



INSIDER

Voice of South Asian Community Since March 2002

Dhurandhar 2
Grand, Gritty,
but not flawless



Vol. 24

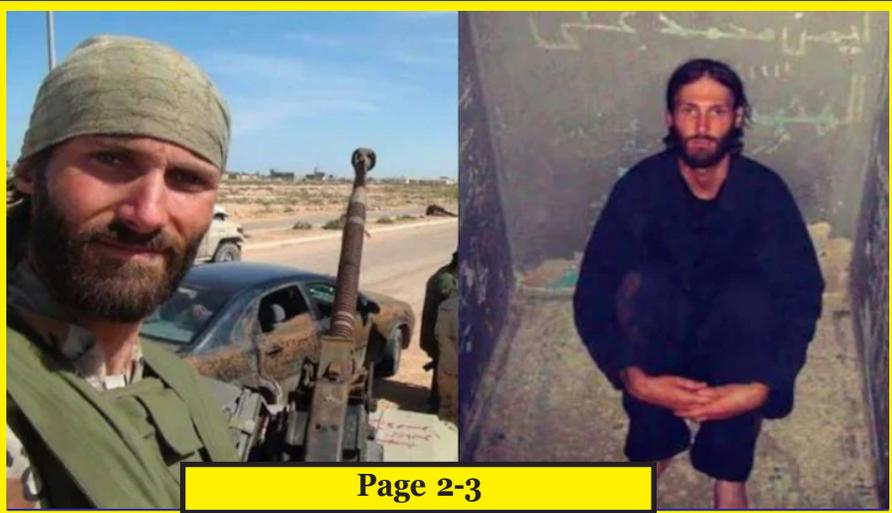
Issue 50

Friday 20 March 2026

\$1

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

The Ghost Soldier Who Never Came Home



Page 2-3

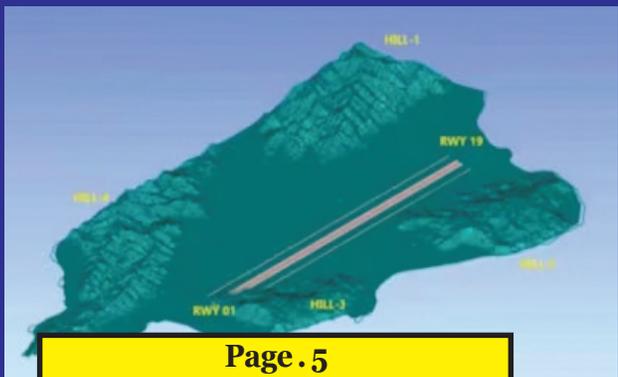
From Baltimore to Bengasi to the India-Myanmar border : How Matthew Aaron VanDyke became the most arrested American in the world's most dangerous places. STATUS-NIA Custody, New Delhi. ARRESTED March 13, 2026 CHARGED UNDER UAPA Terror Conspiracy.

How Iran War Is Exposing Pakistan's Economic Fault Lines



Page .4

Why The Great Nicobar Project Matters More Than Ever



Page .5

Trump's Assertive America In A Fragmenting World



Page .4

Krishnamoorthi Falls Short In Illinois Senate Bid As Stratton Prevails



Page .6

Your Solutions are One Consultation away.....



Glova Group

SEO

Campaigns

AI Intergrations

Branding

Web Design

Social Media

www.glovagroup.com

The Ghost Soldier Who Never Came Home

(Our Staff Reporter) There is a peculiar category of American that the intelligence community calls a “grey man” — someone who exists in the negative space between official policy and private action, between journalist and combatant, between diplomat and mercenary. Matthew Aaron VanDyke is, by almost any measure, the most thoroughly documented example of this archetype currently alive. And as of March 13, 2026, he is also in the custody of India’s National Investigation Agency, charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act with what authorities are calling a sophisticated cross-border terror conspiracy.

To understand how a boy from Baltimore ended up in solitary confinement in Tripoli, on the frontlines of Mosul, in the trenches of eastern Ukraine, and finally in a Delhi court, one must begin at the beginning — and that beginning is deceptively academic. VanDyke grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. He pursued a bachelor’s degree in Political Science at the University of Maryland Baltimore County before earning a Master’s degree in Security Studies from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in 2004. Georgetown’s foreign service school is, by reputation, one of the most prolific producers of CIA officers, State Department officials, and national security professionals in America. Whether VanDyke was recruited into any such network, or whether he merely absorbed the culture and contacts that institution provides, has never been officially confirmed — but the question has never fully gone away.

CHAPTER II

The Motorcycle Odyssey, Cover Story or Genuine Wanderlust?

From 2007 to 2009, VanDyke undertook a solo journey through North Africa and the Middle East on a Kawasaki KLR650, traversing Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Turkey. He became, by his own account, the only American citizen to cross Muammar Gaddafi’s Libya by motorcycle under the dictatorship. He suffered a motorcycle accident in Morocco’s Rif Mountains, was stranded in the Sahara Desert, and was briefly trapped between Syrian and Turkish border controls. In 2010, he followed this up with a six-month trek from Iraq through Iran to Afghanistan. During his time across Iraq between 2008 and 2010, he was arrested or detained by Iraqi security forces no fewer than twenty times. Twenty. The question an intelligence analyst might ask is not ‘why was this American arrested so

many times?’ but rather: ‘what was this American doing that warranted twenty separate security interventions, and how did he always walk free?’ VanDyke’s own answer was simple: he was working as a war correspondent for The Baltimore Examiner, embedded with US forces in Iraq in January and February 2009, and his adventurous itinerary naturally attracted scrutiny in an active war zone. Whether that explanation is sufficient is, like so much about this man, a matter of perspective.

CHAPTER III

Libya, 2011, From Tourist to Fighter to Prisoner of War

When the Arab Spring ignited in early 2011 and Libya erupted into civil war, VanDyke’s Tripoli friends called. He answered. He joined the Libyan National Liberation Army as a foreign fighter alongside rebel forces that the United States, NATO, and much of the Western world was quietly supporting. In March 2011, VanDyke was ambushed in the city of Brega. He was shot, captured, and disappeared into the machinery of Gaddafi’s security state. For nearly six months, VanDyke was held in Abu Salim prison in Tripoli — the same facility that was the site of one of Libya’s most notorious mass killings of political prisoners. He spent significant time in solitary confinement. And during this period, Gaddafi’s regime put him on state television and accused him of being a CIA spy carrying CIA-provided espionage equipment. These accusations were never substantiated by any public evidence, and VanDyke has consistently denied any formal intelligence connections. When Tripoli fell to rebel forces in August 2011, VanDyke escaped prison and returned — not to America — but to the frontlines, where he fought until the end of the war. He was awarded the rebel forces’ Shield of Courage.

CHAPTER IV

Syria and the Birth of a Private Army

In 2012, VanDyke traveled to Aleppo, Syria — the epicenter of the civil war against Bashar al-Assad’s regime — not to fight, but to film. The result was a short documentary called ‘Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution,’ self-financed for approximately \$30,000. The film was designed, by his own admission, to shift world opinion toward the Syrian rebel cause and encourage international support. It screened before Britain’s House of Lords and before senior United Nations officials. It won over a hundred awards at film festivals around the world. In 2014, two of VanDyke’s closest friends were murdered. American journalist James Foley was



(AI Imagined Image, for reference purposes only. Not Real)

beheaded on video by ISIS. Two weeks later, American journalist Steven Sotloff — whom VanDyke had befriended in Libya — was executed the same way. The killings broke something in him and rebuilt it as something harder. He founded Sons of Liberty International (SOLI) — organized as both a 501(c)(3) non-profit and an LLC, headquartered in Washington DC with an office in Erbil, Iraq. Its mission: provide free military training, advising, and supplies to vulnerable populations fighting terrorists and authoritarian regimes. Its first client was the Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU), an Assyrian Christian military force in northern Iraq resisting ISIS. SOLI trained over 300 NPU fighters, working with the blessing — if not official endorsement — of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

OPERATIONAL FOOTPRINT

The Map of a Man Who Never Stopped Moving

To understand the full scope of VanDyke’s

operational history is to trace a map that aligns, with uncomfortable precision, to the geopolitical priority zones of successive US administrations. A former US Army Special Forces operator who reviewed VanDyke’s public profile for this article observed: ‘The countries where this guy shows up — Libya before regime change, Syria during the insurgency, Iraq against ISIS, Ukraine against Russia, Venezuela against Maduro — those aren’t random. That’s a tour of American strategic interests over fifteen years.’ The observation is not, by itself, proof of anything. But it is

CHAPTER V

Ukraine and the Drone War Education

When Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, VanDyke was among the first Americans on the ground. SOLI established training operations in Lviv and Kyiv, working with Ukraine’s Territorial Defense Forces.

CHRONOLOGY OF A CAREER

A Life in Theatre

2004 Georgetown M.A. — Security Studies

Graduates from Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. The institution that will define his network.

2007–09 North Africa Motorcycle Expedition

Solo journey through Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Turkey. Befriends Libyans in Tripoli.

2009 Embedded in Iraq — Baltimore Examiner

War correspondent with US forces. Arrested 20+ times by Iraqi security forces between 2008 and 2010.

2011 Libyan Civil War — Combatant and POW

Joins rebel forces. Shot, captured in Brega. Held in Abu Salim prison six months, solitary confinement. Accused on state TV as CIA spy. Escapes when Tripoli falls. Awarded Shield of Courage.

2012–14 Syria — Filmmaker and Influence Operative

Films 'Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution' in Aleppo to build international support. Screened before UK House of Lords and UN officials. 100+ festival awards.

2014 Founds Sons of Liberty International (SOLI)

After friends Foley and Sotloff are beheaded by ISIS, creates Washington DC-based non-profit. Trains 300+ Assyrian Christian NPU fighters in Iraq.

2019–25 Venezuela — Covert Operations

By his own admission, ran covert ops with Venezuelan rebel commander for six years, including 'Operation Aurora' to topple the Maduro government.

2022–24 Ukraine — Drone Warfare Training

Trains Ukrainian Territorial Defense Forces. Develops counter-drone tech. Evacuated from Avdeevka 2024.

2026 Arrested by India's NIA — Kolkata Airport

Detained March 13 alongside six Ukrainian veterans. Charged under UAPA for alleged drone warfare training for Myanmar ethnic armed groups. Habeas corpus filed.

VanDyke's training programs were increasingly focused on the weapon system that has defined the Ukraine war and reshaped modern conflict: drones. SOLI developed counter-drone technologies, trained personnel in drone assembly and drone jamming, and created what VanDyke described as a 'force multiplier' — a small team of expert trainers capable of rapidly preparing thousands of recruits. In 2024, he was evacuated from Avdeevka — a frontline city in Donetsk under devastating Russian bombardment. By his own public admission in 2025, VanDyke had been running covert operations with a Venezuelan rebel commander since 2019, including an operation referred to as 'Operation Aurora.' It is against this backdrop — drone expertise, covert operational experience, a Ukrainian veteran network — that the India arrests must be read.

