warm reception of Modi was more than ceremonial. It was a signal that Canada is turning a page. Notably, Carney acknowledged "transnational repression," a term often used in Canadian parlance around the Hardeep Singh Nijjar killing. But crucially, he also mentioned "terrorism" in the same breath, recognising India's consistent concerns about Khalistani extremists operating out of Canada.

While answering a question about the Nijjar case, Carney treaded cautiously, saying that a judicial process was underway and he needed to be careful of making further comments. This marks a dramatic shift from the Trudeau era, where extreme and theatrical rhetoric was deployed for narrow publicity and political gains.

Modi's Firm Diplomacy Pays Off

A major sign of progress was the agreement between the two leaders to "designate new high commissioners with a view to returning to regular services to cities and businesses in both countries." This is a restoration of diplomatic ties that had been downgraded during Trudeau's spat with India, when embassies in Ottawa and New Delhi had slashed staff in escalated tit-for-tat measures.

In fact, ahead of the meeting, the two countries made a pact on intelligence sharing on terrorism and crime, directly addressing India's concerns. Under this, the law enforcement agencies on both sides would cooperate with each other. For Canada, this can be sold as cooperation in the Nijjar case, but for India, this means cooperation on countless terror and crime cases involving Khalistanis and other criminals—not to mention a road to their extradition. This moment marks the success of Modi's steady, firm and patient diplomacy. India has remained consistent in its stance on terrorism, extremism, and criminal syndicates, and never wavered even when faced with Trudeau's political theatrics and

international mudslinging. Modi's maturity and firmness have paid off. He refused to dignify Trudeau's provocations, and instead let facts and India's red-lines speak for themselves.

From Harper to Trudeau to Carney: A Rollercoaster Ride

Modi's last visit to Canada was in 2015, when Stephen Harper was Prime Minister. Harper had recognised the threat posed by Khalistani terrorism and chose to push trade and strategic cooperation with India. It was Harper's government that reversed Canada's position on India's nuclear programme, clearing the way for Canadian uranium exports to India and doubling bilateral trade to \$4 billion. But everything changed when Trudeau came to power. Under him, Canada slowly became a haven for Khalistani extremists. Cooperation with India on terrorism and crime diminished, and Trudeau openly pandered to the Khalistani lobby that propped up his minority government. The 2018 debacle, where Trudeau's India visit included a convicted Khalistani on his guest list, was just the beginning. Things nosedived further in 2023 when Trudeau accused India of involvement in Nijjar's death—an allegation that lacked evidence. Rather than responding to legitimate Indian demands for extradition of criminals and terrorists, Trudeau's government resorted to media theatrics, painting India as a perpetrator of "foreign interference" and "transnational repression." The result was the worst deterioration in India-Canada relations in decades.

But Trudeau's political gambit has ultimately collapsed. His handling of India-Canada ties, driven more by vanity than statecraft, unravelled under pressure. Facing mounting criticism from within his own party, Trudeau was eventually forced to step down as Liberal Party leader. This opened the door for Mark Carney, who took the reins and led the party to victory—even as Canada came under intense pressure from a confrontational Trump administration.

Mark Carney: A Pragmatic Reset

Now, Mark Carney is not a man of showmanship like Trudeau, but a seasoned economist who has formerly led the central banks of Canada and the United Kingdom. Carney brings a different tone to Ottawa—one of measured pragmatism. His campaign had already signalled a rethink on India. Upon taking office, he quickly set about recalibrating Ottawa's foreign policy. Carney extended the invitation to Modi for the G7 summit, recognising India's growing global influence. While the invitation was unusually delayed, it was finally issued and accepted—likely the result of intense backchannel negotiations.

By : Shubhangi Sharma

Why establishment Democrats still can't stomach progressive candidates like Zohran Mamdani

Who's afraid of Zohran Mamdani?

The answer, it would seem, is the entire establishment. The 33-year-old democratic socialist and New York City mayoral candidate has surged in the polls in recent weeks, netting endorsements not just from progressive voices like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders but also his fellow candidates for the mayoralty, with Brad Lander and Michael Blake taking advantage of the ranked-choice voting system in the primary and cross-endorsing Mamdani's campaign.

With the primary just around the corner, polls have Mamdani closing the gap on Andrew Cuomo, the disgraced former governor of New York. This has spooked the establishment, which is now doing everything it can to stop Mamdani's rise. Take Michael Bloomberg, who endorsed Cuomo earlier this month and followed this up with a \$5m donation to a pro-Cuomo Pac. The largesse appears motivated not by admiration for Cuomo – during his mayoralty, sources told the New York Times that Bloomberg saw Cuomo as "the epitome of the self-interested, horse-trading political culture he has long stood against" – but animosity towards Mamdani and his policies.

Mamdani wants to increase taxes on residents earning more than \$1m a year, increase corporate taxes and freeze rents: policies that aren't exactly popular with the billionaire set.

Bronx congressman Ritchie Torres (who was once progressive but moved steadily away from that and now receives fundraising assistance from far-right donors) is another establishment Democrat trying to prevent a Mamdani win at all costs. Torres, who makes his pro-Israel positions explicit, has criticized Mamdani for pro-Palestine comments. Torres has even said he won't run for governor in 2026 if a socialist like Mamdani becomes the mayor because it will

"revolutionize the political landscape".

The New York Times' editorial board is also aghast at Mamdani's sudden popularity. On Monday, it published a piece urging New Yorkers to completely leave the candidate off their ranked-choice ballot, arguing that the assemblyman is woefully underqualified for office and has a bunch of wacky progressive ideas that will never work including free buses and frozen rent. The Times, which announced almost a year ago that it will not make endorsements in local elections, did not officially endorse a candidate but it certainly didn't tell people not to put Cuomo on the ballot. It seems being accused of sexually harassing multiple women and then going after those women in an aggressive and intrusive way (including demanding gynecological records) isn't as disqualifying as progressive policies. And, of course, the sexual harassment is just one of many scandals that Cuomo has weathered, including allegations he covered up nursing home deaths during the pandemic. Nobody in the Democratic establishment is quite so delusional that they think the party is doing great, yet they seem keen to sabotage anyone who might bring about change. The Atlantic also came out with an anti-Mamdani piece, albeit one that was more subtle and which focused on the process rather than the personality. Staff writer Annie Lowrey argued that ranked-choice voting in a mayor primary, used by New York City since 2021, is not truly democratic: "Without ranked-choice voting, Cuomo would probably steamroll his competition. With ranked-choice voting, Mamdani could defeat him." While there are problems with ranked choice (as there are with first-past-the-post systems), I think the bigger democratic threat might be a system in which a billionaire can swoop in with millions to prop up their preferred candidate at the last minute.

By Arwa Mahdawi



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Looming Threat Of A Third World War

By : Farooq Wani

By most accounts and developments, tensions in most parts of the world are currently at their peak. Conflicts in Europe, the Middle East and Asia show grave signs of escalating, suggesting the possibility of a Third World War taking place in the not too distant future.

No real guesswork is required to identify the leaders responsible for these simmering and sudden conflagrations. Five or six of them are prominent "players", while the rest are possibly being assisted to manage their own region-wise or country-wise disputes by their more prominent counterparts. Currently, the prominent ones are Donald Trump (United States), Xi Jinping (China), Vladimir Putin (Russia) and Kim Jong Un (North Korea). The second rung of conflict-driven leaders includes Benjamin Netanyahu (Israel), Ayatollah Khamenei (Iran), Volodymyr Zelenskyy (Ukraine) and Field Marshal Asim Munir (Pakistan).

The bottom line is that the behaviours and endgames of the leaders mentioned are difficult to predict and so is the impact of their decisions on the world community geopolitically, geo-economically and geo-strategically going forward.

Let us start with the crisis in South Asia, involving Pakistan and India, its two major players. The recent crisis emanating out of a terrorist strike in the sublime environs



of the Kashmir Valley that claimed 26 civilian lives, has been the most significant one between these two nuclear-armed nations in several decades.

It saw military action unfold and wantonly violate earlier mutually decided and agreed to geographic thresholds. It saw state-of-the-art weaponised systems being used and tested for the first time, with telling impacts produced on the ground. It concluded with intense and high-level diplomatic engagement, with the US government indirectly stroking its keys, though India pointedly denied such third-party intervention.

For the first time, we also saw unprecedented levels of misinformation and disinformation being circulated, both at the

diplomatic and the military level, in attempting to project and secure home advantage over what actually transpired between Islamabad and New Delhi during May 7 to 10.

The four-day India-Pakistan conflict following the April 22, 2025 terrorist attack in Pahalgam evolved into a very serious military crisis between the two rival nuclear states in decades. Several military and political conclusions surfaced during and after the crisis, as for example, India demonstrated her ability to deliver precise standoff attacks across large parts of Pakistan on all four days of the conflict, particularly on May 7 and May 10.

Pakistan, on the other hand, exposed its air defence vulnerability in the face of an

Indian aerial attack.

Both sides also made the world aware of how seriously they viewed the threats from the air.

Politically and diplomatically, the India-Pakistan interaction, if any, remains crisis-prone, and these only have the potential to escalate in terms of severity over the passage of time. Both sides were successful in calibrating and managing their respective escalatory levels.

The crisis in South Asia was costly in terms of loss of human lives and expended or destroyed military equipment. Will those costs prompt them to proceed with care and caution in bilateral ties, out of fears of dangerous spillover effect and impact on the extended region, only time will tell. The latest confrontation, however, underscores the point that South Asia could be one of the most likely theatres of a long-drawn-out war, a nuclear war if you will, even if situation is not immediately imminent.

The Russia-Ukraine War is now in its fourth year and is showing no signs of abating anytime soon. The attempts by the Donald Trump-led administration to broker talks and peace between the two warring parties don't seem to have taken off, and is being viewed more as an attempt to sideline Europe politically, militarily and economically, while keeping the conflict in an on-again, off-again mode to secure potential transactional advantages on all three fronts.

The Two Elements Of Surprise In The Iran-Israel Escalation

By Aditi Bhaduri

It was bound to happen. The decades-long shadow war between Iran and Israel has finally turned into a full-blown struggle. In hindsight, it was probably coming all along. There are, however, two elements of surprise here.

The Timing

The first is that of Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear and military installations in the wee hours of June 13, almost on the eve of the sixth round of negotiations between Iran and the US over the former's nuclear programme. US President Donald Trump's demand is that Iran not enrich uranium under any nuclear deal. Iran found this unacceptable. While it has always stated that it did not seek nuclear weapons - as per the diktat against weapons of mass destruction by its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei - Iran has always maintained its right to nuclear energy.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu justified these "preemptive" strikes on Iran, saying how "in recent months, Iran has taken steps ... to weaponise its ... enriched uranium...". The strikes also killed a number of Iran's nuclear scientists, several high-ranking personnel of the elite Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the



Chief of Army Staff, and other personnel. US intelligence officials, however, have said that Iran was not building a nuclear weapon and that Supreme Leader Khamenei had not authorised the nuclear weapons programme suspended in 2003.

Iran's Response This Time
The second element of surprise has been Iran's response to the strikes. Many analysts, including this writer, had expected angry rhetoric and possibly some symbolic strikes against Israel. This is how Iran had responded last year in the aftermath of Israeli strikes on its diplomatic

complex in Damascus. Israel, too, responded by undertaking tit-for-tat strikes against Iran, though it was careful not to escalate tensions. However, this time, it has been the fourth day now that Iran, without a common border with Israel, has been raining drones and missiles on its adversary, simultaneously showing up the gaps in Israeli air defence systems, targeting Tel Aviv as well as the strategic and western most Israeli port city of Haifa, and striking both military and civilian sites. In response, Israel has widened its targets, hitting radar

sites, fuelling aircraft, energy infrastructure, and even a national broadcasting centre during a live broadcast.

Reports have also emerged that Netanyahu was mulling eliminating Khamenei, but President Trump vetoed it.

How The World Sees The Conflict

At the time of writing this piece, around 24 Israelis and 240 Iranians were reported dead, with hundreds more wounded on both sides. Predictably, the sixth round of negotiations between Iran and the US, slated for Sunday in Oman, has been called off. Iranian lawmakers also announced that they were considering drafting a law that would enable their country to pull out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Speculation has also been rife that Iran may close the Strait of Hormuz, which transports a fifth of the world's oil. Editorials in the Arab press, however, have highlighted that doing so would be a self-goal for Iran.

Even so, while the world, including Trump, has urged restraint on both sides, he does not seem to be in any particular hurry to bring the war to an end, pleading instead Russia's case at the G7 meeting in Canada.

Inside China's 'Low-Cost' Arms Exports, Serving Everyone From Pak To West Africa

By Manoj Kewalramani, Anushka Saxena

During Operation Sindoor, the Pakistani armed forces displayed their 'Made in China' export-variant arsenal. This included the use of the HQ-9P and HQ-16 surface-to-air missiles, the PL-15E air-to-air missile, the JL-10CE fighter, and the co-produced JF-17 'Thunder' Block III jet. Pakistan is China's biggest client, accounting for 63% of China's total arms export basket between 2020 and 2024. From a Pakistani perspective, China accounts for 81% of its defence imports. China's arms exports to Pakistan are one part of a complex military production, export, and diplomacy ecosystem that Beijing has built. Over the years, China has focused on becoming self-reliant in the defence manufacturing domain. This process has included making export variants of major weapons. That said, there are challenges that China faces in its defence export agenda. These include political issues and quality-related concerns that make Beijing the lesser-preferred option over the world's top three defence exporters: the US, Russia, and France. Nonetheless, China's defence export market is expanding. And this has significant implications for India.

Growing Military-Industrial Complex

China's military-industrial complex comprises a few, large corporations that focus on innovation and self-reliance. These primarily include the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation (CASIC), Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC), China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC), and China North Industries Group Corporation (NORINCO). They are all State-Owned Defence Enterprises, largely under the administrative control of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) of the State Council. Many of them have been on the Global Fortune 500 lists, and together, they own over 2000 subsidiaries, R&D labs, listed companies and global branch institutions. NORINCO International Ltd., for example, owns oil fields in Iraq and operates R&D and manufacturing facilities in Saudi Arabia. These entities operate on the concept of 'Military-Civil Fusion'. This means that their production cycles conform to the operational requirements of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), and most commercial/civilian products can also be deployed for military purposes at the



Party-state's request. Hence, these firms concentrate their expertise on a particular industrial cluster of importance to the PLA. The CETC, for example, is the PLA's primary radar, communications infrastructure, and electronics supplier. AVIC, and specifically, its main subsidiary, the Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group (CAIG), has its hand in the production of most of China's J-series fighter jets. CSSC, which is the world's largest shipbuilding group, produces most of the PLA Navy's warships. Together, CAIG, CASIC and CASC have also produced most of China's military drones, such as the CH 'Rainbow' series, the Wing Loong series, and the Wuzhen High-Altitude, Long Endurance (HALE) UAV series.

The agenda and priorities for defence production, R&D and safety and quality are laid down by China's chief regulatory body in the military-industrial domain, the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND). Naturally, defence production must comply with SASTIND's technological, safety and quality certification standards. In addition, party and government institutions like the Ministry of Industry and IT, Ministry of Commerce, and the Logistics Department of the Central Military Commission, together lay down regulations regarding ideological commitment of defence SOEs, innovation and export control, and management of talent.

China's Export Philosophy

Since 2022, China's defence budget has consistently witnessed a year-on-year rise of 7.2%. A significant chunk of this money goes into producing defence goods. Of course, part of this expansion of defence production is driven by a profit motive, with Chinese weapons finding their way to warring parties. An example

is Myanmar, where Chinese arms are available to both the junta government, and the Rakhine-based insurgent group, the 'Brotherhood Alliance'.

Sometimes, China is also a supplier of last resort for entities seeking low-cost military equipment. One example is Pakistan, which has imported low-cost export variants of the Chengdu J-10C

fighter jet. Many of these entities, however, have also included non-state actors such as insurgent groups in Chad and Syria, who were found to be in possession of the Chinese-made FN-6 Man-Portable Air Defence System (MANPADS). Despite the controversies arising from such sales, China veils its exports and uses "non-interference" in internal matters of other countries as justification.

A 'Technological Gap'

It is worth noting that Beijing only prioritises international sales of export variant arms, which are usually of lower quality, and keeps the most advanced and efficient defence systems for itself. Chinese commentators also seem to acknowledge that even though China has a cost advantage with a few arms and ammunition, there exists a "technological gap" and a lack of competitiveness against Western alternatives in major arms, such as fighter jets, aircraft carriers, and large warships.