CHAPTER VI

The India Operation, A Net Closes at Three Airports

On March 13, 2026, India's National Investigation Agency executed one of its most globally significant arrests in recent memory. In a coordinated operation spanning three cities simultaneously, NIA officers detained seven foreign nationals: one American, and six Ukrainians. Matthew VanDyke was apprehended at Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport. Three Ukrainian nationals — Petro Hurba, Tara Slyviak, and Ivan Sukmanovski — were arrested in Lucknow. Three more Ukrainians — Stefankiv Marian, Honcharuk Maksim, and Kaminskyi Viktor — were detained

in Delhi. All seven were produced before the Patiala House Court, which granted the NIA eleven days of custody. The NIA's account: the group entered India on tourist visas, traveled to Guwahati in Assam, then moved into Mizoram — a state requiring a Restricted Area Permit for foreign nationals, which none of them possessed. From Mizoram, authorities allege, the group crossed illegally into Myanmar, where they conducted pre-arranged drone warfare training sessions for ethnic armed groups in the Chin-Kuki-Zo region. VanDyke is alleged to have been the leader of the network. Drones were allegedly procured from Europe and transited through India to reach these groups.

CHAPTER VII

The CIA Question, Evidence, Speculation, and the Problem with Patterns

The question of whether Matthew VanDyke has ever operated as an agent or asset of American intelligence is, in the strict evidentiary sense, unanswered. No US government document has confirmed it. No intelligence official has confirmed it. VanDyke himself has denied it. What exists instead is a pattern. A Georgetown security studies graduate travels extensively through authoritarian states, embedded repeatedly in conflict zones during periods of maximum US strategic interest, joins US-backed rebel forces in Libya, trains US-favored ethnic minorities against ISIS in Iraq, produces influence-operation documentaries screened to Western lawmakers, trains Ukrainian forces against Russia, runs covert operations in Venezuela, and then appears at the India-Myanmar border in the

company of Ukrainian veterans — all under the banner of a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington DC. The NIA and some Indian media commentators have leaned heavily into the CIA angle. Ukraine's embassy has sharply rejected any implication of state involvement, instead blaming Russia for attempting to drive a wedge between Kyiv and New Delhi. The US Embassy has acknowledged awareness of the case and declined further comment — a response notable for its minimalism given that an American citizen is held under terror charges in a foreign country.

CHAPTER VIII

The Geopolitical Context, Why India, Why Now, Why Myanmar

Myanmar has been convulsed by civil war since the military junta seized power in February 2021. The Chin-Kuki-Zo corridor — where investigators place VanDyke's alleged training activities — sits at the intersection of Myanmar's civil conflict, India's northeastern insurgency concerns, and a region characterized by porous borders, ethnic armed organizations, and decades of proxy maneuvering by multiple state and non-state actors.

| INVESTIGATIVE SERIES THE GHOST SOLDIER — MATTHEW VANDYKE

Grey Zone Dispatch | March 2026 | Investigative Journalism

For India, the northeast has always been a zone of acute strategic sensitivity. Insurgencies in Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram have simmered for decades. The ongoing Myanmar civil war has generated instability, refugee flows, and — India's security agencies allege — opportunities for foreign actors to support armed groups that pose risks to Indian territorial integrity. Against this backdrop, the arrival of an American with drone warfare training expertise, accompanied by Ukrainian combat veterans from one of the most sophisticated drone war theatres in history, conducting training for ethnic armed groups, struck India's NIA as worthy of the full force of the UAPA — a law that carries severe provisions and was originally enacted to combat terrorism and secessionist activities.

CHAPTER IX

The Defence, Torture Allegations and a Habeas Corpus Battle

VanDyke's legal team has not been passive. His lawyer filed a habeas corpus petition asserting that his client's arrest and detention is unlawful. More strikingly, the defence alleges that VanDyke was tortured and beaten by those who arrested him — allegations that, if substantiated, would constitute a significant human rights violation regardless of whatever underlying criminal activity may or may not have occurred. Ukraine's response has been vigorous on behalf of its six nationals. Ambassador Oleksandr Polishchuk met with senior MEA officials and submitted a formal diplomatic note seeking consular access, while Ukraine's embassy publicly rejected any suggestion of state involvement and framed Russia as the

likely source of disinformation designed to damage Ukraine-India relations.

CHAPTER X

What Future Holds, Three Possible Trajectories

The Legal Exoneration Path: His habeas corpus petition and the defence's argument that there is no case against him could succeed. Under pressure from Washington — pressure that has so far been conspicuously absent — India might find a face-saving way to release a US citizen, particularly if the evidence of actual terror-related intent proves difficult to establish in court. The Long Detention Path: The UAPA enables extended detention and makes bail difficult to obtain in terror cases. If India's investigative agencies have solid evidence — travel records, communications intercepts, witness testimony from within Myanmar — VanDyke could face a prolonged legal battle on Indian soil, becoming a significant bilateral irritant in US-India relations. The Diplomatic Resolution Path: Given the sensitivities involved — an American citizen, Ukrainian nationals, allegations touching on US foreign policy operations — a quiet diplomatic resolution is not implausible. Whether Washington wants to spend political capital on Matthew VanDyke is a different question entirely, and its silence so far is telling.

CONCLUSION

The Man Who Always Shows Up

There is something almost mythological about Matthew VanDyke's career — and mythology, it should be noted, tends to obscure more than it illuminates. He is either exactly what he says he is: a passionate, ideologically driven American who believes in freedom and is willing to risk his life in its service, trained academically to understand conflict and practically in its most lethal theaters, who helps beleaguered people defend themselves at no personal profit.

Or he is something else — a highly effective instrument of grey-zone American power, operating with sufficient deniability that no official fingerprints ever appear, moving through the world's most sensitive strategic flashpoints with the freedom only a private citizen possesses.

The truth is possibly both, and possibly neither. What is beyond dispute is the pattern: wherever American strategic interests have concentrated in the past fifteen years — Libya, Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Venezuela, and now the India-Myanmar borderlands — Matthew Aaron VanDyke has shown up, camera or weapon or training manual in hand. He is 46 years old. He has survived solitary confinement in Gaddafi's prisons, ambushes in Brega, artillery in Avdeevka, and twenty detentions in Iraq. Whether India's UAPA will prove a more durable cage than anything he has faced before remains, as of March 19, 2026, an open question. What is not open is the question of whether his story is over. It emphatically is not. Men like Matthew VanDyke do not have endings. They have new theatres.

Trump's Assertive America In A Fragmenting World

(Our Staff Reporter) The ongoing tensions across the Gulf region point to a deeper churn in global geopolitics — one that goes beyond immediate military objectives and reflects a broader contest over influence, economic leverage, and the future of the international order.

The role of the United States under President Donald Trump, particularly since his return to office in January 2025, is central to this unfolding dynamic. Trump's second presidency appears driven by a determination to reassert American primacy, framed through the familiar lens of 'Make America Great Again'. While campaign rhetoric often tends toward exaggeration, there is little doubt that his administration has adopted a more assertive posture — questioning aspects of the rules-based international system and seeking to reshape it in ways that align more closely with perceived American interests.

One of the earliest signals of this approach was the renewed emphasis on tariffs and trade barriers. These measures were justified as a response to what Washington views as long-standing unfair trade practices. At the same time, they reflect a broader concern: the steady expansion of China's economic footprint across regions traditionally considered within the US sphere of influence, including parts of Latin America.

Efforts to counter this influence have taken varied forms. In the Western Hemisphere, US policy has increasingly focused on limiting Beijing's economic and strategic inroads, particularly in critical infrastructure and energy sectors. Venezuela, with its vast oil reserves and long-standing ties with China, has remained a focal point. While the idea of a decisive political shift in Caracas remains uncertain, the broader US objective of constraining Chinese access to key energy resources is evident.

Similar concerns are visible in other theatres.

Trump's earlier interest in acquiring Greenland, though controversial and ultimately unsuccessful, underscored the strategic importance Washington attaches to the Arctic — an emerging arena of competition involving both China and Russia. These developments have, at times, created friction with European allies and raised questions about cohesion within NATO, even if the alliance itself remains intact.

The Middle East, however, remains the most immediate and volatile arena. The ongoing crisis involving Iran, Israel, and the United States reflects a convergence of security concerns and strategic calculations.

Washington and its allies have articulated the objective of limiting Iran's

regional influence and preventing further advancement of its nuclear programme. Yet, beyond these stated goals, there is also a clear economic dimension.

Energy security continues to underpin much of global geopolitics. The stability of the US dollar — particularly its role in global oil transactions — remains a key pillar of American economic strength. In recent years, moves by countries such as China to conduct trade in alternative currencies have raised concerns in Washington about the long-term resilience of the so-called petrodollar system.

Iran and Venezuela, both significant energy producers, have at various points explored alternatives to dollar-based transactions.

Efforts to isolate or pressure these countries, therefore, carry implications not just for regional stability but also for the broader financial architecture. At the same time, China's deep investments in energy infrastructure in both nations highlight the interconnected nature of these geopolitical and economic contests.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which a substantial portion of the world's oil supply passes, remains a critical chokepoint. Any disruption here would have immediate global consequences, particularly for energy-importing nations

such as China. Calls for broader international involvement in securing such routes reflect both practical necessity and the complex interdependence that defines the current moment.

At a military level, the United States and Israel retain clear advantages. However, prolonged engagements carry their own risks. In both countries, there are signs of public fatigue with extended conflicts, shaped in part by past experiences where outcomes have fallen short of initial expectations. These concerns are not unique to the present situation but form part of a longer historical pattern.

Ultimately, the current phase of geopolitical competition is marked by overlapping objectives: security, economic resilience, and strategic dominance. While US policy under Trump has been more overtly transactional and assertive, it is also operating within a landscape shaped by the rise of China and the reassertion of other regional powers. Whether this approach leads to a more stable balance of power or further fragmentation of the global order remains an open question.

What is clear, however, is that the interplay between energy, economics, and security will continue to define the trajectory of international relations in the years ahead.

How Iran War Is Exposing Pakistan's Economic Fault Lines

(Our Staff Reporter) In any global crisis, the resilience of a nation's economy is often revealed not through rhetoric but through the policies it is forced to adopt. Pakistan's latest decision to impose sweeping wartime austerity measures, which was triggered by the escalating war between the United States-Israel and Iran, has turned into one such revealing moment. As the war drags on and disrupts global energy flows, particularly with the Strait of Hormuz effectively closed, Islamabad has moved to conserve fuel and limit economic activity at home. It has announced extraordinary measures which, however, say less about the war abroad and more about how fragile Pakistan's economic foundations have become.

In a televised address on March 9, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif outlined a series of emergency steps meant to reduce fuel consumption and stabilise the economy during the crisis. He announced that government offices will operate only four days a week while schools and universities will remain shut for two weeks. Both public and private organisations are required to reduce on-site work to 50 per cent while 60 per cent of government vehicles have been grounded and fuel allocations for the remaining fleet being cut in half. Such measures are usually adopted by countries directly involved in war or facing immediate economic collapse. But for Pakistan, these have been

imposed in anticipation of external shocks rather than as a response to direct military conflict. This state of affairs speaks volumes about the structural weaknesses of the country's economy.

If we look at Pakistan's economic history, it has majorly survived on external financial lifelines, including aid, grants and loans, throughout its independent existence since 1947. It narrowly avoided sovereign default during a severe balance-of-payments crisis in June 2023 through yet another bailout package from the International Monetary Fund, with which its relationship is longstanding but deeply revealing. Beginning in 1958, eight years after it joined the institution, it has since received more than two dozen bailout loan packages through successive standby arrangements and stabilisation programmes. The most recent of these came in 2024, when Pakistan secured a \$7 billion bailout under a 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EEF) designed to stabilise its macroeconomic environment and encourage structural reforms. Yet the recurrence of such programmes has led many economists to describe Pakistan's economy as permanently dependent on external assistance, becoming a state sustained less by productive growth than by periodic financial resuscitation.

The Pakistani government has depended on international financial support

through loans and grants and aid delivery since its first independence. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have provided financial assistance to Pakistan on multiple occasions while China has financed it through loans and investments. The economic inflows into the country have not provided long-term growth benefits because they functioned as temporary solutions that allowed existing structural issues to continue. The current Middle Eastern crisis has created new external shocks, which have maintained economic vulnerability for Pakistan.

At the core of this vulnerability lies a deeper structural issue which is the unusual political economy of Pakistan itself. Unlike most countries, where economic policymaking remains firmly under civilian oversight, Pakistan's military establishment, currently led by Army Chief Asim Munir, has long exercised significant control over both governance and commerce. Scholars describe this system as a form of "military capitalism" wherein the armed forces operate extensive business networks alongside their strategic and political roles. For instance, Pakistani political economist Ayesha Siddiqi in her *Military Inc.* has estimated that the country's military establishment controls an economic empire worth nearly \$20 billion.

This network includes more than 50 business entities involved in sectors

ranging from manufacturing and agriculture to real estate and infrastructure development. Organised under Fauji, Bahria and Shaheen Foundations besides Army Welfare Trust (AWT), these enterprises produce everything from bottled water and cement to fertilizer and construction services. But the problem is not merely the scale of these enterprises but their insulation from civilian scrutiny as revenues generated by these ventures often remain outside the oversight of Pakistan's elected institutions. In effect, the military establishment operates a parallel economic system that exists alongside and sometimes above the formal state economy. This arrangement has far-reaching consequences. By diverting economic activity and resources away from civilian management where accountability can be fixed, it weakens the state's ability to undertake coherent fiscal planning. This parallel economic system discourages private investment since civilian businesses often find themselves competing with military entities which enjoy preferential access to land, credit and state contracts. It also complicates reform efforts which the country's international lenders like IMF have repeatedly demanded from Pakistan, including broadening its tax base, reducing fiscal deficits and restructuring state-owned enterprises.

Why The Great Nicobar Project Matters More Than Ever

(Our Staff Reporter) In an increasingly volatile geopolitical environment, nations are rediscovering the importance of geography. Strategic locations that were once overlooked are now emerging as decisive assets in the contest for economic and military influence. The ongoing Israel-Iran war has once again demonstrated how fragile global supply chains can become when key maritime routes are threatened.

Against this backdrop, India's ambitious Great Nicobar development project, including a strategic airport and transshipment hub close to the Malacca shipping route, stands out as one of the most forward-looking initiatives of the Modi government.

Conceived under his leadership, the project is not merely an infrastructure initiative but a long-term strategic investment that could transform India's maritime and security posture in the Indo-Pacific. At a time when supply chains are being repeatedly disrupted by conflict and great-power competition, the importance of India nurturing such strategic assets has never been clearer.

A Strategic Asset

The Great Nicobar project aims to transform India's southernmost island into a major logistics and strategic hub. It includes a deep-water international container transshipment port, a greenfield international airport capable of handling both civilian and military operations, along with supporting infrastructure such as power facilities and a township to sustain economic activity.

The true strength of the project lies in its location. Great Nicobar sits very close to the Strait of Malacca, one of the busiest maritime corridors in the world. This narrow waterway links the Indian Ocean to the Pacific and carries a massive share of global trade, including large volumes of oil shipments headed towards East Asia. From a strategic perspective, the island lies only about forty nautical miles from the main shipping route that passes through the strait. Such proximity gives India a powerful vantage point over one of the most critical sea lanes of communication in the world.

Infrastructure developed in this location would allow India to monitor maritime traffic far more effectively, provide logistics support to ships and aircraft, and maintain a stronger naval presence in the eastern Indian Ocean. For decades, countries like Singapore have benefited enormously from their position along these trade routes. The Great Nicobar project offers India the opportunity to harness similar advantages and become a major maritime logistics player in its own right.

Lessons from the Israel-Iran



Conflict

Recent global events have starkly illustrated the vulnerability of supply chains. The Russia-Ukraine war disrupted energy flows across Europe, attacks on shipping in the Red Sea have threatened international trade, and the escalating confrontation between Israel and Iran has further heightened concerns about the security of maritime chokepoints.

When such conflicts intensify, critical shipping corridors can quickly become pressure points in global trade. Insurance costs for shipping surge, freight rates climb, and the ripple effects are felt across economies thousands of miles away. For a country like India, whose economy depends heavily on maritime trade and energy imports, the stability of these sea routes is of paramount importance.

In this context, the strengthening of India's strategic presence near the Malacca Strait becomes not just desirable but essential. The Great Nicobar project provides India with the infrastructure needed to monitor shipping lanes, support naval operations, and protect the maritime arteries that sustain its economic growth.

Modi Government's Strategic Vision

The project reflects a broader strategic vision of the Modi government — one that recognises the Indo-Pacific as the centre of global geopolitics in the twenty-first century. For decades after independence, India's island territories were underdeveloped despite their immense strategic potential. Policymakers acknowledged their importance, but the necessary investments and infrastructure never materialised.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has begun to take a far more proactive approach. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands already host India's only tri-service command, underscoring their strategic importance. The Great Nicobar project builds on this foundation by creating a powerful maritime and aviation hub that strengthens India's operational reach across the eastern Indian Ocean.

A major component of the project is the proposed container transshipment port at Galathea Bay. Its natural depth makes it capable of accommodating some of the world's largest cargo vessels. At present, a significant portion of India's cargo is transshipped through foreign ports such as Singapore or Colombo. Developing a domestic transshipment hub would reduce this dependence, lower logistics costs, and improve India's trade competitiveness.

The proposed airport will also serve a dual purpose. While it will boost civilian connectivity and economic activity in the region, it will simultaneously function as a strategic airbase capable of supporting military operations and maritime surveillance across the Indo-Pacific.

A Contrast with the Congress Era

The importance of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has long been recognised by defence planners. Yet successive governments, particularly those led by the Indian National Congress, failed to translate this understanding into concrete action. For decades, India's island territories remained relatively neglected from both economic and strategic perspectives. Infrastructure development was limited, and large-scale investments that could have transformed these islands into maritime hubs were repeatedly delayed. This reflected a broader pattern of strategic hesitancy that often characterised India's national security approach during those years. Meanwhile, other countries were rapidly strengthening their maritime infrastructure and expanding their strategic footprints across the Indo-Pacific. Ports, logistics hubs, and naval facilities were being developed across Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region. The Modi government's decision to push forward the Great Nicobar project represents a decisive shift from that earlier inertia. By recognising the long-term strategic value of the island and committing to its development, the government has demonstrated a willingness to think several decades ahead. Economic Promise Alongside

Strategic Power While the strategic importance of the project is undeniable, its economic potential is equally significant. The creation of a world-class transshipment hub could transform India's role in global maritime logistics. A substantial share of cargo currently handled by foreign ports could instead pass through an Indian facility located close to one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. The port is expected to handle millions of containers annually once fully developed, placing India among the major maritime logistics hubs in Asia. Alongside this, the project is likely to stimulate tourism, trade, and infrastructure development in the Andaman and Nicobar region, which has historically remained economically isolated. Such development would bring employment opportunities and new economic activity to a remote region while simultaneously strengthening India's maritime economy.

A Strategic Investment for the Future

Large infrastructure projects of national importance inevitably face scrutiny and debate, particularly when they involve ecologically sensitive regions or significant financial commitments.

However, history repeatedly shows that countries willing to invest early in strategic infrastructure often gain long-term advantages. Singapore's transformation into a global shipping hub and Dubai's rise as a logistics powerhouse were both the result of visionary investments made decades earlier. The Great Nicobar project represents a similar opportunity for India. As global trade patterns evolve and geopolitical tensions continue to shape maritime routes, the island could emerge as one of the most valuable strategic assets in the Indo-Pacific. The turbulence currently gripping global geopolitics — from conflicts in West Asia to intensifying great-power rivalry — has reaffirmed a fundamental truth: geography still shapes power. Nations that recognise the strategic value of key locations and invest in them early are better prepared to navigate an uncertain world. By recognising the immense potential of Great Nicobar and pushing forward its development, the Modi government has taken an important step towards strengthening India's long-term security and economic resilience. In an era when supply chains can be disrupted overnight and maritime chokepoints can become flashpoints of geopolitical tension, such foresight may prove invaluable in the decades ahead.

Krishnamoorthi Falls Short In Illinois Senate Bid As Stratton Prevails



an “unauthorised war with no end in sight” in Iran and supported legislative efforts to challenge the administration’s actions. He also focused on economic concerns, pointing to rising prices worsened by the Iran conflict, and backed measures to reverse cuts to welfare programs.

Immigration emerged as another key issue in the race, especially as Trump’s enforcement actions reached Chicago through Operation Midway Blitz, which led to about 1,600 arrests, many under disputed circumstances.

Emphasizing his personal story, Krishnamoorthi said in a campaign ad, “I’m an immigrant myself,” adding, “That’s why stopping Trump and ICE’s attacks on our communities is deeply personal to me.”

” He called for ending the current version of Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations and reforming the agency, while Stratton has advocated abolishing it entirely.

Born in New Delhi, Krishnamoorthi moved to the U.S. as an infant when his father came to pursue higher education. Reflecting on his journey, he said, “Only in America can an immigrant with twenty-nine letters in his name go from public housing and food stamps to the halls of Congress. I will continue to fight for our country, the greatest on Earth, to make the United States of America the kind of country we all still believe in.” With this loss, Krishnamoorthi falls short of becoming the second Indian American to serve in the Senate after Harris. He will also leave his House seat at the end of his term, potentially reducing the number of Indian American members in Congress, often referred to as the “Samosa Caucus,” unless new candidates are elected in November. Adobe Penalty Analysis

(Our Staff Reporter) A closely watched Democratic primary in Illinois ended with a narrow but decisive win for Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton, dealing a setback to Indian-origin Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi’s bid for the U.S. Senate and reshaping the race to succeed retiring Senator Dick Durbin.