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Rising North-East India: Frontrunner Of Development

By : Monalisa Deka

The North-Eastern region of India, comprised of eight states—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim—is renowned for its beautiful sceneries and exceptional weather. This region, rich in both natural and artificial resources, has recently gained prominence on the global stage. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's inauguration of the 'Rising North-East' summit has spotlighted the region's potential, leading to Rs 4.3 lakh crore in investment interests, positioning it as India's next economic powerhouse. Modi has embraced the region's potential through a comprehensive developmental project. The Minister of Development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER) highlighted eight key focus areas: agriculture, animal husbandry, sports, investments, economic corridors, infrastructure, textiles, and handicrafts.

The North-Eastern region shares international boundaries with Myanmar, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Thailand. Each state boasts unique cultures and traditions, making it a biodiversity hotspot and a culturally rich area. The region plays a crucial role in India's 'Act East Policy,' aimed at strengthening ties with Southeast Asia. With abundant natural resources and potential in agriculture and horticulture, the North-East is emerging as a hub for sustainable manufacturing and services. The region's diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural landscape also makes it an attractive tourist destination, offering significant growth potential in tourism. Covering 2.6 lakh sq. km, the North-Eastern region accounts for 7.98 per cent of India's total geographical area and 3.78 per cent of its population. The terrain is a mix of hills and plains, with hills making up 70 per cent of the land. With a tribal population of around 54 per cent, especially in the hills, the region is home to approximately 135 Scheduled Tribe groups out of the total 705 across India. The area is rich in natural resources, including agro-horticultural and forest resources, hydroelectric potential, oil, natural gas, and minerals, making it ripe for investment and growth. Poor connectivity has historically hindered development, but transportation and infrastructure improvements are now a priority.

Road Connectivity

The Indian government has launched several initiatives to enhance road infrastructure, such as the 3,000-km-long Trans Arunachal Highway in Arunachal



Pradesh and the Dhola-Sadiya bridge in Assam, the longest in India. The Bharat Mala Pariyojana, a key highway development programme, aims to construct 35,000 km of highways across India, including significant projects in the North-East to boost connectivity and regional development.

Air Connectivity

New airports have been built, and existing ones upgraded, making air travel more comfortable and convenient. Incentives like reduced landing and parking fees have attracted airlines, increasing flight numbers. Improved air connectivity has made the North-East more accessible to tourists and businesses, boosting the local economy and regional growth.

Rail Connectivity

The Indian Railways has introduced special trains showcasing the region's cultural and natural heritage, promoting tourism and awareness. New and extended rail services have improved connectivity, contributing to economic growth.

Recent Development Projects

National Highways Expansion: India's National Highway network expanded from 65,569 km in 2004 to 1,46,145 km in 2024, with multi-lane stretches increasing from 18,371 km in 2014 to 48,422 km in 2024.

Bharatmala Pariyojana: Launched in 2017, this programme aims to develop about 26,000 km of Economic Corridors. By November 2024, 18,926 km of roads were completed.

Multimodal Logistics Parks (MMLPs): As part of the Bharatmala Pariyojana, 35 MMLPs are planned with a total investment of about Rs 46,000 crore, expected to handle around 700 million metric tonnes of cargo once operational. **Civil Aviation Growth:** The number of operational airports increased from 74 in 2014 to 157 by September 2024. In the North-East, operational airports grew from 9 in 2013 to 17 by 2023, leading to a 113% rise in traffic. The UDAN scheme added 194 fixed-wing and helicopter routes, boosting tourism, investment, and business. Arunachal Pradesh's first Greenfield airport at Hollongi, Itanagar, connects it to major cities.

Inland Waterways Transport (IWT): A state-of-the-art IWT terminal at Jogighopa, Assam, connected to the Multi-Modal Logistics Park, serves as an international port for Bhutan and Bangladesh, enhancing logistics in the region. The development of National Waterway-2 (Brahmaputra) and National Waterway-16 (Barak River) aims to reduce logistics costs.

Urban and Industrial Growth: A semiconductor manufacturing plant is being established in Jagiroad, near Guwahati, Assam, in collaboration with the Tata Group. The first MMLP in India is under construction at Jogighopa, Assam, set to transform logistics, warehousing, and cargo movement.

Policies and Schemes: Various state government initiatives like the Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme (UNNATI) aim at developing industries and generating employment. The North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS) focuses on enhancing infrastructure related to water supply, power, connectivity, and tourism. The Ministry of DoNER has sanctioned 90 projects costing Rs 3,417.68 crore under NESIDS in the last three financial years. The Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE) funds infrastructure and social development projects, promoting youth and women's livelihoods. The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan aims at strengthening multi-modal logistics and seamless freight corridors. Bharatmala Pariyojana focuses on expanding highway corridors, enhancing inter-state and cross-border trade.

An Old Tango in Washington: Donald Trump, Asim Munir & A Farce India Has Seen Before

By : Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

President Donald Trump, in a move dripping with transactionalism, has rolled out the red carpet for Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Syed Asim Munir. Recently anointed a "Field Marshal" for saving Pakistan from India's fury by securing a "ceasefire," Asim Munir is now in Washington.

He arrives not as a statesman representing a nation, but as an exposed military leader with a begging bowl, seeking to mortgage his country's strategic alignment for his institution's financial and political survival. But this time, there was a crucial and unexpected prologue. Just before meeting Munir, President Trump requested a call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In the 35-minute conversation, PM Modi made India's new doctrine vis-à-vis Pakistan crystal clear. He briefed Trump on Operation Sindoor, framing it as "measured and precise", and made it clear that terrorism is now considered an actual war by India.

The operation, he warned, is merely paused, and would resume with renewed ferocity were Pakistan to attempt any misadventure. With that single phone call, Munir's mission was kneecapped before it even began. He arrives not to a blank slate, but to a chessboard where India has already placed his king in check. THE



GENERAL, NOT THE PRIME MINISTER, TAKES THE STAGE

Munir's itinerary, reportedly including meetings with Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, is not a diplomatic courtesy. It is a coronation. It confirms who truly wields power in Islamabad, and it is not the man with the title of 'Prime Minister.' The meeting between an American President and a Pakistani Army Chief, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is relegated to the sidelines, is the most profound insult to the very notion of Pakistani "democracy." It is a public declaration from Washington that the fig leaf has fallen.

The civilian government in Pakistan is, and has always been, a flimsy façade – a Potemkin village designed to



secure IMF loans and maintain the pretense of a 'modern' state. The real power, the entity that decides matters of war, peace, and nuclear codes, resides in the military's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. By engaging directly with Munir, Trump is simply legitimising Pakistan's military rule. It is a display of strategic myopia, where short-term gains are pursued at the cost of long-term regional stability. A PIVOT FOR A PRICE: WOOING RAWALPINDI, WORRYING BEIJING But why now? The timing, as always, is key. The escalating conflict between Israel and Iran has sent ripples of anxiety through the world. With Pakistan sharing a long and porous border with Iran, its geography once again becomes its greatest, and perhaps only, asset. Washington sees

a frontline state, a potential staging ground, and a lever against Tehran. In this high-stakes game, Trump is making a classic American bet: that the loyalty of the Pakistani military can be bought, or at least rented. He is attempting to pry Pakistan from the tightening embrace of its two most committed patrons: China and Iran.

This courtship is aimed squarely at Beijing. For years, China has nurtured Pakistan as its "all-weather" ally, a strategic gateway to the Arabian Sea through CPEC and a loyal customer for its military-industrial complex. Trump's embrace of Munir, with its unspoken offer of American dollars and technology, is a direct challenge to that leverage. After all, an "all-weather friendship" built on loans can look remarkably fragile when confronted with the immediate gratification of American patronage. Beijing is about to find out just how deep its influence in Rawalpindi truly runs.

The second prize is the vast mineral wealth of Balochistan. Since he took office in January, Trump has been scanning the world topography for rare earth elements (REEs). The India-Pakistan flare-up appears to have brought Balochistan's rare earth deposits to Trump's attention. Balochistan, currently under Pakistani occupation, is estimated to contain 12 of the 17 known REEs.

At Our Core: Social Housing Values



By Ahmed Tigani

While there is no single definition of social housing, every single day, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and

Development (HPD) lives its principles. At its core, social housing is about ensuring everyone — including our most vulnerable neighbors — has access to quality, affordable housing. It emphasizes fairness, inclusion, long-term affordability, and often, community or resident stewardship. These values are at the heart of this agency's work.

Recently, HPD joined the New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings for a hearing on social housing. It was a welcome opportunity to reflect on the work ahead and underscore how deeply rooted these values are in our mission. We understand that housing equity and fair housing go hand-in-hand.

That's why HPD continues to address the barriers that limit housing choice — whether by financing buildings that serve a wide range of incomes, advancing new projects with new and established community land trust or by prioritizing affordable development in neighborhoods that have historically lacked it. The urgency of this work is undeniable. According to the 2023 Housing and Vacancy Survey, New York City's vacancy rate stands at just 1.41% — and it's even lower for the most affordable homes. Meanwhile, there's nearly a \$1,500 gap between the median rent and the median asking rent. For many working families, that means if they need to move — even for positive reasons — they face a steep and often unaffordable jump in monthly housing costs.

These numbers underscore why we must act quickly and decisively to preserve and create housing that New Yorkers can afford. The values behind social housing are embedded in broader

City initiatives — like Housing Our Neighbors, Where We Live NYC, Get Stuff Built, and City of Yes — and HPD, informed by those values, is laser-focused on building and preserving deeply affordable, inclusive homes. In 2024, HPD supported nearly 28,000 affordable housing starts: more than 14,000 new construction units and over 13,000 preserved homes. We deliver this impact through a mix of financing tools, tax credits, and extended regulatory agreements that lock in affordability over the long term. Programs like ELLA (Extremely Low- and Low-Income Affordability), SARA (Senior Affordable Rental Apartments), and the recently relaunched Neighborhood Pillars allow us to create and preserve housing for the New Yorkers who need it most.

And we know that who owns and stewards our housing matters. That's why HPD prioritizes mission-driven partners — including nonprofits and minority- and women-owned businesses (MWBs) — in our work. On City-

owned land, we require these groups to make up at least 25% of the development team. We also invest in their growth by addressing the operational and financial barriers they face. These organizations are deeply rooted in the communities they serve and are essential partners in advancing long-term affordability.

We're also expanding shared equity models that support community stewardship — including Community Land Trusts (CLTs), limited equity co-ops, and HDFCs. HPD has financed or is in the pipeline to finance more than 1,200 units on CLT-owned land. In Edgemere, for example, we partnered with the local CLT to support community-led ownership and sustainable land use. These models remove housing from speculative markets and create lasting affordability that strengthens neighborhoods for the long haul. At HPD, we know this work is complex. But we also know it's possible — and necessary.

PM Modi In Canada: India's Firm Diplomacy Pays Off As Carney Clears Up Trudeau's Mess

By SHUBHANGI SHARMA

A thaw is underway between India and Canada. PM Modi's patient yet firm stance has made Canada blink, with Mark Carney making all the right moves. With Trudeau out of the picture, and Khalistani influence marginalised, this icy-diplomatic front has finally warmed up, making for a highly memorable G7 summit.

A Summit That Changed the Tone Prime Minister Modi's arrival in Alberta—his first visit to Canada in nearly a decade—coincided with the G7 summit held in the pristine setting of Kananaskis, nestled in the Canadian Rockies. While a rattled group of Khalistani protesters tried to make noise, they ultimately failed to overshadow the real story: a significant diplomatic shift between New Delhi and Ottawa.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's warm reception of Modi was more than ceremonial. It was a signal that Canada is turning a page. Notably, Carney acknowledged "transnational repression," a term often used in Canadian parlance



around the Hardeep Singh Nijjar killing. But crucially, he also mentioned "terrorism" in the same breath, recognising India's consistent concerns about Khalistani extremists operating out of Canada. While answering a question about the Nijjar case, Carney treaded cautiously, saying that a judicial process was underway and he needed to be careful of making further comments. This marks a dramatic shift from the Trudeau era, where extreme and theatrical rhetoric was deployed for narrow

publicity and political gains.

Modi's Firm Diplomacy Pays Off

A major sign of progress was the agreement between the two leaders to "designate new high commissioners with a view to returning to regular services to cities and businesses in both countries." This is a restoration of diplomatic ties that had been downgraded during Trudeau's spat with India, when embassies in Ottawa and New Delhi had slashed staff in escalated tit-for-tat measures. In fact,

ahead of the meeting, the two countries made a pact on intelligence sharing on terrorism and crime, directly addressing India's concerns. Under this, the law enforcement agencies on both sides would cooperate with each other. For Canada, this can be sold as cooperation in the Nijjar case, but for India, this means cooperation on countless terror and crime cases involving Khalistanis and other criminals—not to mention a road to their extradition. This moment marks the success of Modi's steady, firm and patient diplomacy. India has remained consistent in its stance on terrorism, extremism, and criminal syndicates, and never wavered even when faced with Trudeau's political theatrics and international mudslinging. Modi's maturity and firmness have paid off. He refused to dignify Trudeau's provocations, and instead let facts and India's red-lines speak for themselves. Modi's last visit to Canada was in 2015, when Stephen Harper was Prime Minister. Harper had recognised the threat posed by Khalistani terrorism and chose to push trade and strategic cooperation with India.





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Audrey Truschke: A Demagogue With A Megaphone

By : Sankrant Sanu

On the streets of New York, Audrey Truschke — then Assistant Professor of South Asian history at Rutgers University — stood with a megaphone and declared to a crowd: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his political party, the BJP, openly adhere to Hindutva." She then launched into her historical comparison: "Hindutva came about roughly 100 years ago... It was inspired in its early days by Nazism. Did I say Nazis? Yeah, I said Nazis." She emphasised: "I want to be clear that I am talking about real, actual, historical Nazis." Then came the most inflammatory claim: "Early Hindutva espousers openly admired Hitler... They praised Hitler's treatment of the Jewish people in Germany as a good model for dealing with India's Muslim minority."

With this inflammatory rhetoric, she branded India's ruling BJP and its adherence to Hindutva as Nazi-like — by extension tarring the hundreds of millions of Indians who democratically elected this government, as fascists. It wasn't scholarship; it was street theatre designed to demonise an entire community. For Hindus across America, this wasn't just academic discourse — it was public vilification. To rub salt into the wound, the

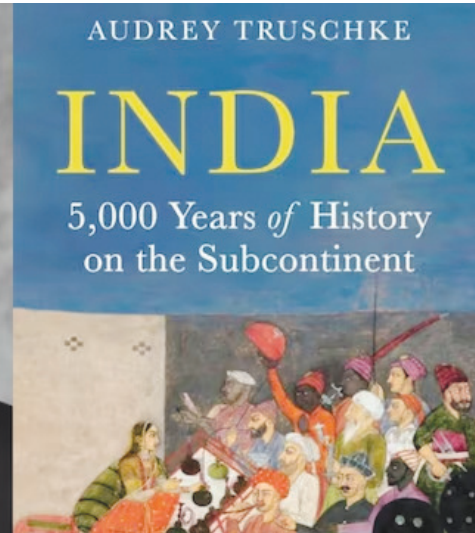


department of history at Rutgers gleefully posted Truschke's diatribe on their Facebook feed with the endorsement: "That's what we call public history."

Now, with her latest book *India: 5,000 Years of History on the Subcontinent* hitting shelves this month, Truschke's troubling methodology is reaching an even wider audience. The timing couldn't be more urgent for examining what happens when academic platforms become weapons of ideological warfare.

THE HITLER ANALOGY: HISTORY STRIPPED OF CONTEXT

Truschke's accusation draws from a controversial passage in *We or Our*



Nationhood Defined, published in March 1939 and attributed to MS Golwalkar of the RSS. The reality is more complex than her megaphone moment suggests.

The book wasn't authored by Golwalkar but paraphrased and translated by him. The historical context matters crucially: in 1939, the full extent of Nazi atrocities against Jews was not yet known. The Holocaust — the systematic extermination of six million Jews — wouldn't begin until 1941. For many colonised peoples worldwide, including some Indians, Hitler was viewed primarily as an enemy of Britain — their colonial oppressor.

The passage reflects the ideological uncertainty of that era, when colonised peoples worldwide were grappling with competing definitions of nationalism and looking to various models of national reorganisation. More importantly, the RSS has explicitly disavowed this misattributed quote, and decades of subsequent Hindutva writings have evolved far beyond these early formulations. But such nuance doesn't fit Truschke's narrative.

Most perversely, her Hitler comparison erases a remarkable historical truth: Hindus have never persecuted Jews. For over two millennia, India has been a haven for Jewish communities — in Kerala, Maharashtra, and Bengal. While Jews faced pogroms in Europe, ghettos in the Middle East, and extermination in Nazi camps, they found safety and dignity in Hindu-majority India.

To draw parallels between Hindutva and Hitler isn't just inflammatory — it's a moral inversion of history that anachronistically applies knowledge of the Holocaust to judge a misattributed quote from an earlier period — and then use that nearly 100-year-old aside to define a contemporary political movement. This is not academic history; it is political pamphleteering.

Air India Plane Crash: Is Boeing The New Union Carbide?

By :Rahul Shivshankar

Sweeping questions are only appropriate when the risk of sounding prejudiced is negated by hard facts. Therefore, this essay will hope to adduce fact-driven evidence to justify the poser: Is Boeing the New Union carbide?

By way of explanation, the question is prompted by some stark similarities between the tragic events in Bhopal in 1984 and the stomach-churning crash of a Boeing 787 Dreamliner in Ahmedabad. In both cases, the story didn't just remain focussed on technical failures but also brought renewed focus upon a culture of corporate impunity built on a sense of condescension for the law. This haughty disregard among the top brass at Union Carbide, the villain of Bhopal, and the Boeing corporation, the impugned in Ahmedabad, for regulations, was derived from the confidence that they were too big to be answerable to the law.

For those that may not be aware. In 1984, U.S. chemical manufacturing behemoth Union Carbide's negligence led to the Bhopal gas tragedy. Thousands were left dead, and many more were maimed for life. Safety systems had failed, warnings were ignored, and the Indian government struck a weak settlement that let the corporation walk away largely unscathed. Such was the glaring nature of the





abdication that in the end it was left to the good offices of the Indian Supreme Court to ensure a modicum of justice. As numerous stunning works of investigative reporting have shown Union Carbide's playbook was clear: deny, delay, deflect and for good measure also deploy political influence to dilute accountability. Today, Boeing stands accused of relying on eerily similar tactics. Repeated whistleblower warnings about faulty production practices in the construction of civilian aircraft were either silenced or buried. The narrative is being mysteriously twisted to place blame on the doorstep of the pilots. Worse, regulatory bodies like the FAA, and by extension others like India's DGCA, have allowed Boeing to get away with self-certifying key aircraft systems. This dangerous leniency as investigations have shown contributed to the 737 MAX disasters. And who's to say now possibly even the Dreamliner crash as well?

Whistleblowers like Ed Pierson, Sam Salehpour and the late John Barnett were sidelined or worse. The media in the U.S., too, often treats Boeing's failures as unfortunate glitches rather than systemic breakdowns. This has been well documented by the Columbia Journalism Review, 2021 in the study "How the Press Missed the Boeing Story".

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Modi's G7 Invite Isn't An Olive Branch, It's The West's White Flag Of Necessity

By : Sanbeer Singh Ranhotra

Let's be brutally honest. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's presence at the G7 summit in Canada is a sign of how India has become impossible to ignore. Beyond just being a sign of a diplomatic thaw, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's invitation to PM Modi symbolises the criticality of India to the Western world. After all, India is now the world's fourth largest-economy. Therefore, to not have India at the G7 table would be pure diplomatic myopia. Whether it's global supply chain resilience, climate finance, or counterbalancing China's influence, India's role is no longer peripheral. It is, in fact, pivotal. For Canada, despite months of frosty ties following the Nijjar controversy, the invitation is a pragmatic recalibration. For the rest of the G7, it is an acknowledgment that global governance without India is no longer viable. PM Modi's presence in Canada is less about optics and more about bare



necessity.

So, how should one interpret PM Modi's participation at the G7 summit in Canada? Many would call it an olive branch from Canada, a nation that several months ago stood before the world and accused India of orchestrating a political assassination on its sovereign soil. But is that really the case? That the Canadian government would agree to share a forum with a leader it has publicly implicated is the entire story. It is a stark and deeply revealing lesson in 21st-century

realpolitik. It represents the West's reluctant but necessary capitulation to a new global hierarchy.

In a world ablaze—with a grinding war of attrition in Eastern Europe, an escalating inferno in West Asia, and the shadow of China's ambitions looming over the Indo-Pacific—the leaders of the G7 have been forced to confront an inconvenient truth: moral outrage is a luxury they can no longer afford. The principles they preach on sunlit stages have been quietly shelved in the cold, hard calculus of survival.

The unstated reality, the one whispered in the corridors of power from Washington to Brussels, is that India has become too big to fail, too powerful to ignore, and too strategically vital to alienate. It is the indispensable counterweight, the emerging economic engine, and the demographic behemoth whose trajectory will define this century. The West doesn't have to like it. They just have to accept it.

And Canada's acquiescence is the ultimate proof. Trudeau's government chose drama over realpolitik. There are early signs that his successor, Prime Minister Mark Carney is much more pragmatic. After all, the choice for him was simple: Modi's presence at the G7 summit could be the first step to normalising relations with the world's fourth-largest economy. Alternatively, not having him at the G7 summit would be an act of geopolitical self-immolation. Canada chose survival. Strategic compulsion has officially trumped

bilateral fury.

You do not have to read between the lines to understand the transactional nature of this decision. You just have to listen. Canadian opposition leader Pierre Poilievre cut through the diplomatic fog with the clarity of a CEO discussing a balance sheet. "India has been at the last six G7 conferences," he stated, matter-of-factly. "It's one of the biggest and fastest-growing economies in the world. We need to sell our natural gas, our civilian nuclear power technology and other resource projects to India. And we need to work with India and other countries on trade and security."

There it is. Stripped bare of all pretense. No lofty rhetoric about shared values. No platitudes about the bonds of democracy. Just a raw, unvarnished calculation of need: gas, nuclear tech, resources, trade and security. Poilievre's statement was not a political gaffe; it was the accidental articulation of the West's private consensus.

Beyond Utopia: Is India Tackling Inequality?

By Shaurya Doval

With \$4.19 trillion (current prices), India has surpassed Japan in terms of GDP in the year 2025, as per the IMF. Now, India ranks fourth in the world, just below Germany (\$4.74 trillion) with a small margin. It is expected to surpass Germany within two to three years if India continues its growth trajectory.

It is undoubtedly a remarkable feat for India. However, there is one concern raised in public discourse that needs to be addressed: 'Is India's growth inclusive or unequal?', and, 'Should India do more to eradicate inequality?' This question is frequently raised by a section of economists. In this article, an effort is made to understand this inequality, its trends, and how to tackle it based on secondary data and reports available, while considering all opinions.

The most common index to measure inequality is the Gini



coefficient (values between 0 to 1, where 0 represents perfect equality and 1 shows extreme inequality). As per the Economic Survey 2024-25, inequality has shown declining trends. The Gini coefficient for rural areas declined to 0.237 in 2023-24 from 0.266 in 2022-23, and for urban areas, it fell to 0.284 in 2023-24 from 0.314 in 2022-23, based on consumption expenditure. Historically, the Gini index has fluctuated between 31.6% (the lowest in 1993) and 35.9% (the highest in 2017) between 1977 and 2021 (World

Bank). However, some experts believe that the expenditure-based Gini coefficient does not represent the true picture, as households or individuals with low incomes tend to spend more than they earn, whereas high-income groups spend much less in percentage terms, resulting in long-term wealth inequality that remains uncaptured in the data. Other reports on this matter also need to be considered, as findings vary. According to the 'Pandemic, Poverty, and Inequality: Evidence from India' report by Bhalla Surjeet

S. et al. (2022), "Real inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, has declined to near its lowest level reached in the last forty years—it was 0.284 in 1993/94 and in 2020-21 it reached 0.292.". The percentage of total consumption at the national level by the top 10% income group changed from around 28% to 32%, while for the bottom 40%, it remained around 9% between the 1980s and 2013, as per the 'Inequality and Locational Determinants of the Distribution of Living Standards in India' report by the IMF in 2021. Other literature also shows that inequality has declined in recent years (Ghatak et al., 2022 and Gupta et al., 2021). A report titled 'State of Inequality in India' (Kapoor and Duggal, 2022) states that 6%-7% of total incomes are earned by just the top 1% and expresses concerns over the concentration of growth benefits without percolation to the poorer classes. In contrast, some studies report stark inequality based on different

parameters or data sets, such as unequal median-to-top pay ratios among NIFTY50 companies, flight usage data, the Forbes list, or even food-delivery app usage data. Most reports on inequality in India are based on expenditure data, but a few also derive estimation for income or wealth inequality. One of the world's leading voices on inequality, the World Inequality Lab (WIL), provided various estimates for India in its report. According to the report, the top 1% hold 40.1% of wealth, the top 10% hold 65%, and the bottom 50% hold just 6.4%. In terms of income, the top 1% earn 22.6%, the top 10% earn 57.7%, and the bottom 50% earn just 15% of the total income share for the year 2022-23. Although after liberalisation, between 1990 and 2022, the average real growth rate in income in India became 3.6% per year, significantly higher compared to 1.6% between 1960 and 1990.

If Khamenei falls, who's next? Inside the race to be Iran's next Supreme Leader

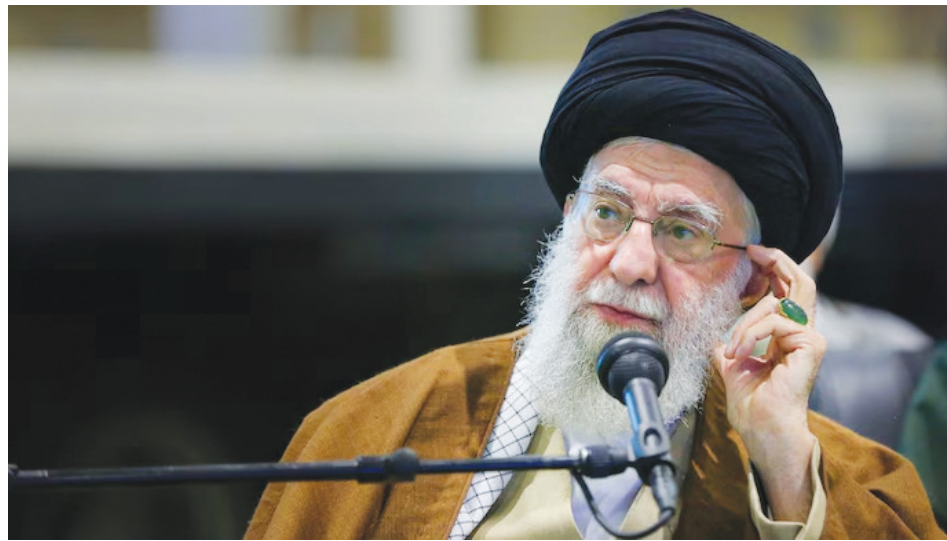
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu believes killing Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei would "end the conflict". Here's a look at the frontrunners and the secretive selection process that could decide Iran's fate.

(News Agency)- Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei now finds himself increasingly isolated, caught at the centre of a high-stakes conflict and growing threats to both his life and leadership.

In a recent interview with ABC News, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggested that killing Khamenei could bring an end to the long-standing hostility between Israel and Iran. Just a day later, Israel's Defence Minister, Israel Katz, issued a more direct warning, saying Khamenei could meet the same fate as former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. Talk of a post-Khamenei Iran has intensified in recent days, especially after former US President Donald Trump reportedly blocked an Israeli plan to assassinate the Iranian leader. Defending the plan in his interview, Netanyahu argued that such a move would not escalate tensions, but rather "end the conflict".

MEET IRAN'S PROBABLE FRONTRUNNERS

Amongst the likely successors, Mojtaba



Khamenei, the Supreme Leader's second son, stands out as a top contender. Born in 1969, Mojtaba has deep ties to both the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iran's clerical establishment. He served in the final phase of the Iran-Iraq war and is now a mid-ranking cleric with strong influence behind the scenes. Another prominent name is Alireza Araf, a trusted aide of Khamenei.

Araf holds several key positions, including deputy chairman of the Assembly of Experts, member of the Guardian Council, and Friday prayer leader in Qom. His extensive credentials within Iran's power structure make him a serious candidate for succession. Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei, who has spent decades in the judiciary and intelligence

circles, is another potential successor. He previously served as Iran's intelligence minister under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and has held various senior legal posts, including attorney general and judiciary spokesperson.

Other possible contenders include Mohammad Golpayegani, the long-serving chief of Khamenei's office; former foreign ministers Ali Akbar Velayati and Kamal Kharazi; and former parliament speaker Ali Larijani. All are seasoned insiders with deep experience in both domestic governance and foreign affairs, particularly the nuclear negotiations.

HOW WILL IRAN SELECT NEXT AYATOLLAH?

Once the Supreme leader of Iran is dead, unfit, or has resigned, the Assembly of Experts is convened to select a successor to fill the vacuum in the leadership. The Assembly is composed of senior clerics elected by the public but vetted by the Guardian Council of Iran. It's a body of 88 members who serve eight-year terms.

Trump declares US control over Iranian skies after warning unconditional surrender



Trump also issued a warning to Iran, saying: "But we don't want missiles shot at civilians, or American soldiers. Our patience is wearing thin."

TRUMP DEMANDS UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

In a follow-up post, he simply wrote in all caps:

"UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER!"

(News Agency)-US President Donald Trump declared that the United States has full control of Iranian airspace, stating that Iran's defence systems, including advanced tracking equipment, are no match for American-made military technology. He hailed the superiority of US defence capabilities in a post on Truth Social. On Truth Social, Trump wrote, "Iran had good sky trackers and other defensive equipment, and plenty of it, but it doesn't compare to American made, conceived, and manufactured 'stuff.' Nobody does it better than the good ol' USA." Earlier, Trump had made another provocative statement, where he said that US intelligence knows where Khamenei is currently located. "We know exactly where the so-called 'Supreme Leader' is hiding. He is an easy target, but is safe there — We are not going to take him out (kill!), at least not for now," he said.

Trump's remarks come at a time when instability in the Middle East is rising following clashes between Israel and Iranian forces. The ongoing violence has claimed over 200 lives in Iran, mostly civilians, and at least 24 Israeli civilians. The conflict has entered its fifth day after missile and drone strikes exchanged between the two sides.

ISRAELI MINISTER WARNS KHAMENEI Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said meanwhile that Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei could face the same fate as Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who was toppled in a US-led invasion and hanged in 2006 after a trial. "I warn the Iranian dictator against continuing to commit war crimes and fire missiles at Israeli citizens," Katz told top Israeli military officials.



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NYC comptroller and mayoral candidate Brad Lander arrested at immigration court

New York City Comptroller and mayoral candidate Brad Lander was arrested by masked federal agents at an immigration court while supporting an immigrant whose case was dismissed.

(News Agency)- New York City Comptroller Brad Lander, who is also running for mayor, was arrested on Tuesday at an immigration court at 26 Federal Plaza. According to local media, Lander was there to observe hearings and support immigrants facing possible deportation. This was his third visit to the court in a month.

According to video footage, Lander was walking alongside an immigrant whose case had been dismissed earlier that day. As they left the courtroom, federal agents, some wearing masks, stopped them. Both Lander and the immigrant were arrested. In the video, Lander can be seen telling officers: "I'm not obstructing. I'm standing right here in the hallway. I asked to see the judicial warrant." He added, "You don't have the authority to arrest US citizens asking for a judicial warrant." Despite his stance, agents pinned him to a wall and put him in



handcuffs. The exact reason for his arrest is still unclear. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has not released any statement on the incident.

Lander's wife, Meg Barnette, shared an update on his X (formerly Twitter) account shortly after the arrest. "While escorting a

defendant out of immigration court at 26 Federal Plaza, Brad was taken by masked agents and detained by ICE," she wrote.

WIFE SPEAK OUT AFTER ARREST

Speaking at a news conference after the arrest, Barnette said she was "extraordinarily proud" of her husband.

"What I saw was shocking and unacceptable. What I saw today was not the rule of law," she told reporters. She added that they could quickly get a lawyer for Lander, but most people in immigration courts do not have the same resources. "This is just one more example of Brad's values in action. He doesn't just talk the talk. He walks the walk. He cares about what happens to people," Barnette said. Lander's arrest comes amid rising tensions over how Trump administration is operating. Reports say masked agents from multiple federal departments -- including ICE, the FBI, and the Treasury -- were seen throughout the courthouse on Tuesday morning.