Krishnamoorthi conceded Tuesday night, March 17, as results showed Stratton leading by about six percentage points with roughly 85 percent of the vote counted, three hours after polls closed. Lawyer Directory

“I called Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton and

congratulated her on winning this primary. I trust that she will continue the lasting legacy that Senator Dick Durbin leaves behind,” he said.

Stratton’s victory all but guarantees her a Senate seat, given Illinois’ strong Democratic lean. In the 2024 presidential election, former Vice President Kamala Harris carried the state by 11 percentage points over President Donald Trump, making a Republican upset in November highly unlikely.

The race was shaped by heavy spending, party backing, and competing political coalitions. Stratton, widely seen as the Democratic

establishment’s preferred candidate, was supported by Governor JB Pritzker and Senator Tammy Duckworth.

Pritzker, an heir to the Hyatt hotel fortune, reportedly spent \$5 million of his own money to boost her campaign.

Krishnamoorthi, who has represented Illinois in the House since 2017, mounted a well-funded challenge. About \$29 million was spent on ads supporting him, compared with around \$16 million for Stratton. Politics

His campaign drew additional attention due to support from Fairshake, a political action committee backed by digital and

cryptocurrency interests. Controversy arose when Fairshake funded ads for Representative Robin Kelly, who finished third, in what some viewed as an attempt to split African American voters.

Krishnamoorthi also received about \$250,000 from the Indian American Impact Fund. Despite strong financial backing, he was unable to overcome Stratton.

Adobe Penalty Analysis Throughout the campaign, Krishnamoorthi positioned himself as a vocal critic of Trump, making opposition to the president’s policies a central theme. He recently intensified criticism of what he described as

Arjee-The Brain Rot Chronicles



U.S. Highlights India's Role In Fight Against Fentanyl Networks

(Our Staff Reporter) U.S. intelligence leaders told lawmakers that a mix of drug trafficking, evolving terrorism, and emerging technologies is reshaping the global threat landscape, with India playing a role in efforts to curb the flow of fentanyl-related chemicals.

During a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on the 2026 Annual Threat Assessment, officials said cooperation with India and China has shown some progress in limiting the supply of precursor chemicals used to manufacture fentanyl. However, they cautioned that much more needs to be done as synthetic drug networks continue to expand. Latest News Updates

The Defense Intelligence



Agency said transnational criminal organizations remain a major concern, with Mexico-based cartels still dominating the production and smuggling of fentanyl into the U.S. These opera-

tions continue to pose a serious risk to public health and safety.

At the same time, intelligence officials warned that terrorism threats are shifting rather than disappearing. Groups such

as ISIS and al Qaeda are weaker than in the past but are increasingly relying on online radicalization to inspire individuals instead of organizing large-scale attacks.

Domestic security concerns are also rising. The FBI reported disrupting multiple terrorist plots, several of them linked to ISIS-inspired individuals. Authorities said extremist groups are using digital platforms more effectively, making recruitment and coordination easier across borders. Cybercrime has emerged as another growing challenge.

Officials pointed to sophisticated scam networks operating overseas and said efforts are underway to dismantle orga-

nized fraud centers targeting victims globally. Law enforcement agencies are also expanding coordination through joint task forces to address both terrorism and organized crime.

Concerns about Iran and its missile program were also highlighted, with intelligence officials describing it as a continuing threat to U.S. interests. They also noted significant gains in intelligence collection, particularly in areas such as China, advanced technology, and artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence itself is becoming a critical factor in national security, with officials warning it could be used for cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and military decision-making.

Tulsi Gabbard Flags Pakistan As Emerging Missile Threat to U.S.



(Our Staff Reporter) Growing missile capabilities across several countries, including Pakistan, could increasingly put the U.S. homeland at risk, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard told lawmakers, as she outlined a rapidly evolving global threat environment. Speaking before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence while presenting the intelligence community's 2026 Annual Threat Assessment, Gabbard said the scale and sophistication of missile systems worldwide are expanding at a pace that could challenge U.S. defenses in the coming decade. She warned that both China and Russia are work-

ing on advanced delivery systems designed to evade missile defenses, while North Korea already possesses intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching American soil. Gabbard also pointed to Pakistan's ongoing missile development as an emerging concern. "Pakistan's long-range ballistic missile development potentially could include ICBMs with the range capable of striking the Homeland," she told lawmakers. The broader report warned that Pakistan is developing increasingly sophisticated missile technology that could eventually extend beyond South Asia and pose a threat to the U.S. if current trends continue.

According to the assessment, the number of missiles capable of threatening the U.S. is expected to rise sharply in the coming years. "The IC assesses that threats to the Homeland will expand collectively to more than 16,000 missiles by 2035, from the current assessed figure of more than 3,000 missiles," Gabbard said. Despite these risks, she said the U.S. nuclear

deterrent remains effective in safeguarding the country. The report also highlighted South Asia as a continuing source of concern, particularly due to tensions between India and Pakistan. It noted that past conflicts between the two nuclear-armed neighbors create the risk of escalation, especially in the event of major terrorist attacks. Adobe Penalty Analysis "The terrorist attack last

year near Pahalgam, in the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, demonstrated the dangers of terrorist attacks sparking conflict. President Trump's intervention deescalated the most recent nuclear tensions, and we assess that neither country seeks to return to open conflict, but that conditions exist for terrorist actors to continue to create catalysts for crises," the re-

Khanna, Moulton Warn President

Trump's Iran War Is Straining U.S. Power

(Our Staff Reporter) Mounting concern is emerging in Washington that the ongoing Iran conflict is straining U.S. military capacity and weakening its broader global strategy, particularly as competition with China intensifies. A warning was sounded by Indian-origin Representative Ro Khanna, Ranking Member of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, who said President Donald Trump's approach risks undercutting American deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region.

"President Trump's reckless war in Iran puts America's security and economy at risk. The United States should be focused on countering the growing challenge of maintaining peace and stability in the Pacific," Khanna said. He added that the administration was "stretching our armed forces thin by pursuing an ill-advised 'pivot to the

Middle East'." Khanna also pointed to the economic burden of the conflict, warning that the costs are becoming unsustainable. He said that the war is costing taxpayers nearly \$1 billion per day and burning through critical munitions. He said that this kind of spending is "unsustainable", warning that "Americans are already feeling the consequences as gas prices soar and economic uncertainty mounts."

He further criticized the administration's reported outreach to China for assistance in the region, arguing that it could undermine key alliances. Meanwhile, at a separate House Armed Services subcommittee hearing, Representative Seth Moulton offered a stark assessment of the broader risks posed by the conflict, arguing that U.S. security has deteriorated since the war began.

Rajya Sabha polls expose Congress cracks as MLAs defy party in three states



(Our Staff Reporter) The recently concluded Rajya Sabha elections have turned into a major embarrassment for the Indian National Congress, with several legislators either skipping voting or cross-voting in favour of rival candidates across three states - Bihar, Odisha, and Haryana.

UP woman storms BJP office event, slaps leader over Rs 4.5 lakh dispute



(Our Staff Reporter) A felicitation programme at a BJP office in Uttar Pradesh's Maharajganj district descended into chaos on Wednesday after a woman stormed the venue, accused a party functionary of cheating her of lakhs, and assaulted him in front of party workers.

CHAOS DURING FELICITATION EVENT

The incident took place at the BJP office, where a programme had been organised to congratulate nominated councillors and party office-bearers. The event had barely begun when the woman entered the premises and confronted a party functionary over an alleged financial dispute.

Eyewitnesses said she slapped the leader and attempted to drag him out by his collar, triggering panic at the venue. Dozens of people present rushed to intervene, but the situation quickly escalated into a heated confrontation.

ALLEGATION OF RS 4.5 LAKH FRAUD

The woman alleged that she had handed over around Rs 4.5 lakh in the name of LIC deposits, but the accused never deposited the money and instead misappropriated it. She had been demanding the return of her money for a long time, and on Wednesday, she arrived at the event with her son.

Both of them insisted on immediate repayment, even as party workers tried to calm the situation.

The argument soon turned aggressive, with reports of scuffles, verbal abuse, and even slippers being used during the altercation. POLICE INTERVENE Police reached the spot after being alerted and managed to bring the situation under control. The woman and others involved in the dispute were escorted out of the BJP office, allowing the programme to resume after nearly an hour of disruption.

PARTY REACTS

Former district president and ex-candidate Sameer Tripathi said the clash erupted suddenly over a financial dispute.

The developments have sparked fresh debate within the party over the limited control of the central leadership over state units, particularly in states where Congress is not in power.

BIHAR: ABSENTEEISM AND 'BETRAYAL' CHARGE

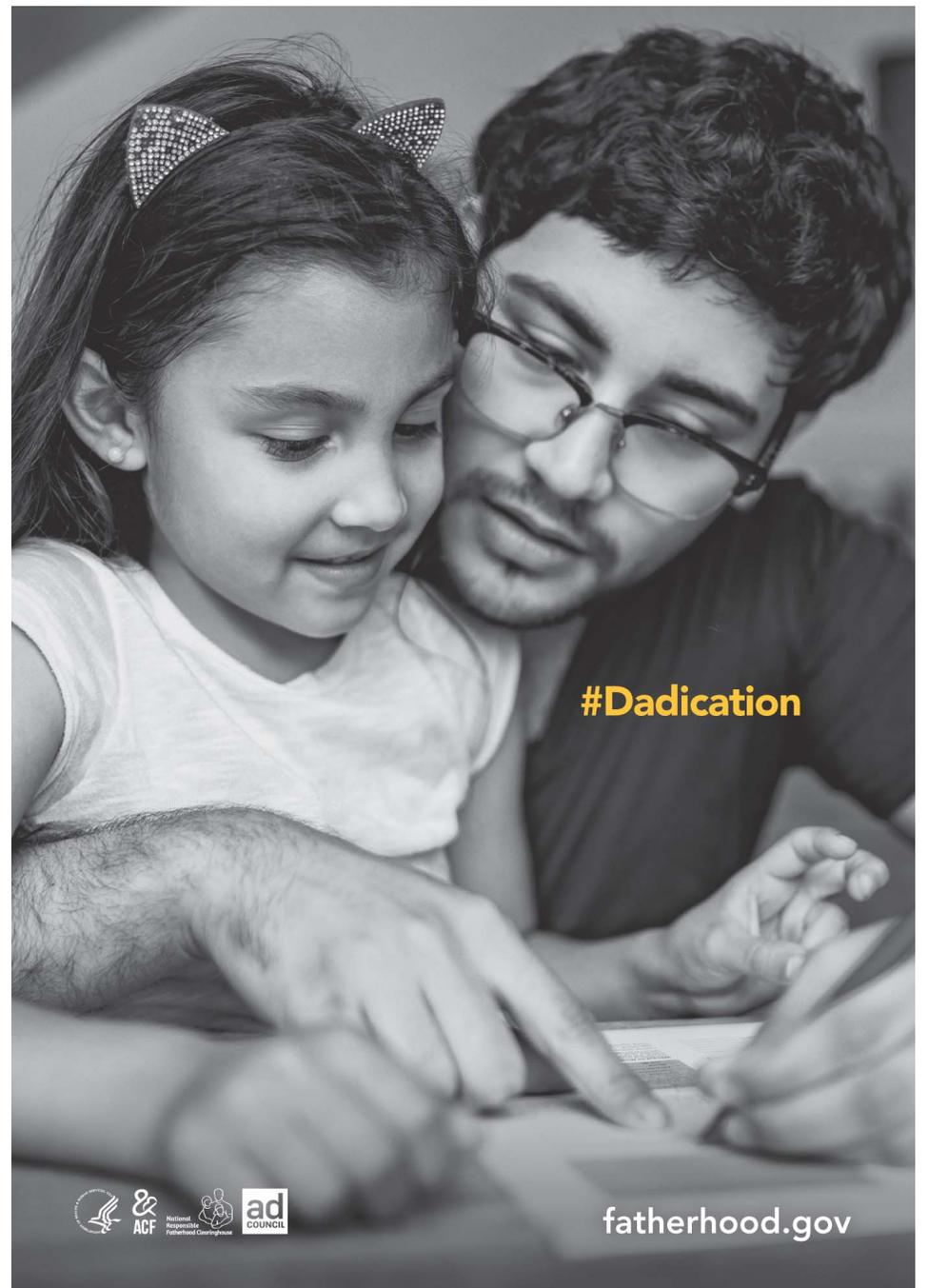
In Bihar, Congress faced criticism for what many leaders described as poor coordination and election management. Party sources noted that state in-charge Krishna Allavaru did not travel to Patna to oversee the voting process. While five MLAs of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) — not formally part of the opposition alliance — supported Mahagathbandhan candidate A.D. Singh, three of the six Congress MLAs stayed away from voting. The absence proved costly, enabling the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to secure a fifth Rajya Sabha seat from Bihar. A Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader described the outcome as a "betrayal" by Congress legislators, intensifying tensions within the opposition bloc. In Odisha, the episode highlighted deeper organisational