This follows a trend. According to a report by The Guardian, there has been an 807% increase in arrests of immigrants with no criminal record since January. These arrests are happening outside immigration courts across the country.

Trump officials reverse pause on immigration raids at farms, hotels: Report



(News Agency)- The US Department of Homeland Security on Monday told staff it was reversing guidance issued last week that agents were not to conduct immigration raids at farms, hotels and restaurants, the Washington Post reported late on Monday.

Officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including its Homeland Security Investigations division, told leaders at the agency in a call Monday that agents must continue conducting workforce site immigration raids on agricultural businesses, hotels and restaurants, the newspaper reported, citing two sources familiar with the call. The Department of Homeland Security, of which ICE is a part, had no

immediate comment late on Monday. In an internal email reviewed by Reuters, a senior US official and another source said late last week that President Donald Trump's administration had directed immigration officials to largely pause raids on farms, hotels, restaurants and meatpacking plants.

Trump took office in January, pledging to deport millions of immigrants in the US illegally. While Trump framed the effort around removing serious criminals, thousands of suspected immigration offenders with no criminal records have been swept up in recent months.

ICE's more aggressive tactics -- including raids in Los Angeles -- have sparked protests.

ICE resumes raids on farms, hotels and restaurants after briefly telling agents to avoid them



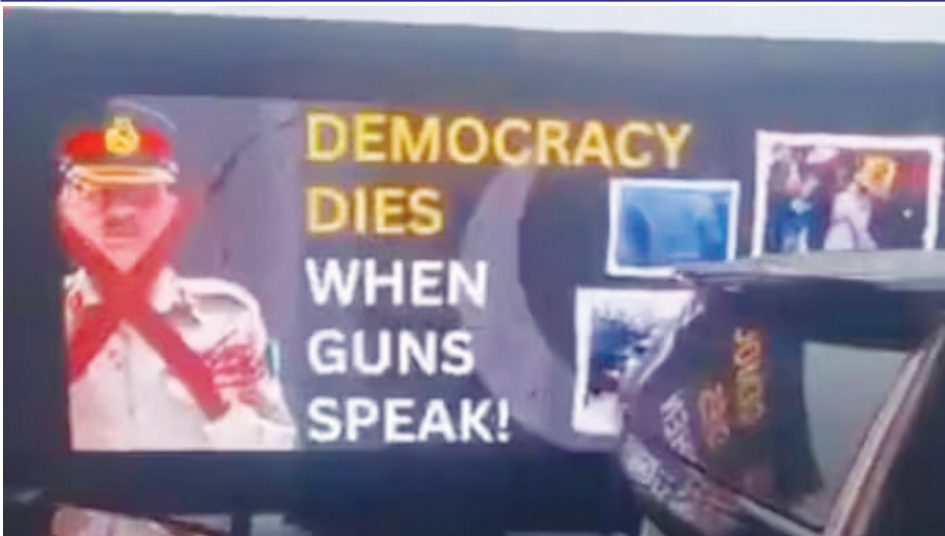
(News Agency)-The Trump administration is backing away from its earlier instructions to halt immigration raids at farms, hotels and restaurants, according to reports.

Homeland Security officials instructed agency leadership in a call Monday to resume raids at those businesses -- which have higher proportions of illegal migrants in their workforce -- following the days-long pause, according to the Washington Post and CNN.

President Trump posted on Truth Social Thursday that his mass deportation campaign was taking its toll on the agricultural and hospitality industries. That same day, ICE agents across the country received an order to "please hold on all work site enforcement investigations/

operations on agriculture (including aquaculture and meat packing plants), restaurants and operating hotels," according to the New York Times. "Our great Farmers and people in the Hotel and Leisure business have been stating that our very aggressive policy on immigration is taking very good, long time workers away from them, with those jobs being almost impossible to replace," Trump wrote. "This is not good. We must protect our Farmers, but get the CRIMINALS OUT OF THE USA. Changes are coming," he said. Immigration and Customs Enforcement supervisors were alerted to a possible reversal of the pause on Sunday after learning the White House didn't support the effort, a source told the Washington Post.

Jackal, jackal, jackal: Pakistani-Americans rally against Asim Munir in DC



Pakistani Americans gathered outside the Four Seasons hotel in Washington DC, protesting against Field Marshal Asim Munir and condemning what they called his crimes against the people of Pakistan, said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in a post on X. The protests came soon after there were murmurs that the Pakistani field marshal would be attending the US Army Day parade. However, the claims were officially denied by the US. The clarification followed reports that the US had invited General Munir, which triggered political backlash in India. The

Congress party termed it a "diplomatic setback", especially in light of Operation Sindoor -- India's recent precision strikes on terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (POK).

The protests also coincide with growing criticism within Pakistan against Munir's military leadership, marked by heightened tensions with India. Munir has faced accusations of suppressing Imran Khan's PTI party and repeatedly interfering in civilian politics, drawing condemnation from various quarters.

Nassau Legislators Unveil Bill to Formally Recognize Juneteenth as a County Holiday



(By our staff reporter) Long Island — Nassau County Legislator Olena Nicks, joined by fellow members of the Legislature's Minority Caucus, introduced legislation today that would require Nassau County to officially recognize Juneteenth as a county holiday. The bill was announced during a press conference held at the Nassau County Legislative and Executive Building in Mineola. The proposed ordinance would add June 19 to Nassau County's list of official holidays and require the County to begin good-faith negotiations with employee unions to implement the policy. "If Nassau County claims to recognize Juneteenth, then why does everything stay open like it's just another Thursday?"

said Legislator Olena Nicks, who is sponsoring the bill. "Recognition without observance is just performance. You can't say you honor a holiday and then ignore it when the calendar date arrives."

Juneteenth was established as a federal holiday in 2021, marking the anniversary of June 19, 1865, the day Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas and enforced the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the last enslaved Americans. Since then, every U.S. state and every town and city in Nassau County, including Hempstead, North Hempstead, Oyster Bay, Glen Cove, and Long Beach, as well as neighboring Suffolk County, have recognized the day as an official holiday. Nassau County government remains the only outlier.

Netanyahu's war gamble: Will Trump stop him?



(News Agency)- West Asia stands at a dangerous crossroads as Israel and Iran abandon decades of proxy warfare for direct military confrontation. What began as shadow operations has exploded into open warfare, with devastating consequences rippling across the globe. Israel's "Operation Rising Lion" marked a decisive shift in strategy—a coordinated military blitz targeting Iranian cities including Tehran, Natanz, and Kermanshah. The strikes hit military bases, nuclear facilities, and key personnel, delivering an unmistakable message: cease nuclear development or face complete destruction.

Iran's response, "Operation True Promise 3," was equally devastating. Hundreds of ballistic missiles rained down on Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, causing civilian casualties and

flattening entire districts. In just five days, the region witnessed the collapse of proxy warfare in favor of direct military engagement.

The Military Balance

The conflict reveals a stark asymmetry in capabilities. Iran boasts overwhelming numbers—88 million people, 610,000 active troops, and extensive missile arsenals capable of reaching every corner of Israel. However, its aging air force remains a critical weakness.

Israel, with only 9 million citizens, compensates through technological superiority. Its stealth F-35s, precision-guided munitions, advanced cyber warfare capabilities, and the Iron Dome defense system provide qualitative advantages that partially offset Iran's numerical superiority.

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New York Attorney General James Secures \$250,000 from MoneyGram for Violating Consumer Protection Laws

MoneyGram Failed to Deliver Funds or Provide Timely Refunds

NEW YORK – New York Attorney General Letitia James today secured \$250,000 from MoneyGram International, Inc., and MoneyGram Payment Systems, Inc., (MoneyGram) for failing to follow consumer protection laws and jeopardizing their customers' money transfers. MoneyGram is an international money transfer provider that serves hundreds of thousands of customers in the United States every year. In April 2022, Attorney General James and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) sued MoneyGram for failing to either transfer funds on time or provide timely refunds, and for ignoring its legal requirements to swiftly and accurately investigate errors. After CFPB chose to end its participation in the lawsuit, Attorney General James secured a settlement with MoneyGram requiring it to pay a \$250,000 penalty and follow all relevant consumer protection laws. "New Yorkers who want to send funds to their loved ones abroad should be able to trust that the companies handling their hard-earned money are operating



honestly," said Attorney General James. "MoneyGram failed to follow the law for years, sometimes leaving its customers in the dark about where their money went. My office stopped MoneyGram's illegal behavior and will continue to protect those who rely on MoneyGram to support their families."

MoneyGram is a non-bank financial services company that enables consumers to send money, known as remittances, from the United States to more than 200 countries and territories. The company has 440,000 locations in the U.S. and worldwide, and also operates through a digital platform. Hundreds of thousands of

New Yorkers use MoneyGram every year for millions of transactions.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and CFPB sued MoneyGram in April 2022, alleging that MoneyGram violated state and federal laws meant to protect its customers. For years, MoneyGram failed to make funds available to its customers on time, quickly resolve errors, or provide accurate information to its customers, in violation of the law.

The settlement with OAG ensures that MoneyGram does not escape accountability for its illegal actions impacting New Yorkers, despite CFPB's decision to withdraw from

the lawsuit. The settlement requires MoneyGram to comply with consumer protection laws by transferring funds and processing refunds on time. It also requires MoneyGram to ensure that disclosures to consumers are accurate and to investigate errors in a timely fashion. In addition, MoneyGram is prohibited from providing money senders with inaccurate disclosures and telling consumers that they are not liable for errors. In addition to complying with the law, MoneyGram must pay a penalty of \$250,000.

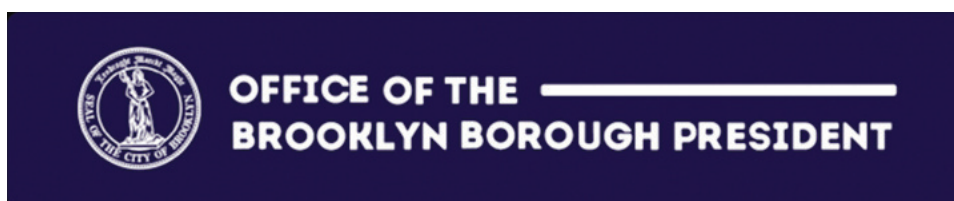
This case was handled by Assistant Attorneys General Laura C. Dismore and Christopher McCall and former Assistant Attorney General Jason Meizlish of the Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau. The Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau is led by Bureau Chief Jane Azia and Deputy Bureau Chief Laura Levine and is part of the Division for Economic Justice, which is led by Chief Deputy Attorney General Chris D'Angelo and First Deputy Attorney General Jennifer Levy.

Open Call for Brooklyn Fashion Designers:

- Borough President Antonio Reynoso and Arts Ambassador Colm Dillane Launch Search for Five Emerging Fashion Designers in Brooklyn
- Selected Designers Will Showcase Five Complete Looks at a Full-Service Fashion Show Hosted at Brooklyn Borough Hall This Fall
- Each Selected Designer Will Be Awarded \$5,000 Grant and Mentorship Opportunities With Colm Dillane of KidSuper

(By our staff reporter) New York: – Today, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso and Brooklyn Arts Ambassador Colm Dillane of KidSuper released an open call for emerging fashion designers hoping to showcase five full looks at a full-service fashion show hosted at Brooklyn Borough Hall this fall. The call for designers is open to all Brooklyn residents ages 18 and above. Applications close July 6 at 11:59pm. The five selected designers will each be awarded \$5,000 grants and mentorship opportunities with Colm Dillane of KidSuper. Interested designers may apply here starting today.

"From streetwear in Bed-Stuy to bridal boutiques in Bay Ridge, people from all over the world come to Brooklyn for the fashion and style



that originates here," said Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso. "While it's never been easy for artists, today it's nearly impossible for young and aspiring designers to get their foot in the door. But a bet on Brooklyn is never lost – and inaugural Arts Ambassador Colm Dillane knows that firsthand. Today, we're launching our search for five emerging Brooklyn designers who are defining the next chapter of what Brooklyn fashion is and can be – bold, expressive, and rooted in culture. I'm so grateful for Colm's partnership as we build an artist network based in mentorship,

opportunity, and excellence, and I can't wait to see the work Brooklyn's up-and-coming designers have to show."

"Brooklyn is home – and no two blocks ever look the same. You've got skaters weaving past strollers, old-school locals trading stories, and kids in head-to-toe looks they definitely styled themselves. That kind of unfiltered, everyday expression keeps me inspired," said Colm Dillane, the creative force behind KidSuper. "I'm excited to help guide these young creatives as they shape their own version of what Brooklyn looks like now."

Specifics for Open Call for Fashion Designers

Summary

Borough President Reynoso and Arts Ambassador Colm Dillane are searching for five emerging fashion designers based in Brooklyn.

If selected, each designer will be invited to show five looks at a special full-service fashion show hosted at Brooklyn Borough Hall during New York Fashion Week in September. Each designer will be provided with a \$5,000 grant to assist with expenses.

Please note: The Office of the Brooklyn Borough President (OBKBP) will not provide materials, tools, or professional assistance with garment construction.

The designer collection must be ready 15 days prior to the fashion show.

Radicalised Khalistanis, A Canadian Problem



As Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Canada for the G7 summit, an unsettling scene greeted international media: young children brandished "Khalistan" flags and even defaced a Hindu temple in Surrey with secessionist graffiti. These images of toddlers taught to chant separatist slogans sparked outrage in India and around the world.

Spokesman Sudeep Singh of the revered Patna Sahib Gurdwara, the birthplace of the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji warned that "the way children were used in the protests is highly condemnable". Similarly, Sikh seminary leader Sarchand Singh Khyala condemned the videos as "spreading hatred by brainwashing children". Dressed-up flags and violent symbols at public parades horrify many Sikhs abroad who see these stunts as political theatre, not Sikhism. Mainstream Sikh leaders make the same point: Khalistanis in Canada are a tiny fringe, not the Sikh community. In late realisation of sorts, former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has emphasised, "Many supporters of Khalistan in Canada... do not represent the Sikh community as a whole."

Leading Sikh voices echo this. Jasdip Singh Jassee of Sikhs of America reminds Americans that "the vast majority of Sikhs globally, including in the US and Canada, do not support separatist agendas". In India, religious seats like Takht Patna Sahib and Damdami Taksal have publicly denounced the protests. Their message is unequivocal: the Khalistan protesters are not Sikh martyrs. Patna Sahib's spokesman notes that all of Sikhism's pending issues are being resolved in India, so

"there should not be such protests" against PM Modi, "no Sikh can tolerate this".

In fact, these Khalistani stunts run directly counter to Sikh teachings. Sikhism emphasises service and harmony, not hate or violence. Provincial Sikh leaders emphasise, "Sikhs have protected mandirs (Hindu temples)", as their sacred Dharmic duty. Yet last April in Surrey, vandals scrawled "Khalistan" on the pillars of Shree Lakshmi Narayana Mandir.

This hate-crime—denounced by the temple as "an attack on a sacred space"—would deeply sadden ordinary Sikhs. Jasdip Jassee said it was "disgusting" that extremists chose Diwali (a Sikh-protected festival) to vandalise a mandir, calling it "shameful" and against Sikh values.

Similarly, Damdami Taksal (a mainstream Sikh seminary) has openly criticized Canadians who use children to insult India's PM, saying these pro-Khalistan people "are spewing venom against India". These Sikh authorities unanimously emphasise that Khalistan is not a Sikh cause and certainly not one worth teaching to children.

On the contrary, Sikhism is deeply Dharmic and Indian. From the Punjabi heartland to global diaspora, Sikhs celebrate their faith's founder Guru Nanak and their tenets of service (seva) and protection. India's own armed forces and civil institutions reflect Sikh contributions: for example, Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh (a Sikh) was made India's first Air Force Field Marshal, and Sikh generals have led the Army in multiple wars. Sikh entrepreneurs, scholars and saints likewise uplifted Indian society.

For modern Sikhs, the idea of carving

out a separate nation feels alien—only a "microscopic" minority even entertains it. A former Punjab Chief Secretary notes that hardcore Khalistani ideologues are "not even one percent" of Sikh population while many others view Khalistan more as a business or polarizing narrative.

Polls agree—Punjab elections show pro-Khalistan candidates picking up well under 1–2 percent of votes in Sikh-majority districts. In short, the Khalistan idea has virtually no grassroots support back in India; it lives on only in select pockets abroad. So why does the Khalistan fringe loom so large in Canada? The answer lies in Canadian diaspora politics and foreign meddling. For years Canada's mainstream parties have courted Sikh immigrants to win votes, often ignoring their excesses. Observers note a growing consensus among all Canadian parties to pander to Khalistan sympathies for electoral gain.

Minister S. Jaishankar put it bluntly: By giving radical Sikhs impunity, "the Canadian government... is repeatedly showing that its vote bank is more powerful than its rule of law." Veteran broadcaster Terry Milewski described it as a dirty deal: Canadian MPs attend Sikh parades and "look the other way" at posters of terrorists, in exchange for "10,000 votes... because the people of the gurdwaras will vote as we tell them". In such a climate, small separatist groups found refuge on Canadian soil under the banner of free speech.

Worse, intelligence services have cynically empowered them. Indian officials repeatedly assert that Pakistan's ISI funds the Khalistani

network in Canada. Union Minister Hardeep Puri openly called protesters "kiraye ke tattu" (mercenaries on hire) whose demonstrations were staged "from the neighbouring country [Pakistan] where they get funding."

Security analysts back this up. Several top analysts observe that these activists have their own underworld and are often involved in deadly gang rivalries and are essentially "helping Pakistanis spend whatever remains of their money". Indeed, he warns that Sikh extremists in Canada "will continue to be funded and fuelled by the ISI".

Put bluntly, this looks less like a grassroots Sikh movement than a criminal-intelligence network. It is a problem imported into Canada by a hostile state, not spawned by Sikh communities.

The political consequences in Canada have been dramatic. In the 2025 federal elections, Jagmeet Singh, NDP leader who long voiced support for Sikh protestors, saw his party collapse. Singh lost his own seat and announced he would step down as leader. Earlier, in September 2024, Singh had even "ripped up" his confidence-and-supply deal with Trudeau's "Liberals", erasing the government majority he once helped engineer.

Meanwhile Trudeau's gamble backfired. As Sikh ally Singh turned on him, Trudeau's Liberals barely clung to power under newcomer Mark Carney. By early 2025 Trudeau himself resigned as a result of his Khalistan miscalculation. In short, Ottawa's flirtation with diaspora extremism not only frayed Canada-India ties, it torpedoed the careers of Western politicians.

Against this turmoil, Sikhs have reaffirmed their core values. Sikh institutions wasted no time republishing lessons of unity. Damdami Taksal's Sarchand Singh praised PM Modi for resolving Sikh concerns "not done in 70 years" by previous governments, noting Modi even received the SGPC's "Qaumi Seva Award" for Sikh welfare.

Jasdip Jassee urged local Sikh majorities to publicly condemn the Khalistan fringe, stressing Sikhism's long history of Hindu-Sikh oneness and harmony. Even survivors of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots say their fight is now within India's democratic fabric, not through separatism. The real Sikh agenda is contributing to India's progress, not division. In the end, the Khalistan agitation proves to be a Canadian export problem. As journalist Terry Milewski notes, the movement in India is essentially dead; it survives only where foreign money flows. Canada's own spin on multiculturalism created a "Khalistani Frankenstein's monster", normalised by political expediency.

Gang-rape, torture cases made UK PM take U-turn on grooming gangs

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has launched a national enquiry into grooming gang crimes, reversing Labour Party's earlier stance after mounting public and political pressure. The decision follows a damning review by Baroness Louise Casey, which exposed years of systemic failures.



After months of mounting criticism over inaction, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has finally launched a national enquiry into grooming gang crimes, marking a major policy U-turn for the Labour government. The move comes in response to widespread public outrage, a damning institutional review, and escalating pressure from campaigners, opposition politicians, and prominent figures, including Elon Musk.

Grooming gangs became a national scandal in the UK in the late 1990s, with horrifying cases emerging in towns like Rotherham and Rochdale. Vulnerable white girls, many underage, were targeted, groomed by young Muslim men, and then passed on to older abusers posing as boyfriends.

What followed were brutal gang-rapes, threats, and years of systemic neglect by authorities. These grooming gangs operated with impunity for decades, while victims were silenced, disbelieved, or ignored.

WHY STARMER RESISTED CALLS FOR A NATIONAL ENQUIRY Initially, Starmer resisted calls for a new national enquiry, arguing that it would delay justice and repeat existing work.

In some instances, the ethnicity of

perpetrators became a problem, fearing accusations of racism, effectively obscuring patterns of group-based exploitation. In January, Tory MPs tried to force a parliamentary vote on establishing such an enquiry, only to be blocked when Labour MPs voted it down. Labour backbencher Dan Carden was the first from the party to break ranks, calling on Starmer to "use the full power of the state."

Officials told the BBC the ultimate goal is not only to bring more perpetrators to justice but also to confront a deeply-rooted "culture of denial."

But now, the Labour Party under Starmer has called for an enquiry.

Under growing pressure from inside and outside Westminster, he changed course. Speaking at the G7 summit, the UK Prime Minister said he had read "every word" of the Casey report and had come to the conclusion that deeper action was unavoidable.

MORE THAN 800 GROOMING GANG CASES TO BE PROBED

At the heart of this decision is a rapid review by Member of the House of Lords, Baroness Louise Casey, commissioned by Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, which concluded that previous efforts were woefully inadequate and a new, full-

scale investigation was urgently needed. Casey's report exposed disturbing systemic failures across councils, police forces, and local leadership. Vulnerable girls, often underage, were drugged, raped, and in some cases even burned. Yet many authorities failed to see them as victims. Complaints were ignored, investigations mishandled, and repeated warnings went unheeded.

The enquiry will examine more than 800 historical grooming gang cases and is expected to recommend sweeping reforms.

These may include tightening rape laws, introducing stricter consent standards, strengthening safeguarding frameworks, and mandating the collection of ethnicity data to avoid institutional blind spots. **'LONG OVERDUE RECKONING WITH TRUTH': HOME SECRETARY**

Some Secretary Yvette Cooper described the new enquiry as a long-overdue reckoning with the truth. "Not enough people listened to survivors. That was wrong and unforgivable. We are changing that now," she said.

The Labour Party had previously argued that years of existing investigations, including the major enquiry led by Professor Alexis Jay, had already exposed serious failings.

But Starmer appointed Casey earlier this year to review the need for further action. Now, all of her recommendations have been accepted.

The new enquiry will be chaired by an independent figure with full statutory authority.

Alongside this, the National Crime Agency-led crackdown will run in parallel, re-examining prematurely closed cases, tracking down offenders, and helping police forces overhaul how they handle child sexual exploitation.

ACTING TOO LATE: NIGEL FARAGE Chancellor Rachel Reeves defended the Labour Party's shift in position, saying the prime minister had taken time to ensure the right course of action.

"This is about justice, not grandstanding," said Reeves. When asked if the Labour Party would apologise to campaigners it had previously dismissed, Reeves said, "The most important thing here is the victims. Not people's hurt feelings."

Still, the U-turn has drawn fire. Reform UK leader Nigel Farage welcomed the move but accused Labour Party of acting too late.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch went further, calling on Starmer to apologise for "six wasted months".

Why the Strait of Hormuz matters to India amid Israel-Iran tensions

The Strait of Hormuz is located between Iran to the north and Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to the south. It connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman, and then to the Arabian Sea.

Tensions between Iran and Israel have been on the rise and one name keeps surfacing in global headlines: the Strait of Hormuz.

This narrow stretch of sea might seem far from India, but what happens there can directly impact your fuel bill, your business, and even your stock market investments. The Strait of Hormuz is located between Iran to the north and Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to the south. It connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman, and then to the Arabian Sea. At its narrowest point, it is only about 21 miles (34 kilometres) wide. However, the actual navigable channel for ships is just a few kilometres wide in each direction, making it a tightly controlled and high-risk zone.

Key ports located near the strait include: Iran's Bandar Abbas – a major naval and commercial port

UAE's Fujairah Port – an important oil storage and shipping point

Oman's Sohar Port – used for trade and shipping reroutes

Qatar's Ras Laffan – a key port for liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports

This waterway is the only sea route for oil and gas exports from most of the Gulf countries, which makes it strategically critical.

WHY THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ IS IMPORTANT

Almost one-fifth of the world's oil, more than 17 million barrels per day, passes through the Strait of Hormuz. It is the main shipping route for energy exports from major producers like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), approximately 20% of the world's oil supply, around 20.9 million barrels per day, passes through this narrow waterway, with nearly 83% of it destined for Asian markets. Any threat to the free flow of oil and gas through this strait poses a significant risk to global energy security. For India, which imports over 85% of its crude oil, this makes the strait a vital artery. Any disruption, whether by military activity, threats, or shipping delays—can lead to a sharp rise in oil prices, impacting India's economy.

HOW THE ISRAEL-IRAN CONFLICT AFFECTS THE STRAIT

As Israel and Iran continue to launch missile and drone attacks on each other, there is growing concern that Iran could restrict or block access to the Strait of Hormuz—something it has threatened in the past. Even the fear of this happening



can send shockwaves through oil markets and disrupt global trade.

Military tension also puts commercial ships at risk. Insurance premiums go up, companies reroute vessels, and shipping delays become more likely.

"The extent to which global powers can dissuade Iran from blocking this vital passage will determine the scale of impact on oil markets going forward. Even without further escalation, the geopolitical risk premium on oil is likely to persist," said Ankit Patel, Partner at Arunasset Investment Services.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT FUEL SERVICES IN INDIA

Though India has diversified oil and energy supply partners including Russia and few Arab nations, but a large part of its supply also comes from Iran.

Diplomatic Expert Sanjeev Srivastava said, "The conflict, if it escalates further, will certainly impact Indian supplies, which could lead to an increase in oil prices that further influence commodity pricing. 1/5 of the total supplies of oil pass through Hormuz trade route in Iran. If the situation continues to escalate, then there are chances of this trade route getting blocked."

India continues to monitor the whole situation closely and has appealed that Iran-Israel should resolve the conflict through dialogue.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated in his address in Cyprus that this is not an age of war, giving a clear indication of India's stand of not supporting the escalating war

between both the nations.

"Besides the supply of oil and energy, the conflict between Iran and Israel could also impact the ongoing projects with Iran, including the Chabahar project. India remains a strong diplomatic and military partner with Israel and has been very balanced in its statements on the escalating situation," said Srivastava. Prof Swaran Singh, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi said, "Prima facie, this direct war between Israel and Iran only further complicates India's foreign policy choices. In last few days, for instance, India had to distance itself from joint statements of both Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the G7 summit that respectively criticised and endorsed Israel."

He further said that India has historically been clear on not taking sides in military conflicts while focusing on seeking an early end of hostilities and meanwhile contributing to mitigating impact of such conflicts.

India's humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and Palestine, while working for an early cessation of hostilities, provides its recent examples.

According to experts, the ongoing Iran-Israel tensions present a multidimensional challenge for India. While New Delhi maintains strategic ties with both nations, any escalation risks destabilising the broader Middle East, a region critical to India's energy security.

EFFECT ON STOCK MARKETS AND THE RUPEE

The stock market reacts quickly to news from the Gulf. Rising oil prices tend to hurt sectors like airlines, paints, and tyres. On the other hand, energy companies, oil refiners, and defence firms may gain.

The rupee also comes under pressure as oil becomes more expensive. A weaker rupee increases import costs and may force the Reserve Bank of India to rethink its monetary policy, especially if inflation rises.

If the Strait of Hormuz becomes unsafe, every Indian could feel the impact. Petrol prices may rise, monthly budgets may tighten, and inflation could increase.

India on Tuesday issued a fresh advisory urging its nationals and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) residing in Tehran to move out of the city, as the Iranian capital came under continued aerial attacks from Israeli drones and missiles.

The Indian Embassy in Tehran asked individuals who have the means to leave the city on their own and do so without delay.

The conflict also threatens global oil prices and maritime trade through the Strait of Hormuz, directly impacting India's economic interests.

"Rising crude oil prices fuel inflationary pressures, particularly in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and strain the external balance. A \$10 increase in crude prices can widen India's current account deficit by approximately 0.55% of GDP and raise CPI inflation by around 0.3%, given oil's significant weight in the national import basket," said Patel.

How Rich Was The Nawab Of Lucknow?

His Palace Is Worth Rs 10,000 Crore Today



The phrase “Are you the Nawab of Lucknow?” might sound like a teasing taunt today, but behind the jibe lies a real legacy of unparalleled opulence, cultural grandeur, and royal indulgence. Nearly 250 years after his rule, the name of the last Nawab of Awadh, Wajid Ali Shah, still resonates as a symbol of immense wealth – so vast that modern estimates peg it in the range of thousands of crores.

Wajid Ali Shah, who reigned from 1847 to 1856, may have ruled for just nine years, but he left behind a towering legacy; one built not only on palatial architecture and artistic patronage, but also on an economy

powered by agriculture, trade, and tax revenues. Though there is no official audit of his wealth, historians and archival records suggest his possessions were nothing short of staggering by any era’s standards. Among his most magnificent achievements was the Kaiserbagh Palace complex, constructed between 1848 and 1850 at a then-astronomical cost of Rs 80 lakh. Adjusted for today’s value, that figure hovers around Rs 10,000 crore, making it one of the most opulent royal estates of the time. And this was just one of many palaces under his rule.

The Nawab’s court was sprawling and

expensive. It included hundreds of wives, concubines, courtiers, artists, musicians, and servants. His taste for the finer things extended beyond architecture and poetry; he had an exotic menagerie that included monkeys, bears, and no fewer than 18,000 pigeons. His gardens weren’t merely decorative, they were stages for grand dramas, elaborate dances, and poetic recitals that showcased the Nawab’s deep patronage of art and culture.

After the British annexed Awadh in 1856, Wajid Ali Shah was forcibly exiled to Matiaburj in Kolkata. But exile didn’t exactly mean poverty, at least not at first. The British government granted him an annual pension of Rs 12 lakh, a significant amount at the time, to sustain his royal lifestyle. However, his expenses far exceeded this amount. According to an 1874 report by a correspondent of The New York Times, the Nawab’s residence in Kolkata housed more than 7,000 people including courtesans, bodyguards, pets, and attendants. He even leased additional bungalows to support his lifestyle, indicating that he still retained private wealth even after his kingdom was snatched away.

When Royals Fell Into Debt

The grandeur couldn’t last forever. Along

with confiscating much of his wealth, the British government also imposed a colossal debt of £2 million (roughly Rs 20 crore in today’s value) on the Nawab. While the pension continued, the burden of debt and the loss of steady revenue from Awadh steadily eroded the fortune.

The British took control of many of his lands, palaces, and treasures. Historians believe that the total value of assets seized by the East India Company – including properties, gold, artifacts, and cultural relics – could today amount to over Rs 2 lakh crore. Years later, descendants of the royal family including Begum Wilayat Mahal demanded compensation from the government, alleging that their ancestral properties had been wrongfully confiscated. These demands, however, were mired in legal ambiguity and never resulted in substantial redress.

Despite the fall of his kingdom, Wajid Ali Shah remains a legend. His patronage of the arts gave rise to modern Kathak and enriched Hindustani music. And though his crown was taken, his legacy of elegance, extravagance, and poetic melancholy still defines the cultural memory of Lucknow.

Iranian regime collapse would be serious blow for Russia

When a group of Russian and Iranian foreign policy officials arranged to meet in Moscow for a conference titled “Russian-Iranian cooperation in a changing world”, they probably did not anticipate just how timely that phrase would turn out to be.

Seated around a table on Wednesday at the President hotel near the Kremlin, officials from both sides were forced to confront a stark new reality: Iran’s regime – a key ally of Moscow – is facing its most serious threat in decades.

As Israel and Donald Trump demand Tehran’s “unconditional surrender”, Moscow is growing increasingly anxious about the fate of Iran, while tacitly acknowledging its limited ability to influence the unfolding events.

Nikita Smagin, an independent expert on Russia-Iran ties, said: “It has long been clear that Russia wouldn’t defend Iran militarily, because it is simply not prepared to risk a confrontation with Israel and the United States for Iran’s sake.”

Analysts say Moscow’s cautious response reflects a cold political calculus: prioritising its war in Ukraine

while simultaneously trying to dissuade the US from direct involvement in a conflict that could lead to regime change in Tehran.

The Kremlin is unlikely to arm Iran, let alone get involved in the fighting, said a Russian source with ties to the foreign ministry. “Moscow clearly doesn’t want conflict with Trump and is also doing everything it can to urge the US to return to diplomacy. But Russia’s priority remains avoiding any moves that could undermine its warming ties with the new US administration or prompt a shift in Trump’s stance on Ukraine,” the source said.