challenges for Congress. The controversy arose after the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) announced Hota as a joint opposition candidate, reportedly without broad consensus. Even as Sofia Firdaus, the Congress MLA from Cuttack, publicly voiced reservations about the candidate ahead of voting, the party leadership failed to contain internal dissent.

During the election, three Congress MLAs cross-voted in favour of a BJP-backed candidate, ultimately helping secure his victory. In response, the party later suspended the three legislators for defying the party line.

HARYANA: NARROW WIN DESPITE NUMBERS

The only relief for Congress came from Haryana, though even there the result exposed cracks in party discipline. Congress nominee Karamvir Singh Boudh required 31 votes to win, while the party had 37 MLAs in the assembly. However, Boudh managed to secure only 28 votes and ultimately won by just one vote, turning what should have been a comfortable victory into a nail-biting contest.



#Dadication

Over 60% Cyber Threats To India Come From China And Pakistan; Defence, Telecom & CAPFs On Target



(Our Staff Reporter) The majority of the Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs)—sophisticated cyberattacks where intruders gain unauthorised access to networks to steal data and sensitive information—that India encountered were led by China and Pakistan, agencies

have found. News18 has learnt this was also discussed as one of the agendas at recent high-level meetings within the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). While more than 50 per cent of such threats were led by China, Pakistan backed 15 per cent of them, News18 has learnt from sources

privy to the matter. Departments with sensitive information like the Ministry of Defence, telecom sector, Central Armed Paramilitary Forces and the IT sector primarily remained on the target of these attacks. Experts say unlike opportunistic attacks, these APTs are intentional and focused on high-value assets like defence establishments or financial institutions. The orchestrators here aim for gradual yet long term impacts to avoid detection using sophisticated custom-build malware.

The purpose usually is to gather intelligence, steal crucial data or access sensitive information, said an official on

the condition of anonymity.

India faces a high number of cyberattacks and threats every year.

According to the 2024 annual report of CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) that tracks latest cyber threats and vulnerabilities and comes under the Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology, the agency in the year 2024 alone handled 20,41,360 incidents. The type of incidents handled were Website Intrusion & Malware Propagation, Malicious Code, Phishing, Distributed Denial of Service attacks, Website Defacements, Unauthorized Network.

Bedridden Mother, 3 Sisters: Rajasthan Family's Only Son Killed In Oman Drone Strike

(Our Staff Reporter) A pall of grief descended on parts of Rajasthan's Sikar and Beawar districts after two young men, working in Oman, were killed in a drone attack linked to the ongoing West Asia war. Their mortal remains reached their respective villages on Tuesday, triggering scenes of shock and mourning among families and residents. The deceased have been identified as Vikram Verma, a resident of Agloi village in the Khandela area of Sikar, and Pappu Singh from Lalpura village in the Raipur subdivision of Beawar district. Both had travelled to Oman on February 23 in search of better livelihood opportunities. According to police, the incident occurred on March 13. The bodies were flown to Jaipur before being transported to their native villages for the last rites. Vikram Verma had been employed with a construction company engaged in road projects in

Oman. Family members said he had spoken to them a day before the attack, expressing unease over the prevailing situation in the region. "He was the only son among three sisters. One is married, while the other two are still studying. He had gone abroad to support the family as his father's income was insufficient. His mother has been bedridden for the past six months," said his uncle, Mahesh Verma, recalling how the family was informed of the tragedy on March 14.

The news of Vikram's death was conveyed by his cousin, who worked at a different site under the same company in Oman. The cousin also accompanied the body back to India. In both villages, the return of the bodies drew large gatherings, with residents expressing disbelief over the sudden loss and extending support to the bereaved families.



The Beginning

MAD MEN
OF
NU WAY ADVERTISING

About the Author

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

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

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

Also available as e-book

Self-Help/General MRP ₹ 299.00

The Beginning

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

Sharanjit Thind Singh

MAD MEN

OF

NU WAY ADVERTISING

Indians in Gulf forced to miss Eid with families as Middle East war disrupts travel

As Eid-ul-Fitr approaches, thousands of Indian workers in Gulf nations are unable to return home due to flight cancellations, exorbitant fares and job security concerns amid tensions involving the US, Israel and Iran. Families in India are bracing for a subdued festival marked by absence and anxiety.



(Our Staff Reporter) For years, Eid has meant a homecoming for many Indian expatriates, particularly from countries like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar, where extended holidays, often lasting five to seven days, allow

workers to reunite with families. This time, however, the ongoing conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran has upended those plans. Flight cancellations and steep fare hikes, rising up to 10 to 12 times the usual cost in some cases, have made travel either impossible or unaffordable. Back home, families are bracing for a subdued festival, shaped as much by concern for loved ones abroad as by their absence at the table.

CANCELLED FLIGHTS, BROKEN PLANS

Akram Tyagi (name changed), a resident of Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, had planned his trip home from Riyadh months in advance. He had booked a ticket on IndiGo, but his flight was cancelled twice after hostilities escalated. "Every year, I go home for Eid.

This time too, everything was planned in advance. But with the flight cancelled, I have no option but to stay back," he said, adding that informing his parents he would not be home was particularly painful. A similar story is playing out for Syed Ali (name changed), a native of Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh who has been working in Dubai for six years. "This will be the first time I celebrate Eid without my family. Festivals are about being together. Without that, it feels incomplete," he said.

FAMILIES MAKE PEACE WITH A QUIETER EID

In Jaipur, the Farooqui family had been preparing for a grand celebration, with relatives expected to return from Dubai. But cancellations and unaffordable tickets forced a change of plans.

3,100 Telegram channels, 800 websites blocked for hosting pirated contents

(Our Staff Reporter) More than 3,100 Telegram channels and about 800 websites hosting pirated content have been disabled at the government's order, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday. Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L Murugan said the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023, has strengthened the legal framework to deter film piracy with sections 6AA and 6AB, which prohibit unauthorised recording and transmission of films.

He said Section 7(1A) provides that if any person contravenes the two provisions, they shall be punishable with a minimum of three months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs 3 lakh, which can be

extended up to three years imprisonment and a fine of up to 5 per cent of the audited gross production cost. In accordance with the provisions of law, the Telegram App was notified under Section 79(3)(b) of IT Act, 2000, on March 11, 2026 to remove and disable access to the 3,142 channels publishing content owned by or licensed to certain content owners,

OTT platforms and producers without authorization in violation of the Copyright Act, 1957, Murugan said in reply to a written question. The minister said access to approximately 800 websites

hosting pirated content was disabled through Internet Service Providers (ISPs). More than 3,100 Telegram channels and about 800 websites hosting pirated content have been disabled at the

government's order, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday. Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L Murugan said the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023,

has strengthened the legal framework to deter film piracy with sections 6AA and 6AB, which prohibit unauthorised recording and transmission of films. He said Section 7(1A) provides that if any

person contravenes the two provisions, they shall be punishable with a minimum of three months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs 3 lakh, which can be extended up to three years imprisonment and a fine of up to 5 per cent of the audited gross production cost. In accordance with the provisions of law, the Telegram App was notified under Section 79(3)(b) of IT Act, 2000, on March 11, 2026 to remove and disable access to the 3,142 channels publishing content owned by or licensed to certain content owners, OTT platforms and producers without authorization in violation of the Copyright Act, 1957, Murugan said in reply to a written question.



CM barging in during ED raids not happy situation: Supreme Court blasts Bengal

(Our Staff Reporter) The Supreme Court on Wednesday came down heavily on the Bengal government in the I-PAC case, saying Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee interrupting ED raids in the state was not a "happy situation". A bench of justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and NV Anjaria said central probe agencies could not be left without any remedy in such instances.

"The case here is that some Chief Minister allegedly barges into a government office and interferes with the Central government agency's work. What is the remedy then? What happens if some other CM does it again? We have to respond to an organic situation where some remedy has to be there," the court said, indicating that it might frame SOPs for such situations. Representing the

Bengal government, senior advocate Shyam Divan, however, argued that the Constitution does provide a remedy. He suggested that the Centre could initiate appropriate proceedings rather than departments acting independently and invoking writ jurisdiction. WHAT IS THE I-PAC CASE? The Supreme Court was hearing the ED's petition alleging interference by Mamata and the

government during its January 8 raids on the office of political consultancy firm I-PAC in Kolkata, as well as the residence of its chief, Prateek Jain. The raids were in connection with a money laundering probe linked to the alleged coal scam. High drama unfolded on January 8 after Banerjee rushed to Jain's residence and walked out carrying a laptop, a phone and several files even as the raids were on.

The Ghost in the Gulf: Why Degrading Tehran is Not the Same as Defeating It



The images flickering across global newsfeeds in March 2026 tell a story of absolute tactical dominance. From the "obliteration" of Iran's nuclear enrichment sites during last year's air campaigns to the more recent precision strikes of Operation Epic Fury, the Islamic Republic's military and energy infrastructure has been systematically dismantled. With the reported death of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the decapitation of the IRGC's top brass, the "mother ship of terrorism" is, by all conventional metrics, sinking.