Still, the Kremlin stands to lose from a prolonged US-backed Israeli military campaign that devastates Iran’s economic and military infrastructure and threatens the survival of the regime in Tehran.

“If the current Iranian regime collapses, it would be both a strategic and reputational blow for Russia,” the source with ties to the Russian foreign ministry said.

“A bigger loss than the fall of Damascus,”

the source added, referring to Moscow’s diminished influence over Syria after the fall of Bashar al-Assad, a longtime Kremlin ally whose eventual defeat marked the end of a costly decade-long Russian intervention.

On the surface, Russia’s muted response and restrained condemnations stand in contrast to the deepening ties it has forged with Iran since its 2022 invasion of Ukraine – a war that placed Moscow alongside Tehran among the regimes most heavily hit by sanctions. In the early months of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Iran proved to be an important partner to the Kremlin, supplying Moscow with thousands of combat drones used to strike Ukrainian cities. Tehran also later sent instructors to Russia to help set up a drone production facility, based on Iranian designs, deep in the Ural mountains.

Vladimir Putin in turn praised the deepening ties between the two countries. In January he and his Iranian counterpart, Masoud Pezeshkian, signed a wide-ranging “comprehensive strategic partnership treaty” aimed at

strengthening military cooperation and intelligence sharing.

Still, the two nations’ relationship has always been complex, observers say. When signing the military agreement, both countries insisted on omitting a mutual defence clause, meaning Moscow now is under no legal obligation to provide military assistance to Iran. Russia has also been slow to deliver a range of weapons Tehran has requested. “Despite repeated requests from the Iranian side for various types of weapons – air defence systems and fighter jets – none of this has been transferred to Iran by Russia to date,” Smagin said.

Partly due to its entanglement in Ukraine and its growing ties with other regional players, including Saudi Arabia, Moscow has shown little urgency on propping up Iran, even as Tehran’s position has weakened after blows against its key proxy, the Lebanese movement Hezbollah. The Kremlin, meanwhile, has largely decoupled its reliance on Iranian military support, having already acquired the expertise to mass-produce drones domestically.

Are We Heading for World War Three ?



(By The South Asia Bureau)

When people think of war, many will bring up images of the First and Second World Wars, with the likes of trench warfare or fierce battles fought in the towns and cities of Western Europe. But in today's day and age, it can be far simpler with the digital arena replacing scenes of destruction at home. Other signs are less subtle as people in Ukraine can attest. Indeed, experts say the Third World War began with Russia's invasion of their friendly neighbours in 2022.

After the Iranian barrage against Israel, and Russia continues to make gains in Ukraine, International allies are counselling restraint. So are we on the cusp of another World War? Many experts believe that World War III may have already begun, characterized by hybrid warfare, cyberattacks, and ongoing conflicts like the war in Ukraine. Some military leaders assert that the involvement of multiple nations in these conflicts indicates the onset of a global war, even if it doesn't resemble traditional warfare.

"No mushroom clouds or apocalyptic wastelands. Rather, it is war by a thousand cuts, conducted across multi-regional and multi-domain battlefields. "Putin's invasion of Ukraine was the opening stage (of World War Three). It was his marker to the global community that the world order as it had existed since the end of the Second World War was no longer."

(South Asian Insider Bureau) New York:

In a world that has grown more dangerous in recent years, the nightmare scenario of a Third World War is in the public consciousness. Earlier this year, UK Defence Secretary Grant Shapps warned the world could be engulfed by wars involving China, Russia, North Korea and Iran in the next five years, and said we are moving "from a post-war to pre-war world". The relief felt at the end of the Cold War in the late '80s has been replaced with increasing alarm at Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and there is outcry at the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. It is a sobering fact that, as the leaders of most of the world's leading industrial powers and leading democracies – the G7 – meet in Canada, there is little they can do, or wish to do, to end the Iran-Israel war.

This is partly because the war, though dramatic in its imagery and real in its civilian toll, has so far been confined to mutual aerial bombardments. They are a longer and more intense version of the strikes launched by the two nations in April and October, and may subside when Israel judges it is prudent to do so, though the IDF currently says it has full control of the skies over Tehran.

Israel says strikes overnight in Haifa and Tel Aviv killed eight, while Tehran says fatalities have been in the hundreds. Still, it is not yet all-out war. There is no question of the Israelis deploying their nuclear weapon, and not much chance

of the Americans engaging directly against Iranian territory or its forces.

If Donald Trump wants vengeance for the reportedly minor damage to the US embassy in Tel Aviv following overnight strikes in a residential area, then he can leave that to Benjamin Netanyahu (BiBi) to take care of.

So, this may turn out to be the moment of maximum or peak danger, rather than a further escalation. It doesn't yet feel like the beginning of World War Three. If you take the view that the 7 October atrocities committed by Hamas were the equivalent destabilising, provocative moment as the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in July 1914 – the spark that lit a global conflagration – then you would be tempted to view recent events as a long-running set of national revivals in a volatile region, which are about to draw in the great powers of our time.

Rather like the Serbian terrorists then, Hamas would certainly welcome the interventions of other powers they traditionally regarded as allies – Iran and Russia – on their side, pitted against Israel and the United States. Hamas could not win a war against Israel on its own, but with Iran and Russia, perhaps it has a chance of advancing its objectives and weakening Israel.

That was why BiBi's disproportionate reaction to the 7 October 2023 attacks seemed so ill-conceived, because it played into Hamas's hands. And, despite

everything, the terrorist organisation has not been eliminated. Israeli war aims have not been achieved, but merely widened to embrace the humiliation of Iran, the end of its nuclear ambitions and possibly even the downfall of the Islamic Republic. Conceivably, America and Russia could still be drawn in, and that might have happened under the Biden presidency. But under Donald Trump, and with the Iranians being revealed to be as weak as they are, the dynamics for such an escalation aren't quite right.

Trump is so reluctant to do anything to get in the way of his strategic aim of partnership with Russia that he would only intervene if Israel were in immediate, mortal jeopardy. Similarly, Putin would only intervene if Iran – a source of diplomatic and military support for the Ukraine campaign – was to be placed at risk.

Neither Israel nor Iran is about to fall, and Israel is doing more than anyone else ever has to disrupt Iran's journey to becoming a nuclear power. It's an uncomfortable fact, and it would have been far better all around if the Iranian nuclear deal had achieved the same ends, but when Trump pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in his first term, Iran merely accelerated its efforts.

Israel stopping the ayatollahs from acquiring weapons of mass destruction suits Trump well enough. And, in this context, it is no great surprise that he

Are We Heading for World War Three?

has suggested Vladimir Putin broker a peace deal or at least a ceasefire. For the time being, with a similar logic, there is also no obvious reason why Saudi Arabia or Turkey would seek to intervene in the conflict between Israel and Iran.

So, this week, the G7 will issue another bland communiqué calling for de-escalation, which will make little impact in Israel or Iran, and the bombings will continue. As will the futile destruction of Gaza, and the Houthis may resume their low-level terrorism around the Strait of Hormuz, tempered by periodic American punishment bombings.

This, however, is not stability, and things could still escalate – but it would need something dramatic to occur, such as the Russians and North Koreans gifting Iran a nuclear weapon and a missile delivery system to take it at least as far as Israel. Or America bombing Tehran or the holy sites.

At such a point, we could again contemplate how the great powers and their satellites might line up in a total war. Not yet, though.

Experts have warned the world is already at war for the third time – and has been for some time.

When people think of war, many will bring up images of the First and Second World Wars, with the likes of trench warfare or fierce battles fought in the towns and cities of Western Europe. But in today's day and age, it can be far simpler with the digital arena replacing scenes of destruction at home. Other signs are less subtle as people in Ukraine can attest. Indeed, experts say the Third World War began with Russia's invasion of their friendly neighbours in 2022. National security expert Mark Toth and former US intelligence officer Col. Jonathan Sweet told MailOnline they believe the world is already at war. They said: "This third global conflagration doesn't look or feel like what Hollywood envisioned.

"No mushroom clouds or apocalyptic wastelands. Rather, it is war by a thousand cuts, conducted across multi-regional and multi-domain battlefields.

"Putin's invasion of Ukraine was

the opening stage (of World War Three). It was his marker to the global community that the world order as it had existed since the end of the Second World War was no longer."

In another sign, this weekend it was reported that Russian hacking software has been allegedly used to steal hundreds of Ministry of Defence computer log-ins in a major security breach. The MoD is now investigating the incident which saw emails and passwords belonging to almost 600 employees – including UK Armed personnel, civil servants and defence contractors – being stolen and leaked on the dark web by cybercriminal groups since 2020.

The stolen data includes email addresses, as well as other log-in information needed to access the MoD's Defence Gateway portal, an online platform for British military personnel. The system doesn't contain classified information but is used by some staff for communication and to get access to human resources and health data.

The MoD told The Mirror the system is not an integral part of its operations and it is accessed via two-factor authentication. It is believed most of the exposed employees are based in the UK, but some details of MoD staff based in Iraq, Qatar, Cyprus and mainland Europe have also been stolen, which could present a significant security risk.

Last week Russia revealed that mass production of its feared Oreshnik ballistic missiles has begun. The new intermediate-range ballistic missile was used in an assault on Dnipro, destroying a factory and bringing it to ruins. In reaction to its launch, Putin claimed the weapon is "unstoppable" and said even the US air defence systems would be powerless to stop the new missile, which flies at Mach 10 and is named after the Russian word for hazelnut tree.

'The international order is fraying' Hugh Lovatt, senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank

"The reassuring news is we are not heading towards the Third World War," he says. While there are conflicts in tensions in

various theatres – Ukraine, the Middle East, Asia-Pacific – these are all "separate and not connected", according to Mr Lovatt. "The Gaza war has been going on for six months and is driving regional escalation – Iran's retaliation against Israel is just the latest example of this." There are implications for the international community, including the UK, for example in terms of the Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping and the impact that has on global trade. There is, he says, a risk that British troops become sucked into a conflict in the Middle East. "We need to see these risks in a certain context in which they do impact the UK but they are not existential risks. "This is also happening at a time when the international order is fraying, and is under considerable strain. This is something that we should be very troubled by."

'More likely now than at any time since the end of the last world war'

Deborah Haynes, Sky News security and defence editor Given the scale of the turmoil shaking parts of the globe – in particular in Ukraine and the Middle East – the potential for a spark that ignites World War Three already exists. That does not mean an escalation to global confrontation is inevitable but it is arguably more likely now than at any time since the end of the last world war. A decision by Iran to launch an unprecedented barrage of missiles and drones against Israel has just raised the stakes even higher.

Israel has vowed to respond though its allies, including the UK and the US, are urging restraint especially as they helped ensure the vast majority of incoming munitions were blasted out of the sky before they could cause harm on the ground.

Should Israel choose to retaliate, the crisis could yet be contained if its return strike is limited and any further Iranian response triggered by such an attack is also curbed. But they are two big ifs. Also, every time even limited military action is taken there is the risk of error or miscalculation that leads to uncontrolled escalation to regional war. What happens in the Middle East also

has a global impact, especially because Iran is backed by Russia and has close ties to China, while Israel's strongest allies, led by the US, are predominantly Western nations.

It means the crisis pitches authoritarian states against democracies – just as the concurrent war in Europe does. Despite vows of Western support, Russia is slowly gaining ground in Ukraine. Western allies are failing to deliver the weapons and ammunition the Ukrainian military needs – leading to an almost inevitable retreat unless the balance of military strength on the ground changes. Success by Vladimir Putin in Ukraine may embolden the Russian president, whose country is on a "total war" footing, to test the strength of the NATO alliance by invading a member state.

Again, this would create a direct war between authoritarian Moscow, armed by Iran, North Korea and also with assistance from China, against the West's NATO alliance. Evidence that military force has proved effective against Western powers could further harden China's resolve to make good on a pledge to reunite the island of Taiwan with the mainland even if that means invading. Such a move could also plunge Asia into conflict, again along the same dividing line of authoritarian states versus democracies.

'Diversion of attention'

Edward R Arnold, senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) thinktank

"I think people really need to understand what the North Atlantic Treaty is, which is the foundation of NATO," he says. Mr Arnold argues that the public seem to believe that NATO's Article 5 (the principle that an attack on one member is treated as an attack on all) is automatic. "That's not the case or certainly does not have to be the case... escalation is not automatic and there are measures to de-escalate things." Looking at the situation in Ukraine, where NATO has been providing weapons and assistance, he says the risk of

a miscommunication between the West and Russia has increased.

"The chances of a miscommunication where one ship accidentally fires on another, I think that goes up. "We need to be really prepared about what that means." He also argues that in some ways the threat of a wider conflict with Russia is reducing at the moment. Kremlin forces are starting to make progress in Ukraine, but the quality of their troops has been degraded significantly such that they are not in a position to present a threat to NATO. Mr Arnold continued: "Vladimir Putin will be looking pretty closely at what happens in the Middle East: how each nation responds and just the diversion of attention (from Ukraine).

"It's all helping Putin at the moment because while focused on the Middle East we are not as focused as we have been on Ukraine."

'Donald Trump could undermine NATO'

Dr Luigi Scazzieri, senior research fellow at the Centre for European Reform thinktank

"It depends on your definition of World War Three. A possible conflict between Iran and Israel has the potential to expand into a major military conflagration in the Middle East, with global implications.

"The US would almost certainly be drawn in on Israel's side and other Western countries, including the UK, may do the same to a lesser extent. "But their involvement would be limited and this would not be World War Three, not least as Russia can ill-afford to support Iran and because China is unlikely to. "The impact of such a conflict on Europe would be primarily economic, through further disruption in energy flows and trade.

"The primary pathway to a World War Three scenario remains a direct Western clash with Russia. That scenario will be more likely if Donald Trump wins and undermines NATO, tempting Vladimir Putin into an attack on the Baltics. "A clash with Russia would also be quite likely if Western forces become involved in supporting Ukraine in frontline combat roles."

Who is Arun Srinivas, new India head of Meta?

Meta has announced the appointment of Arun Srinivas as its new India Head, a key leadership role at a time when the digital advertising market in India continues to grow rapidly. With over 25 years of experience in sales, marketing, and business leadership across top consumer and tech companies, Srinivas brings a rich mix of corporate expertise and operational insight.

Arun Srinivas started his career in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) space, joining Reebok in 1996. Over five years, he held three key roles – Product Manager, Regional Sales Manager for South India, and eventually Marketing Manager. His early exposure to brand building and regional market dynamics helped build a solid base in consumer understanding.

In 2001, he joined Hindustan Unilever as Branch Sales Manager. Over a career spanning more than 15 years at Unilever, he held several leadership positions across categories and geographies.



He rose through the ranks to become Category Vice President for Foods South Asia, where he was responsible for the business in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Before that, he led Skin Care & Makeup and Beverages categories as Vice President, handling well-known brands like Fair & Lovely, Ponds, Vaseline,

Lakm, and Knorr.

FROM FMCG TO TECH AND INVESTMENTS

After leaving Unilever in 2017, Srinivas moved to the private equity space as an Operating Advisor with WestBridge Capital Partners. Here, he led the consumer vertical and helped drive growth at portfolio companies like Vini Cosmetics and Enrich Salons.

He then transitioned to a top role at Ola in 2019, serving as COO and Global CMO. He managed the full P&L for Ola's India business, overseeing marketing, revenue, and all mobility categories including cabs, bikes, and autos. He also played a role in Ola's London launch, which became the #2 ride-hailing company in the city within weeks.

ROLE AT META

Srinivas joined Meta (formerly Facebook) in September 2020. For the first two years, he led the Global Business Group for India, handling revenue from large advertisers and agencies across

industries.

In September 2022, he was elevated to Director and Head of the Ads Business in India. In this role, he led the revenue function across advertisers of all sizes, overseeing sales, solutions, measurement, and creative functions.

Now, as the India Head of Meta, he will be responsible for driving the company's overall strategy and operations in one of its largest global markets.

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Srinivas holds a PGDM in Marketing from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta (1994–1996), one of India's top business schools.

He completed his undergraduate degree in Physics from the University of Madras and also studied science at Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram.

In 2007, he completed an executive education programme in Strategic Customer Management at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University.

Mule accounts, url masking: How forex trading platform OctaFX scammed investors



The Enforcement Directorate recently raided as many as seven locations in four cities, including Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Gurugram, as part of an ongoing investigation into Rs 800-crore fraud linked to a forex trading platform - OctaFX. During the June 13 raids, the federal agency seized various incriminating documents and digital devices that showed how the platform duped investors.

The ED-led investigation revealed that OctaFX, in partnership with M/s OctaFx India Pvt Ltd, operated in India without the authorisation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The firm had defrauded investors under the guise of forex trading, and generated more than Rs 800 crore in less than a year. Raids revealed that the forex trading app routed investor funds through mule accounts into escrow accounts of unauthorised payment aggregator Dinero Payment Services. Additionally, shell companies posing as e-commerce platforms were taken aboard using fake

KYCs to access payment gateways and avoid detection. Investor funds were disguised as online purchases, layered through multiple accounts, and ultimately disbursed as fake forex or betting payouts to conceal their origin. It was also discovered that nearly 50 per cent of user funds were diverted from the OctaFX platform to mule payout accounts. These accounts were used to disburse money under the false pretence of e-commerce refunds, chargebacks, vendor payments, and so on, effectively concealing the actual flow and purpose of the funds.

The recent raids further uncovered that OctaFX used url masking methods to disguise the identity of payment gateways and evade regulatory detection. They used misleading or generic URLs instead of directing users to clearly identifiable payment links, making it difficult for authorities and banks to trace the transactions back to unauthorised or illicit sources.

Donald Trump Says Pharma Tariffs 'Coming Soon'; Indian Drug Stocks Fall Up To 4%



(News Agency)- US President Donald Trump on June 17 said tariffs on the pharmaceutical sector are "coming soon". Following comments, which Trump made while speaking to reporters on board the Air Force One, India's pharma stocks declined up to 4%.

The Nifty Pharma index declined as much as 2.5% following the Trump comments. Granules India became the top loser falling up to 4%, while Aurobindo, Natco and Lupin was down 3% each.

This isn't the first warning — back in April, after imposing reciprocal tariffs on 60 countries (excluding pharma at the time), Trump had hinted that pharma tariffs would come in at "never

seen before" levels and were under active review. "Pharma tariffs are going to come in at levels you haven't really seen before. We are looking at pharmaceuticals as a separate category. We will be announcing that sometime in the near future, and not too distant future. It's under review right now," Trump had said back in April.

The US Commerce Department is currently investigating pharma imports under Section 232, which evaluates the impact of imports on national security. If such tariffs are imposed and companies are unable to pass on the cost, analysts at Citi estimate Indian firms with high exposure to the US generics market could see a 9%-12% one-time hit to their Ebitda.

Travelling Solo? Check These 5 Golden Rules For A Secure Trip

Solo travel is often seen as a journey of self-discovery – a chance to explore the world at your own pace, free from compromise. But while it offers immense freedom, venturing out alone also comes with unique safety challenges. From unfamiliar languages and customs to the possibility of scams or emergencies, solo travellers need to stay vigilant and well-prepared.

To help you travel confidently, here are five crucial safety guidelines every solo adventurer should keep in mind. **Keep Someone In The Loop**

Before setting off on your journey, make it a priority to share your detailed travel plans with a trusted person – whether that's a parent, sibling or close friend. Give them a copy of your itinerary, including where you'll be staying, flight details and scheduled activities. Make it a habit to check in with them regularly, so they're always aware of your location. Having someone back home who knows your movements can make all the difference in case



something goes wrong. **Respect Local Culture And Know Key Emergency Contacts** Take time to learn about the destination's traditions, social etiquette and legal expectations. Being culturally sensitive not only shows respect but can also help you avoid unintentional offences that might lead to trouble. Dressing appropriately – especially in more conservative areas – and picking up a few basic words or phrases in the local language can go a long way.

Be sure to save essential emergency contacts, such as local police numbers, the nearest hospital, and your country's embassy or consulate.

Choose Safe And Well-Rated Places To Stay

When booking accommodation, prioritise properties with consistently positive reviews, especially regarding safety and cleanliness. Pay attention to comments about the surrounding neighborhood, staff reliability and

security measures in place. Solo travelers often benefit from staying at reputable hostels, boutique hotels or guesthouses that attract other travelers, giving you the option of companionship when you want it, and safety in numbers.

Stay Alert And Protect Your Valuables

Remaining aware of your surroundings is key to staying safe on solo trips. Be cautious with alcohol consumption and avoid situations where your

judgment might be impaired. Leave flashy jewellery and expensive electronics tucked away, and don't display large amounts of cash in public. When using taxis or ride-shares, double-check the vehicle's details before getting in and steer clear of unregistered drivers or vehicles without clear identification. Your intuition is a powerful tool – don't ignore it. If something feels wrong, whether it's a person's behaviour, an isolated area or a sudden change in circumstances, trust your gut and remove yourself from the situation. Always have a backup plan for getting back to your accommodation safely, particularly at night. This might mean having the number of a trusted taxi service saved or familiarising yourself with safe walking routes.

Solo travel can be incredibly enriching, offering unforgettable experiences and personal growth. By preparing thoughtfully and keeping these safety principles in mind, you can make the most of your adventures while staying secure and at ease.

Meet These AI Travel Influencers Who Are Leading The Digital Travel Revolution

AI Travel Influencers: Think travel influencers are all plane tickets and passport stamps? Think again. With AI taking over the world, AI-powered personalities are the new rage. These AI travel influencers are planning dream itineraries, dropping destination inspo, and redefining what it means to continuously explore the world. From hyper-personalised guides to virtual globetrotting glam, these AI travel influencers are blurring the lines between tech and wanderlust.

Here are some AI travel influencers who are changing the way we see (and scroll through) the world and the travel space. India's first



bilingual (Tamil and English) AI travel influencer, Radhika Subramaniam, made her debut in June 2025, created by Collective Artists Network. Designed as a solo Gen Z traveller who quit her stable job to journey across India, Radhika represents the current generation of explorers. Explaining the vision behind her, Vijay

Subramaniam, Founder and Group CEO of Collective Artists Network, told The Economic Times, "Radhika feels like someone we all know, that one friend who took the leap and actually went on the trip. She's thoughtful, independent, and interested in the world around her. With her, we wanted to build more than just a new kind of influencer –

we wanted to create someone who could tell stories with heart and make people feel seen." Launched by FUTR Studios in 2022, Kyra holds the title of India's first AI meta influencer. With over 250K followers on Instagram, her feed is a curated mix of fashion-forward travel, yoga sessions by the beach, and snapshots at iconic heritage sites. She even made an appearance on Shark Tank India. "Living" in Mumbai, Kyra blurs the lines between virtual and reality with a lifestyle that's as aspirational as it is algorithmically crafted. An early pioneer in the AI influencer space, Thalasya has been capturing imaginations since 2018. With over 500K followers on Instagram, she blends travel and lifestyle content with her

virtual best friend, Zeline. Her feed is a vibrant mix of wanderlust and style, proving that virtual creators can build real-world influence. Created by the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) in 2023, Emma is a multilingual virtual ambassador on a mission to showcase Germany to the world. She "travels" across the country, shares travel tips on Instagram, and engages with users through chatbot features in over 20 languages. As per the official press release, "Emma's persona is a modern, cosmopolitan Berlin resident who feels at home in the digital world. In her mid-30s and with an affinity for technology and travel, she combines her love of new technologies with her passion for travelling through Germany."

Say Goodbye To Headaches With These 7 Calming Yoga Poses

Dealing with headaches or migraines can be exhausting, often disrupting your focus and daily life. While medication is one option, gentle yoga can offer a powerful, natural way to reduce the frequency and intensity of these episodes. By calming the nervous system, relieving muscle tension, and improving blood circulation, yoga targets many common migraine triggers. **Balasana (Child's Pose)**

Balasana is a calming resting pose that helps quiet the mind and ease tightness in the back, shoulders, and neck, common areas of stress-related tension.

How to practice: Kneel on your mat with your big toes touching and knees spread apart. Sit back on your heels and gently fold forward, resting your forehead on the mat. Extend your arms forward or alongside your body. Breathe slowly and deeply, allowing your spine to lengthen and your body to relax.

Why it helps: This pose promotes deep relaxation, reduces stress, and helps regulate the nervous system, ideal for those prone to tension headaches.

Uttanasana (Standing Forward Fold)



This gentle forward bend stretches the spine, neck, and hamstrings, while encouraging fresh blood flow to the brain.

How to practice: Stand with feet hip-width apart. Hinge at your hips to fold forward, letting your upper body drape toward the floor. Slightly bend your knees for comfort. Rest your hands on the mat or clasp opposite elbows.

Why it helps: It releases neck and shoulder tension and soothes the nervous system, helping to relieve headache discomfort.

Viparita Karani (Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose)
A restorative inversion that encourages relaxation and supports circulation to the upper body and head.

How to practice: Sit close to a wall and lie on your back, extending your legs vertically along the wall. Let your arms rest beside you with palms up. Breathe slowly and remain in the pose for 5–10 minutes.

Why it helps: This pose calms the nervous system, eases fatigue, and improves blood flow — all of which may help reduce

migraine frequency.

Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose)

Bridge Pose gently opens the chest, stretches the spine, and stimulates circulation, all while reducing back and neck tension.

How to practice: Lie on your back with knees bent and feet hip-width apart. Press into your feet and arms to lift your hips off the ground. Clasp your hands beneath you or keep your arms at your sides. Breathe steadily and release slowly.

Why it helps: It relieves spinal tension, balances hormones, and supports better breathing — all beneficial for headache relief.

Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog)

This rejuvenating full-body pose stretches the spine, hamstrings, and shoulders — areas where stress and tension often build.

How to practice: Start on your hands and knees. Tuck your toes and lift your hips to form an inverted "V" shape. Let your head relax between your arms, keeping your gaze soft. Hold for several breaths.

'I Was Feeling 60': Fardeen Khan On How Quitting Alcohol Transformed His Health



After a phenomenal performance in Heeramandi last year, Fardeen Khan returned to the big screen recently with Housefull 5. In a recent interview, the actor opened up about his weight loss journey. He revealed that he lost 25 kilograms, and he also spoke about how quitting alcohol helped him achieve his weight loss goals. In a conversation with Cyrus Broacha, Fardeen Khan talked about his impressive weight loss journey. His incredible transformation has captured the attention

of fans and the industry alike. After more than a decade away from the spotlight, the actor made a striking return in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Heeramandi, where his significantly leaner frame sparked conversations online. Over the last few years, he's shed close to 25 kilos — a feat he recently spoke candidly about. He said, "I was 102-103 at my heaviest. Not muscle. Good old body fat... as of last week, I am 78-79 now. Some 25 kilos off." Fardeen emphasised that this

journey wasn't solely about appearances. His primary motivation was reclaiming his health. Reflecting on the emotional impact of the weight gain, he admitted, "I didn't feel like myself at all." In an earlier interview with Zoom TV, the actor also opened up about being at the receiving end of brutal trolling when his appearance changed. "I was a worldwide trending topic at that time and not for the right reasons."

How Giving Up Alcohol Changed Everything

One of the most pivotal shifts in his transformation journey came when he decided to cut out alcohol entirely. Fardeen shared that the turning point came in 2020, when he realised alcohol was taking a toll on both his well-being and daily life.

"I was sober in the early 2020s. That's when I kicked the habit full on during the COVID-19 lockdown. I stopped in one go," he recalled. The benefits of quitting were almost immediate. He described how the mental fog began to lift for the first time in years. "I was feeling bloody 60 years old. Now, when you wake up, I feel clean, sober... I quit overnight, but coming to terms with your new life was a tough journey," he shared.

Fardeen's story is a powerful reminder that transformation is all about rediscovering clarity, strength, and a sense of self.

Can Magnesium Really Help You Rest Better? Expert Explains The Science Behind It

It's not every day a humble mineral starts trending, but magnesium has found its moment, and it's long overdue. Studies show that over 60% of urban Indian adults are deficient in key micronutrients, and magnesium is often among them. This one mineral supports hundreds of processes in the body: calming your nerves, relaxing your muscles, regulating your heartbeat, supporting better sleep, and even helping convert food into energy. When it's missing, things feel off. You may feel tired, tense, restless, or just not quite yourself. From fatigue and sleep disturbances to muscle cramps and anxiety, low magnesium levels can show up in subtle but disruptive ways. Amidst the hype for magnesium, Dr. Chandrika Kambam, Medical Director at Even Healthcare, answers all the questions. **Can Magnesium Really Help With Sleep And Anxiety?**

Dr Kambam says, "Yes, especially if your levels are low." She explains that magnesium plays a vital role in promoting restful sleep and relaxation by activating the parasympathetic nervous system — your body's natural 'relaxation mode.' It binds to GABA, a calming neurotransmitter that helps soothe the nervous system and quiet the mind. Magnesium also supports your circadian rhythm by regulating melatonin production, the hormone responsible for sleep-wake cycles.

Go viral for racist behavior, receive \$750,000: inside the new extremist crowdfunding campaigns

By Gloria Oladipo

Shiloh Hendrix, a white woman based in Rochester, Minnesota, went viral after admitting in a video that she called a 5-year-old Black child the N-word while at a local park on 28 April.

Though Hendrix was met with widespread condemnation and denouncement after the incident, she also raised over \$750,000 on the crowdfunding website GiveSendGo, commonly used by extremists to fundraise for far-right causes. Many contributors to Hendrix's campaign, which was created to "protect [Hendrix's] family" after backlash, used racial slurs and Nazi symbols in their donation names. As of 1 June, over 30,000 people had donated to Hendrix's fundraiser. The support and funding Hendrix received for her racist actions raised alarm bells for many, including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which flagged the fundraiser as being used to "spread hateful talking points and legitimize their ideas". Experts say the response to her campaign signals the rise of more overt, public support for racist actions, versus their condemnation.

Hendrix isn't the first white person to become infamous for racist behavior and receive financial support from members of the public. A legal defense fund for Daniel Penny, a white veteran who killed Jordan Neely, a Black unhoused man, on a New York City subway in 2023, raised over \$3.3m on GiveSendGo. The fund was created by Penny's defense lawyers. A similar campaign was started for Kyle Rittenhouse, who shot and killed two protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin, during a 2020 demonstration against the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man. That crowdfunding drive was started by Friends of Kyle Rittenhouse, a group based in Atlanta, Georgia, and raised more than \$585,000. Several fundraisers for participants of the 2021 capital insurrection are currently hosted on the website. But experts say that the grassroots nature of Hendrix's fundraiser is concerning. Compared to the success of



fundraisers like Rittenhouse or Penny that were largely driven by media attention and conservative politicians, Hendrix's campaign is in support of her usage of a racial slur and was spread by white supremacist circles.

"This particular case stands out because of the horrifying, vile slur that is being defended," said Brian Levin, the founding director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino. He added: "It's illustrative of something that we've seen with regard to online organizing with respect to 'dyed-in-the-wool' racists, as opposed to just more controversial political expression." Organizations and individuals explicitly supporting white supremacy, anti-LGBTQ+, and QAnon conspiracies raised over \$6m on fundraising sites, including GiveSendGo, between 2016 and 2022, according to a report from the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism. GiveSendGo hosted the majority of fundraisers, about 86.5% of the money tracked by the ADL.

Other experts say that the Hendrix campaign demonstrates a shift in public opinion following Donald Trump's latest electoral victory, one where bigoted acts receive more open, tangible support than ever before. "There's evidence that in the last few

years, we've really seen a normalization of explicitly racialized politics," said Jennifer Chudy, an assistant professor of political science at Wesleyan University. "I think the person in the White House has emboldened people who may have felt silently sympathetic in the past towards this white woman, to now be more open about it, to not have any kind of sense of embarrassment or shame [since] this is a position that many in our upper echelons of power endorse and profess." In many ways, the success of Hendrix's crowdfunding campaign represents an "anomaly", said Mark Dwyer, an extremism funding investigator with the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism. For one, a small group of users on X, known for spreading racist rhetoric online, claimed that they created the fundraiser on GiveSendGo and then reached out to Hendrix, offering her support, said Dwyer.

What's more, Hendrix's crowdfunding came after a viral fundraising campaign for Karmelo Anthony on the same platform. Anthony, a Black teenager from Frisco, Texas, allegedly stabbed and killed Austin Metcalf, a white teenager from a rival school, during a track meet. White supremacists encouraged people

to donate to Hendrix's fund as a rebuttal to money raised for Anthony's legal defense fund, which Dwyer said likely boosted the campaign's success.