President Trump has largely delivered on his promise to use "overwhelming force" to force strategic submission. Yet, as the smoke clears over the Natanz ruins and the charred remains of internal security checkpoints in Tehran, a haunting question remains for the residents of Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, and Manama: Is the job actually finished?

The Paradox of Degradation

The current U.S. strategy has achieved what decades of "strategic patience" could not—it has broken the regime's ability to project power through conventional military might and nuclear brinkmanship. However, a regime fighting for its survival is often more dangerous than one sitting comfortably in power.

While Iran's "Axis of Resistance" is in shambles—Hezbollah decapitated and the Assad regime fallen—the "ghost" of the Islamic Republic remains embedded in the geography of the Gulf. As we saw in the first 48 hours of this month's conflict, a degraded Iran still possesses enough low-tech, asymmetric "sting" to shut down the Strait of Hormuz and rain drones on civilian hubs like Dubai and Sharjah. For the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, "degraded" is a relative term when your desalination plants and oil processing hubs are within range of a desperate, terminal regime's remaining arsenal.

The Missing Piece: The Political

Endgame

The Trump administration's focus has been on "strategic submission"—compelling the leadership to accept permanent constraints. But as the intelligence community recently noted, the regime remains "intact but largely degraded." This middle-ground status is the most volatile position possible for the region. A wounded predator is less predictable than a dead one.

To "finish the job," Washington must move beyond the kinetic. The missing piece of the puzzle isn't another bunker-buster; it is a clear, credible plan for the "Day After." If the U.S. declares victory and withdraws its carrier groups before a stable, post-theocratic alternative takes root, it risks leaving a power vacuum filled by fragmented, radicalized militias—a "Hezbollah-ization" of the entire Iranian plateau.

Lessons for the Future

Candidates like Sharanjit "Sunny" Thind, who are running for Congress on platforms of "Peace Through Strength," must look at the current Iran crisis as a masterclass in the limits of military force. Thind has often spoken about the need for a foreign policy that protects American taxpayers while securing global trade. The lesson from 2026 is that military "obliteration" is only the first step.

The next phase of the "Trump Doctrine" must be diplomatic and economic reconstruction. We cannot afford an "Iraq 2.0" style nation-building project, but we also cannot leave the Gulf states to face the "flailing" of a dying regime alone. The job will only be finished when the Iranian people—who are currently celebrating in the streets of Tehran despite the blackouts—have a path to a government that prioritizes bread over ballistic missiles.

Until then, the Gulf remains a theater of "inflection points." We have broken the regime's sword, but we have yet to disarm its spirit of regional chaos.

Beyond the Ballot: Why Raja Krishnamoorthi's Primary Loss is a Lesson, Not a Ceiling, for Indian American Power

Politics, much like the immigrant journey itself, is rarely a straight line of unbroken progress. On March 17, 2026, the Indian American community felt a collective jolt as Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi conceded the Illinois Democratic Senate primary to Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton. For a man who seemed to "do everything right"—Ivy League credentials, a massive \$30 million war chest, and nearly a decade of congressional seniority, the loss was a sobering reminder of the volatility of statewide races.

However, to view Raja's defeat as a ceiling for Indian American political power would be a profound misreading of the current landscape. Instead, it is a localized setback that underscores the community's transition from "being at the table" to "leading the conversation."

The "Raja Record": Successes and Missed Marks

Raja Krishnamoorthi's career remains a blueprint for South Asian legislative impact. As the first Indian American to lead a congressional committee (the Select Committee on the CCP), he transformed from a "local rep" into a national security heavyweight. His work on the Oversight Subcommittee, investigating everything from the vaping epidemic to pandemic preparedness, proved that Indian American leaders are not just focused on "ethnic issues" but on the fundamental safety and health of all Americans.

Yet, every campaign provides a post-mortem of missed opportunities. Despite his record-breaking fundraising, Raja's campaign hit a "polling ceiling" in the mid-30s. Some analysts argue his message leaned too heavily on his impressive resume and "establishment" ties at a time when Illinois voters were hungry for the "bold, outsider" energy that Stratton successfully projected. By allowing his opponent to define the "courageous" lane, Raja's immense resources paradoxically

made him look like the status quo in a year of change.

The Broader Ascent Continues—While Raja will not be heading to the Senate this year, the "Samosa Caucus" and the broader Indian American political machine are more robust than ever. Across the country, candidates are no longer running as novelties but as seasoned public servants. The infrastructure Raja helped build, the donor networks, the mentorship, and the proof of concept, remains intact.

We see this resilience in candidates like Sharanjit "Sunny" Thind, who is currently vying for New York's 18th Congressional District in the 2026 cycle. For Thind and other emerging leaders, Raja's career offers two vital lessons: The Power of Policy Specialization: Thind's focus on "AI-proofing" jobs, Common sense Immigration Enforcement Policy and, protecting seniors from financial scams mirrors Raja's ability to grab hold of complex, future-facing issues. The Need for Authentic Connection: Raja's struggle in the Chicago urban core suggests that candidates must balance their "policy wonk" side with a grassroots, populist touch. Thind, a Republican immigrant who understands the "struggling" middle-class experience, has the opportunity to bridge that gap by staying rooted in the daily anxieties of Hudson Valley families. What's Next? Raja Krishnamoorthi still has a year left in his "best job ever" representing Illinois' 8th District. Whether he returns to the private sector to lead in the tech space or prepares for a future executive appointment, his influence is far from over. For the Indian American community, the message is clear: the barrier hasn't been lowered; the stakes have simply been raised. We have moved past the era where a great resume is enough. To win the highest offices, our leaders must now pair that excellence with a vision that resonates beyond the suburbs and into the heart of the American electorate.



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Editor in Chief

Sharanjit Singh Thind

Tel: 646 875 8495

Managing Editor:

Amaninder Singh Thind

Email: editor@thesouthasianinsider.com

Aruna Singh

Resident Editor (New Delhi)

Mailing Address:

NuWay Media Group Inc.

223 W, 38th Street, Suite 4

Manhattan, New York 10018

For General and Advertising Inquiries:

thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Publisher: NuWay Media Group Inc.

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

Kashmir, Iran, And The Difficult Politics Of Grief

There was never going to be a single response in Kashmir to the death of an Ayatollah in Iran. There rarely is. In the days that followed, reactions unfolded in multiple directions at once. Some people expressed grief openly. Others chose silence. And beyond Kashmir—particularly among some Iranian women who have lived under the weight of state control—there were also voices of relief, even celebration. The digital space quickly filled with accusations. Anti-state. Brainwashed. Radical. Foreign-aligned. As often happens in politically tense environments, emotion was treated like a declaration of loyalty. Grief, it seemed, had to pass a geopolitical test before it could be recognised as legitimate. But grief does not move in straight lines. Nor do symbols. What unfolded was not a referendum on allegiance. It was a moment that revealed how differently people interpret the same event—and how quickly complex human responses become flattened into political labels. Understanding that complexity requires looking at three realities at once: the nature of the Iranian state, the layered identities of Kashmir's Shia community, and the moral tension between mourning and relief.

Recognising what an Ayatollah stands for and does not within Iran's political system is crucial to comprehending responses to his passing. A single person was never the sole focal point of the Islamic Republic that was founded following the revolution in 1979. It evolved into a complex institutional framework where economic networks, military might, and clerical authority converge. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which serves as both a military force and a significant political and economic player, is at the core of this system. The IRGC and other organisations have become ingrained in important facets of Iranian industry and governance over many years. Although leaders are important, the system is built to withstand them. History demon-

strates that the death of a well-known person rarely causes ideological states to fall apart. In many cases, revolutionary systems outlive their founders. Institutions, whether in monarchies or socialist republics, have a tendency to withstand shocks, adjust their leadership, and carry on. This background is important because symbolic moments frequently have dramatic political ramifications in international reactions. However, states—especially those with robust institutional frameworks—do not function like emotional events alone. Even though an Ayatollah's passing has great symbolic significance, it doesn't always change the political landscape overseas or the identities of people living far away.

The Shia population in Kashmir has a complicated and lengthy history that predates modern geopolitics. Shia Islam's religious traditions—martyrdom, resistance, scholarship, and devotion—have their roots in stories that date back hundreds of years, like the Karbala story. Before they become political, these stories are theological. Clerical figures have spiritual significance for many believers. In addition to being a political figure, an Ayatollah is frequently seen as a marja, a role model in religious and legal matters. A follower and a religious leader may have a very intimate relationship. Shia communities in Kashmir have traditionally engaged in social and civic life without serving as the ideological foundation of separatist militancy. Political affiliation and religious identity have never exactly overlapped. However, symbolic politics is rarely tidy. The execution of Saddam Hussein provides a compelling historical example. In some areas of Kashmir, symbolic mourning gestures emerged despite Saddam's bloody war against Iran, which decimated Shia populations. This seemed contradictory on paper. Why lament a leader who battled Shia Iran? However, identity does not work like a spreadsheet. Layered emo-

tions are frequently reflected in public expressions, such as sympathy for Muslim political symbols, anger toward international power structures, or more general narratives of perceived injustice. Today, the same dynamic might manifest. Lamenting an Ayatollah does not necessarily imply support for all Iranian state policies. It might result from religious reverence, cultural customs, or death-related rituals. Geopolitical analysis and human emotion are rarely in perfect harmony.

Suffering Under the Iranian Regime

Yet acknowledging mourning alone would ignore another powerful truth. For many Iranians—especially women who have challenged state restrictions—the clerical establishment represents a system that has controlled bodies, silenced dissent, and punished defiance. The protests following the death of Mahsa Amini in 2022 exposed deep anger towards the structures of religious authority that shape Iranian governance. For some of these women, the death of a powerful cleric does not evoke grief. It can evoke relief. It can feel like a small symbolic rupture in a system that has constrained their lives. Those reactions cannot be dismissed as heartless or insensitive. They emerge from lived experiences of repression and struggle. In other words, the emotional landscape surrounding such a moment contains two sincere realities at once. One group mourns a religious authority they respect. Another remembers a system that has inflicted suffering. Both responses are shaped by experience. Both deserve acknowledgement. The real challenge arises when observers insist that only one reaction is morally legitimate.

The Collision of Celebration and Mourning

When these contrasting emotions meet—mourning in one place, relief in another—the temptation is to turn interpretation into judgment. In Kashmir, this process unfolded rapidly. Social me-

dia posts were dissected for hidden meaning. Attendance at gatherings was scrutinised. Silence was interpreted as strategic. Grief became evidence. But methodologically, this approach is deeply flawed. It collapses religious sentiment into political intent without proof. It assumes that symbolism must correspond to geopolitical alignment. Such interpretations often reveal more about the anxieties of the observer than the motivations of the mourner. Symbols travel through layers of meaning: theology, history, communal memory, regional politics, and personal belief. When those layers are flattened into a single narrative—loyalty or disloyalty—the analysis becomes less about understanding and more about suspicion. In conflict-marked societies, this dynamic can become especially corrosive. Communities accustomed to being scrutinised learn that even ordinary emotions may be interpreted as political signals. The result is a climate where grief itself becomes suspect.