Hendrix's video also served as a form of recruitment and camaraderie for folks who may have bigoted views but are not white supremacists. "[Hendrix's video] got in front of millions and millions and millions of eyes. It drove donors that might not necessarily be the hardcore white supremacist, but in their eyes, they don't see what she did as a problem," said Dwyer. He added: "People are voting on their views with their dollar. [For] a lot of people, this might be their first action outside of posting on social media to push their views and making a donation." This latest incident represents a sharp contrast in how the public reacted to racist incidents just a few years ago. With the launch of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2013, many white people began facing public outrage over problematic behavior, including their harassment of Black people in public spaces. Jennifer Schulte, nicknamed "Barbecue Becky", was widely criticized in 2018 after calling 911 on a Black family who was barbecuing in an Oakland, California, park. Amy Cooper was fired from her job after a trending video proved that

she falsely claimed that a Black birdwatcher threatened her and her dog. "Karen" quickly became a moniker to describe an entitled, nosy white woman as racial justice protests spread across the globe in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd.

But Chudy said that high levels of support for the Black Lives Matter movement among white people was also due to a confluence of unusual forces, including the Covid-19 pandemic and viral video of Floyd's murder. She added: "You had white people who were stuck at home, [with the] typical distractions of their daily life suspended and so they would watch their screens and they saw an unambiguous, violent, lethal interaction between a white police officer and a Black man. We were always going to kind of revert to the norm."

Backlash to support of racial justice also came quickly, best illustrated by the political rise and election of Trump in 2016.

"Trump emerges on the national stage with an explicitly racial agenda of talking about Obama's birth certificate and where he's from," said Chudy. "Because Trump is so visible, because he's served in the highest political office in the land twice, that's just a lot of visibility to entrench new norms."

Meanwhile, individuals who were previously sympathetic to racial justice causes largely reduced their support. "White people might feel like, 'Oh, we already discussed those issues. We already read the books, did the marches. So why is there still something to be upset about?'" said Chudy.

In the midst of shifting support, platforms like GiveSendGo have been used as a fundraising tool by "alt-right" extremists to fund causes. The website advertises itself as a free, philanthropic platform which emphasizes "providing hope for people's spiritual needs", according to the group's website. "The most valuable currency is God's love", the website reads, noting that GiveSendGo also partners with "individuals and organizations dedicated to praying over our campaigns".

'I have never seen such open corruption':

Trump's crypto deals and loosening of rules shock observers

Cryptocurrency multimillionaire Justin Sun could barely contain his glee.

Last month, Sun publicly flaunted a \$100,000 Donald Trump-branded watch that he was awarded at a private dinner at Trump's Virginia golf club. Sun had earned the recognition for buying \$20m of the crypto memecoin \$Trump, ranking him first among 220 purchasers of the token who received dinner invitations.

Trump's much-hyped 22 May dinner and a White House tour the next day for 25 leading memecoin buyers were devised to spur sales of \$Trump and wound up raking in about \$148m, much of it courtesy of anonymous and foreign buyers, for Trump and his partners.

Memecoins are crypto tokens that are often based on online jokes but have no inherent value. They often prove risky investments as their prices can fluctuate wildly. The \$Trump memecoin was launched days before Trump's presidential inauguration, spurring a surge of buyers and yielding tens of millions of dollars for Trump and some partners.

Trump's private events on 22 May to reward the top purchasers of \$Trump have sparked strong criticism of the president from ethics watchdogs, ex-prosecutors and scholars for exploiting his office for personal gain in unprecedented ways. But they fit in a broader pattern of how Trump has exploited the power and lure of his office to enrich himself and some top allies via cryptocurrencies.

I have never seen such open corruption in any modern government anywhere

Steven Levitsky of Harvard University

"Self-enrichment is exactly what the founders feared most in a leader – that's why they put two separate prohibitions on self-benefit into the constitution," said former federal prosecutor Paul Rosenzweig. "Trump's profiting from his presidential memecoin is a textbook example of what the framers wanted to avoid."

cholars, too, offer a harsh analysis of Trump's crypto dealings.

"I have never seen such open corruption in any modern government anywhere," said Steven Levitsky, a professor of government at Harvard University and an expert on authoritarian regimes who co-authored the book *How Democracies Die*.

Such ethical and legal qualms don't seem to have fazed Trump or Sun. The pair forged their ties well before the dinner as Sun invested \$75m in another Trump crypto enterprise, World Liberty Financial (WLF), that Trump and his two older sons launched last fall and in which they boast a 60% stake.

The Chinese-born Sun's political and financial fortunes, as well as those of other



crypto tycoons, have improved markedly since Trump took office and moved fast to loosen regulations of cryptocurrency ventures at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the justice department and other agencies to upend Joe Biden's policies. As the SEC has eased regulations and paused or ended 12 cases involving cryptocurrency fraud, three Sun crypto companies that were charged with fraud by an SEC lawsuit in 2023 had their cases paused in February by the agency, which cited the "public interest" and reportedly has held settlement talks.

Trump's and Sun's mutually beneficial crypto dealings symbolize how the US president has boosted his paper wealth by an estimated billions of dollars since he returned to office, and worked diligently to slash regulations fulfilling his pledges to make the US the "crypto capital of the planet" and end the "war on crypto".

After the 22 May dinner, Sun posted: "Thank you @POTUS for your unwavering support of our industry!"

Although Trump's crypto ventures are less than a year old, the State Democracy Defenders Fund watchdog group has estimated that as of mid-March they are worth about \$2.9bn.

In late March, Reuters revealed that WLF had raised more than \$500m in recent months and that the Trump family receives about 75% of crypto token sales.

Trump's pursuit of crypto riches and deregulation represents a big shift from his comments to Fox News in 2021, when he said that bitcoin, a very popular crypto currency, "seems like a scam".

In July 2019, Trump posted that "Unregulated Crypto Assets can facilitate unlawful behavior, including drug trade", and noted that their value was "highly volatile and based on thin air".

Now, Trump's new pro-crypto policies have benefited big campaign donors who lead crypto firms as well as Elon Musk, the world's

richest person, who spent almost \$300m to help elect Trump, and who boasts sizable crypto investments in bitcoin through his electric car firm Tesla and his other ventures. Though Trump and Musk have since fallen out, the mogul's crypto fortunes seem to have improved due to the president's deregulatory agenda.

Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, is a real estate billionaire who helped found WLF, in which he has a stake; Trump's two oldest sons, Eric and Don Jr, and Witkoff's son Zach have played key roles promoting WLF in the Middle East and other places.

Trump's use of his Oval Office perch to increase his wealth through his burgeoning crypto businesses while his administration rapidly eases regulations is unprecedented and smacks of corruption, say scholars, many congressional Democrats and some Republicans.

"To me, Trump's crypto dealings seem pretty explicit," Julian Zelizer, a Princeton University professor who focuses on political history, told the Guardian. "Policy decisions are being made regarding parts of the financial industry that are being done not to benefit the nation, but his own financial interests ... It's hard to imagine what he's doing benefits the nation."

Rosenzweig stressed that "not only do Trump's extravagant crypto ventures benefit him personally as his administration slashes crypto regulations and takes pro-crypto steps at the SEC; they also benefit his tech bro backers who will take full advantage of the end of regulatory enforcement".

In Congress, leading Democrats, including Richard Blumenthal, a senator from Connecticut, and Jamie Raskin, a representative from Maryland, in May announced separate inquiries by key panels in which they are ranking

members into Trump's crypto dealings, and attacked Trump for using his office to enrich himself via his crypto operations.

"With his pay-for-access dinner, Trump put presidential access and influence on the auction block," Blumenthal told the Guardian. "The scope and scale of Trump's corruption is staggering – I'll continue to demand answers."

Trump's crypto schemes are the Mount Everest of corruption

Democratic senator Jeff Merkley

Last month, too, the Democratic senator Jeff Merkley, from Oregon, and the Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, introduced the "end crypto corruption" bill, which 22 other Democrats have endorsed.

"Trump's crypto schemes are the Mount Everest of corruption," Merkley told the Guardian. "We must ban Trump-style crypto corruption so all elected federal officials – including the president, vice-president and members of Congress – cannot profit from shady crypto practices," which his bill would curtail.

Some former congressional Republicans are also incensed by Trump's blatant use of his presidency to peddle \$Trump. "Nobody should be allowed to use their public positions while in office to enrich themselves," said ex-Republican congressman Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, who once chaired the House ethics panel. "A member of Congress would not be permitted to engage in the kind of memecoin activities which the president has been doing."

Columbia law professor Richard Briffault noted that as part of the Trump administration's wide-ranging and risky crypto deregulatory agenda which can benefit Trump's own crypto ventures, the Department of Labor in late May nixed a Biden-era "extreme care" warning about 401K plans investing in crypto.

"[The labor department] has rescinded the red light from the Biden years for 401K retirement plans, which is another sign of the Trump administration's embrace of crypto," Briffault said.

Briffault, an expert on government ethics, has told the Guardian more broadly that Trump's crypto ventures and his 22 May memecoin bash are "unprecedented".

"I don't think there's been anything like this in American history," he said. "Trump is marketing access to himself as a way to profit his memecoin. People are paying to meet Trump and he's the regulator-in-chief. It's doubly corrupt."

In late May, in a new crypto business twist, the Trump Media and Technology Group, the parent of Truth Social, said it had sealed a deal to raise \$2.5bn to be used to buy bitcoin, creating a reserve of the cryptocurrency.

The IMF-Shaped Irony In Pakistan's Massive Defence Budget Hike



Pakistan's trial by fire is here. After delaying the announcement of the budget for weeks together, there was no putting it off any longer. Not just the budget, but also the Economic Survey, and within all this, the allocations for the armed forces. That last bit is particularly interesting at the moment, since it should give an idea of the losses suffered by them during Operation Sindoor. But the Pakistani defence budget retains its opacity. Neither the International Monetary Fund (IMF) nor the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has been able to persuade Pakistan to be a little more transparent to its own people. General Asim Munir got his lifetime rank of Field Marshal, but the question that arises is what Pakistanis have to pay for it.

The Economic Survey

Taking a quick look at the Economic Survey itself is an exercise of going past duplicity to get at the realities. For instance, the fact that the fiscal deficit has remained at 6% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) for more than a decade means the simple fact that the country has to continue taking loans to pay off the interests of previous loans. Remember, Pakistan has been going to the IMF since 1958, with the present bailout being its 25th. As previous finance ministers have pointed out, the deficit is reduced by steadily trimming the government's developmental spending. In other words, Pakistanis are getting far less bang for their borrowed buck. A second issue is how to increase revenue, which, in simple terms, is the purse that the government has to draw upon. The IMF, in its latest report, has warned

against tax exemptions, including in retail, while in Pakistan, much of this is hidden in land acquisitions. It emerges that the cost of this has risen by PKR 2

period from when the country started to back terrorism, both to the east and the west.

Defence Allocations



trillion to a total of PKR 5.8 trillion. This despite the Board of Revenue trying to increase the tax base. Clearly, the rich landowning classes voting for the present government and the huge landholders in the military don't like paying up.

Even as agriculture stalls with a mere 0.56%, the point of this whole thing is that where Pakistan once had a growth rate of 7% in the mid-1980s, today it has slowed down to a mere 1.6% in the last three years. Note that this is the

Now for the defence budget. The allocation of PKR 2.55 trillion, a jump of 20%, is the highest in a decade, at 1.97% of GDP. That is just about within the mandated IMF limits. But add to that some PKR 742 billion in military pensions, and the IMF is left standing at the post. The army gets the lion's share of the budget at about 45.5 per cent, while the air force and navy get about 20 and 10 per cent each. Meanwhile, the armed forces' pay has been increased.

This has to be seen against the sharp cut to expenditure on health, from an estimated PKR 52 million to PKR 31 million, and the complete wiping out of the section on environment protection. The IMF, in fact, has allotted SDR 1 billion for a Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). So, this is puzzling.

Also noteworthy is a huge rise in civil works, physical assets and operating expenses. In the last two cases, that's a jump from PKR 257,000 million to 336,000 million, and 550,000 million to 663,077 million, which could account for repairs to runways and hangars after Op Sindoor.

What is hidden still are the costs of replacing those aircraft within hangars that were hit at at least three locations (Bholari, Jacobabad, and Sukkur), with unknown numbers or types of aircraft inside. Those costs alone could be in trillions. All this is hardly in the spirit or letter of the IMF, which based its report on much-needed fiscal prudence, stipulating in one of its 50 conditionalities that Parliament should be consulted on the entire budget.

The reaction of Pakistan was predictable. It approved a five-fold increase in the salaries of the Senate Chairman and National Assembly speaker, months after an increase of 138% in the salaries of lawmakers. The hike, with retrospective effect, became effective in January 2025.

The 'India' Citation

All this was allowed by the IMF since the team was in the country at the time. Also notice that the grouping has made no objection to the huge hike in defence expenditure due to possibly 'rising tensions' noted in the document. It only sagely observes that "Pakistan's outstanding debt to the Fund as a per cent of gross international reserves is above the 75 percentile of comparator countries. The three flow indicators (i.e., debt-service to the fund as a per cent of government revenues, exports, and gross international reserves) ...indicating significant risks". It seems the IMF has been 'persuaded' very strongly by the Pakistan army, with the clinching argument being that war with India has increased dangers.

It seems, therefore, that the Pahalgam strikes have delivered multiple deliverables: the testing of Chinese equipment, the army's image transformed, for now, from thieves and knaves to that of 'saviours' of the nation, Gen Munir's field marshal rank, and, most importantly, the United States again hyphenating India and Pakistan.

Chitrangda Singh to star opposite Salman Khan in Apoorva Lakhia's next



Everyone has their eyes on Salman Khan's next project after 'Sikandar'. For the film, we hear that Salman Khan and Chitrangda Singh are finally set to share the screen. The two have been cast in director Apoorva Lakhia's upcoming action drama, reportedly inspired by military events. This marks the first time the two will be paired together.

According to sources close to the production, Chitrangda will play the female lead opposite Salman in the yet-untitled project. The film is being helmed by Lakhia, best known for gritty, high-stakes films like 'Shootout at Lokhandwala' and 'Haseena Parkar', and is said to be rooted in real events. Details of the film remain under wraps. Salman

Khan was last seen in 'Sikandar', which released on Eid 2025. His best known roles in the past decade include the Tiger franchise, 'Sultan', and 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan'. Salman has been looking at restructuring his body of work, especially after the last few releases. Chitrangda Singh, on the other hand, has been known for her screen presence and nuanced performances. However, she remains one of Bollywood's most underutilised talents. Her most recent appearances include the multi-starrer 'Housefull 5', as well as the Netflix series 'Khakee: The Bengal Chapter', where she played a politician.

This untitled Apoorva Lakhia film marks Chitrangda's first major commercial outing with a top-tier male star like Salman Khan.



'Mob Can't Decide': Supreme Court Slams Karnataka High Court For Kamal Haasan's Thug Life Ban

Thug Life Ban In Karnataka: The Supreme Court on Tuesday slammed the Karnataka High Court and issued a notice in the case concerning the ban on the release of Kamal Haasan's Tamil film Thug Life in the state. The top court criticised the groups that have threatened to stall the film's release over the actor's controversial remarks in which he claimed that "Kannada was born from Tamil".

A bench of Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and Manmohan said rule of law has to be established and guns cannot be put to people's heads to stop them from watching the movie. The court also pointed out that "groups of hooligans" cannot be allowed to decide what gets screened in theatres. "If someone has made a statement, you counter it with another statement. You cannot threaten to burn down theatres," the bench remarked.



In addition to this, the apex court gave one day's time to the Karnataka government to apprise it about the release of the movie in the state, saying once a film has got the Central Board of Film Certification clearance, it has to be

released in all the states. "If someone has made a statement, you counter it with another statement. You cannot threaten to burn down theatres," the bench remarked.

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one day's time to the Karnataka government to apprise it about the release of the movie in the state, saying once a film has got the Central Board of Film Certification clearance, it has to be released in all the states. Highlighting the controversy regarding the actor's remarks, the bench said that if Haasan has said anything inconvenient, it cannot be taken as a gospel truth and the enlightened people of Karnataka should have debated and said he was wrong. The top court was also critical of the high court's recent observations seeking an apology over Haasan's remark over Kannada language, and said it has no business to seek an apology. The matter is scheduled for further hearing on Thursday. Notably, Kamal Haasan's "Thug Life", directed by Mani Ratnam, was released in cinema halls across the country on June 5.