The Convenience of Labels

Why do such labels spread so quickly? Because they simplify a complicated reality. Calling someone anti-national removes the need to study history. Describing people as brainwashed eliminates the need to understand theology. Declaring them foreign-aligned bypasses the work of examining layered identities. Labels are intellectual shortcuts. But societies shaped by diverse histories cannot be understood through shortcuts. Kashmir's social fabric—like that of many regions shaped by conflict and coexistence—contains overlapping loyalties and affiliations. A person can feel religious solidarity across borders while maintaining civic belonging at home. These identities do not automatically cancel each other out. Around the world, diasporic and minority communities navigate similar balances every day. Faith, culture, nationality, and politics intersect without forming simple equations. Mourning a re-

ligious figure does not necessarily translate into political allegiance to a foreign state. A More Nuanced Way to Interpret Iran will likely navigate this moment in the way institutional states often do: through adjustment rather than collapse. Systems built on layered bureaucratic and military structures rarely dissolve because of a single death. Kashmir, meanwhile, will respond as plural societies always respond—unevenly. Some people will mourn sincerely. Some will quietly question the reverence. Some may even feel relief, especially when thinking about the struggles faced by many Iranians, particularly women. Most, however, will eventually return to ordinary life: running shops, worrying about education, managing families, negotiating everyday challenges. The loudest voices online rarely represent the full spectrum of sentiment. The more important question is not who mourns and who celebrates. It is how observers interpret both. Recognising mourning as a nuanced emotional response does not mean ignoring the suffering many people associate with the Iranian regime. Likewise, acknowledging that suffering does not require denying the sincerity of religious devotion felt by others. A mature analysis must hold both truths simultaneously. When grief is immediately translated into sedition—or celebration into moral indifference—society loses the ability to understand itself. Interpretive anxiety replaces careful thought. Communities become caricatures. Ordinary emotion becomes evidence of political conspiracy. But fragile societies require the opposite approach. They require restraint in judgment, patience in interpretation, and an acceptance that identities are layered and sometimes contradictory. Because when we misread mourning, we do more than misunderstand an event abroad. We misread the people around us. And in doing so, we risk turning human emotion into a new line of division.

Tehmeena Rizvi

The Next Cuban Revolution: Why the Wrong U.S. Move Could Save a Dying Regime



For sixty years, the "end of the Cuban Revolution" has been the "coming soon" attraction of Caribbean politics—a perennial promise that never quite delivers. But in March 2026, the air in Havana feels different. It doesn't smell like salt and tobacco; it smells like woodsmoke from cooking fires and the ozone of a dying electrical grid. Following the total collapse of the national power system on March 16, Cuba isn't just in the dark—it is on the brink.

The current crisis is a perfect storm of internal rot and external strangulation. Domestically, the Communist Party's mismanagement has reached a terminal velocity. The aging Soviet-era infrastructure has finally surrendered, leaving 11 million people in a state of pre-industrial survival. Food is a luxury; water pumps are silent; and the

youth are fleeing in numbers that represent a demographic hemorrhage the island cannot survive.

However, the most volatile ingredient is the renewed U.S. "oil blockade." By effectively cutting off Venezuelan shipments and threatening tariffs on Mexican tankers, Washington has finally achieved what decades of embargoes could not: a near-total cessation of the island's energy lifeblood. Yet, as the regime teeters, the United States faces a dangerous paradox. While the instinct in Washington is to "twist the knife" to force a final collapse, the wrong move right now—specifically a heavy-handed, overtly interventionist one—could be the only thing that saves the Cuban Communist Party (PCC).

The Siege Mentality as a Life Raft

Historically, the Cuban regime has never been stronger than when it can cast itself as the David fighting a Goliath. For decades, the "Yankee Imperialist" threat has been the PCC's primary source of domestic legitimacy. It is the universal excuse for every failure, from empty grocery shelves to broken tractors.

If the U.S. moves from economic pressure to overt military posturing or a clumsy attempt to "install" a government-in-exile, it hands Miguel Díaz-Canel a gift: a reason for the Cuban military to stay loyal. Currently, the rank-and-file of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) are suffering alongside the people. Their loyalty is fraying as they watch their own families go hungry. But the moment a foreign threat becomes "kinetic," that internal dissent often dissolves into nationalist fervor. To

save the revolution, the U.S. must avoid becoming the villain of the story.

The Negotiator's Trap

President Trump's recent calls for a "deal" before it's "too late" suggest a shift toward high-stakes transactionalism. While the release of 51 political prisoners and the opening of the island to private investment from the diaspora are positive steps, Washington must be careful not to throw a lifeline to the same elite that caused the rot.

A deal that merely swaps oil for minor concessions allows the regime to "recharge" and wait out the storm, much like it did during the "Special Period" of the 1990s.

The goal should not be a deal that stabilizes the regime, but a transition that empowers the burgeoning private sector and the desperate pro-

testers in cities like Morón.

The Path Forward

The next Cuban revolution will not be won with a "Bay of Pigs" 2.0 or a series of aggressive tweets. It will be won when the Cuban people realize that the regime can no longer provide even the most basic elements of modern life—and that the U.S. is not the one holding them back, but rather the one waiting to help them rebuild.

The U.S. must maintain pressure while signaling a clear, massive "Day After" Marshall Plan for a post-communist Cuba. We must allow the regime to collapse under the weight of its own incompetence.

If Washington tries to push the regime over the cliff too aggressively, it might just find that it has accidentally given the PCC a hand to hold onto.

Two-Timing Iran To Bombing Afghan Hospital, How Pakistan Hoodwinks The Ummah

In the 2010 psychological thriller *Black Swan*, ballerina Nina Sayers (played by Natalie Portman) progressively loses her sanity as she sees a darker and destructive version of herself in the mirror. It reflects the Pakistani's descent into a deeply psychotic, multiple-personality State.

Only, the *Black Swan* roles play in reverse in Pakistan's case. In the mirror, it sees itself as the leading voice of the Islamic Ummah, forever willing to take arms against the 'enemies of Islam'.

But in reality, Pakistan is the biggest betrayer of the so-called Ummah and the most prolific killer of Muslims in the world. Women's rights activist Naela Quadri Baloch lists Pakistani forces led by Zia-ul-Haq massacring 10,000 Palestinians in one night of Black September in Jordan in 1970, Pakistan killing 30 lakh in today's Bangladesh in 1971, two lakh in Balochistan, and four lakh in Afghanistan. And while Pakistan has been screaming hoarse about Israel bombing Gaza hospitals, which Hamas was using as shields during the retaliation of the October 7 massacre, Pakistan's planes nonchalantly bombed the Omar Addiction Treatment Hospital in Kabul on March 16. Taliban spokespersons claimed over 400 were killed and more than 250 wounded in the deliberate targeting of civilians. Pakistan's timing of bombing unarmed 'Muslim brothers' was immaculate: peak Ramadan.

The Taliban, which Pakistan once described as its "strategic depth" and which it nurtured for years to use against India and the US after 9/11, is its bloodiest adversary today.

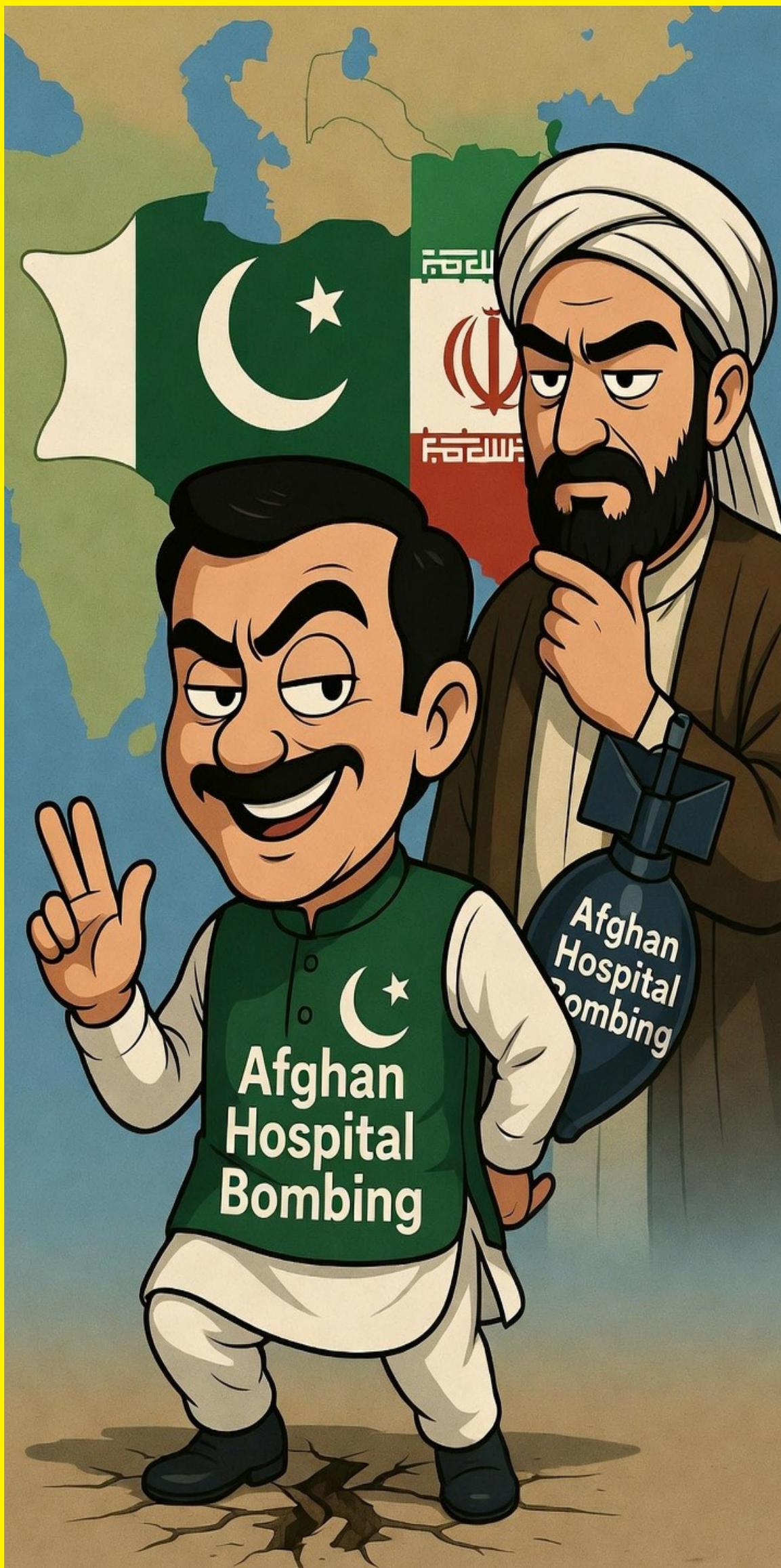
The precursor to this open war was the mass expulsion of more than five lakh Afghan refugees while preaching Muslim solidarity in the same breath. These were the same people whom Pakistan welcomed during the Soviet era as part of its "Islamic duty".

Pakistan's role in the US-Israel-Iran war has been less brazen but slimier. While Islamabad publicly condemned Israel-US aggression against Iran, it has reportedly provided the US war machine with intelligence and logistics to pummel Tehran. It also provided Saudi with military support against Iran as part of a defence pact.

And for all its pro-Iran posturing, ethnic cleansing of Shias through waves of terror attacks tolerated or coordinated by Pakistan's military-jihadi complex continues unabated.

An economically crippled Pakistan entirely reliant on US-IMF bailouts cannot do much but acquiesce to President Donald Trump's whims, even if it means to help 'sworn Zionist enemy' Benjamin Netanyahu in the war against an Islamic nation. But its prize prostration is still reserved for China in the form of silence about the terrible repression of Uyghur Muslims. Islamabad issues red-faced denials when asked about Beijing reportedly putting away nearly two million Uyghurs in 're-education camps' where they are taught: "Islam is a mental illness." China is rapidly turning Pakistan into its colony through loans meant for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). <https://www.news18.com/opinion/opinion-how-chinas-balochistan-investment-is-a-trojan-horse-for-colonial-takeover-ws-l-9962723.html> A debtor cannot answer calls of the Ummah in Uyghur, leave aside screaming in solidarity. Pakistan has only itself to blame for its predicament. Using jihad as state policy, running a terrorism factory in its backyard, spreading violence and instability in the region, presiding over a dead democracy and crippled economy, and over-dependence on short-term, tactical, and opportunistic alliances over strategic long-term ones have washed away the modest credibility Islamabad was left with even in the Islamic world.

ABHIJIT MAJUMDER



Behind Trump's Iran War Is A Saudi 'Equation' Few Can See

Saudi Arabia is increasingly an enigma wrapped in a mantle of white. This is the most evident in recent days, as the war in Iran brings the whole region under threat. It seemed that what was apparently a triangular confrontation between Israel, the US and Tehran, in fact was not. It had an additional actor. Riyadh was in it, from the beginning, reportedly pushing Trump into exactly the kind of war he had sworn never to get Americans into. Yet he did. What's more, the public stance in Riyadh is for diplomacy and an end to war, even as it ships out its oil through a little-known pipeline that entirely bypasses the Straits of Hormuz. Iran has now attacked the nearby port of Fujairah, which belongs to Abu Dhabi. The Saudi pipeline, however, remains safe. That needs some explaining.

The Saudi Influence

Everyone knows that Israel has a huge lobby in the US. It is the Saudi influence that is less evident. Astonishingly, a former Wall Street bond trader who was Nixon's Treasury Secretary, and earlier heading the Energy office, was critical to making a deal with the Saudis way back in 1974, which remains unwritten, due to Saudi King Faisal's demand for total secrecy. It essentially involved the US buying Saudi oil, providing military equipment - and with it an unwritten protection clause - in return for which Riyadh would send its dollars back to the US (the famous 'petrodollar' issue, eventually funding as much as USD 117 billion in debt in 2016. That in itself seems to have been just the tip of the iceberg. A Bloomberg investigation at the time showed that actual figures were probably double, hidden in Treasuries held in offshore accounts, and, eventually, as other Gulf Countries joined in, masked over with data from these sources. That trend seems to continue. Treasury figures for the Saudis put them well below others like Sweden, even as the Cayman Islands tops the list. But the Saudis have promised Washington an additional USD 12 billion in investment in bonds, adding to their already rising portfolio.

The Clout Comes To Town

All this is fine and dandy. But The Washington Post reports how this clout was used. The Saudis were apparently alarmed at Iran's rising capabilities and saw the whole as a 'now-or-never' issue, attacking Iran before it strengthened itself beyond the control of others. Talks between US officials and the Saudis - particularly with Defence Minister Khalid Bin Salman, brother to King Salman - focused on the urgency of this, all this while Saudi Arabia publicly declared that



it won't allow its territory to be used for strikes against Tehran.

Now consider the timeline. Just prior to the war, the Saudis commenced talks with Yemeni separatists, the so-called 'Southern Transitional Government', thus ensuring peace on its key eastern border areas. Then there were the Houthis, who had menaced shipping along the coast for years and attacked Saudi oil installations. A certain uneasy peace prevailed as Iran and Riyadh went through a China-mediated rapprochement deal. Matters were also helped by the US bombing Houthi positions, and a peace deal brokered by Oman that decreed they would not attack American shipping but left them free to attack elsewhere. Though supplied generously with weapons from Iran, the deal seemed to hold, and amazingly seems to continue, despite repeated threats from their leadership of resuming attacks on the Bab al Mandab in support of Iran. If they attack, that's a serious double whammy on oil movement. It could well be that they are being kept in reserve. In other words, Tehran is keeping its part of the bargain. But it could also be that the Houthis, who are no 'proxies' of Iran and follow their own interests, may not be willing to back what they may see as a 'losing' side.

This, however, may end. Recent statements by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi took note of reports of US-Saudi collusion, even while Iranian officials denied hitting Saudi oil facilities at all. The officials even declared that relations with Riyadh remain good. This is not just the 'fog of war'; it seems to point to some deliberate obfuscation. It could equally be an attempt to divide the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and influence the Saudi posture.

That Lonely Pipeline

As the Saudis remain reticent, a vital

pipeline has come to notice. That is Aramco's East-West pipeline network, or Petroline, a roughly 750-mile system that transports crude across Saudi Arabia, connecting Abqaiq on the oil-rich kingdom's eastern Gulf coast to the port of Yanbu on the Red Sea. There is also an Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline (ADCOP), which bypasses Hormuz. But a drone attack on Fujairah last week has disrupted that for the moment. All of this makes the Saudi pipeline vital for every country struggling with rising oil prices. It also especially concerns Riyadh. Capable of transporting up to 7 million barrels of crude oil per day, it is now the largest bypass infrastructure that avoids the Strait of Hormuz.

All this brings the focus back to Saudi-Iran relations. Any erosion of these ties, and Iran is more than capable of hitting this part of the coast with its Sejil-2 missile in play, which has a 2,000-km range and a reported Manoeuvrable Re-entry Vehicle (MaRV) or potential Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRV) capability. More usefully, it could activate the Houthis with more funds and weapons.

Which Way Will The Saudi Wind Blow?

The next few weeks are going to be vital to see which way Riyadh jumps. The key to the whole enigma, meanwhile, is the architect of the new Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed, who has propelled the country to emerge as a power to reckon with in the region. Its readiness to mend ties with Israel at least since 2023 makes Iran the only formidable obstacle in the region to a 'New Middle East' that, it seems, everyone wants. Iran is - or was - militarily far superior to the Kingdom, which depends heavily on US weapons and Pakistani mercenaries, not to mention the odd Army chief or two. All that

translates into clout in the region. Thus, if Iran is weakened irretrievably, Riyadh would truly be king.

However, before Iran goes down that road, it will do all it can to take the Saudis with it. That, in turn, will bring in Pakistan, given its much-trumpeted Mutual Defence Agreement signed last year, which gave clarity to a relationship that has existed for years. The bottom line is that if Saudi Arabia is attacked, Pakistan must come to its aid.

And don't forget that defence would likely include its nuclear weapons. At the moment, Rawalpindi is doing all it can to dodge that commitment, given that a war with Iran is its worst nightmare. It is pleading that its 'war' with Afghanistan is using up all its time. That won't stand much scrutiny, given that the Taliban have a next-to-nothing air force and a virtually non-existent air defence, or even a regular disciplined army. Besides, Saudis are the financial pipers who play the tune in Pakistan, with some USD 5 billion-big 'deposits' and over a billion in deferred payments for oil. Cash-starved Islamabad is already pleading for a better deal. If Saudi Arabia is hit, it will expect Rawalpindi to step up.

The ultimate irony, however, is this: no one, not even India, wants that pipeline to be hit. Currently, some five to six million barrels are to arrive in India this week, with more literally in the pipeline. As Pakistan suffers crippling energy shortages, what emerges is a common desire to see that the Saudis are not drawn into this war. But there are many other forces at work that may want the exact opposite. Time perhaps for the much-talked-about 'Global South' to get into action and stop this war. For once, Pakistan may even like to cheer from the sidelines.

Tara Kartha

The Curious Reason 2 Iran 'Proxies' Haven't Joined The War Against Israel

On March 16, the internet was abuzz with the footage of an Iranian-backed militia infiltrating the US Embassy in Baghdad, using a first-person view (FPV) drone for a reconnaissance mission. It was released by the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) and showed the drone - likely controlled via fibre-optic cable to bypass electronic jamming - flying unchallenged through the heavily fortified complex for nearly two minutes.

On its heels came another announcement by a group calling itself Kata'ib Hezbollah, demanding that every "foreign soldier" leave the country. Its security chief said, "Iraq's instability is due to the malicious American presence, and security will not be achieved until the last foreign soldier leaves Iraqi territory."

The group, which Washington has designated as a "terrorist organisation", is part of the same umbrella organisation known as the PMF, or, as they call themselves, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which has been claiming daily attacks on US interests in Iraq and the region.

The Long Shadow War

These incidents spotlight the role of the proxies that Iran has created, funded, and supported over the years to fight its shadow war with Israel and the US. These include Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and the more recent PMF or the AL Hashd-al Shabi in Iraq. There have been other groups such as Islamic Jihad in Gaza, and Shiite groups in Syria and in Lebanon, but they are now defunct or have become bit players. The PMF has a relatively recent history. These Shiite militia groups appeared as late as 2014, to fight the Islamic State (ISIS) when the Iraqi army proved too inept, weak and corruption-riddled to do so, and Mosul, the second-largest Iraqi city, quickly fell to ISIS. Many of them, trained by the elite Quds force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and thereafter closely aligned with Iran, won the real battle against the ISIS, which won them both authority and goodwill from the

population. Later, they were absorbed into the Iraqi armed forces. However, those that remained closely aligned with Iran, like the Kata'ib Hezbollah, continue to be a law unto themselves, causing friction both within the umbrella movement as well as with the Iraqi state.

These groups have always demanded the withdrawal of US troops from the country. Since



the start of the US-Israel war on Iran, according to reports, airstrikes on Iran-aligned armed groups in Iraq, largely believed to be carried out by the US and Israel, have killed and wounded tens of Iraqis. Meanwhile, US bases in Iraqi Kurdistan and the American embassy in Baghdad have sustained multiple drone and missile attacks. Amid repeated attacks on US interests in the country, Washington has ordered all of its nationals to immediately leave Iraq.

The Hezbollah's Assault

Similarly, Iran's other major proxy, the Hezbollah in Lebanon, has opened up a second front, targeting northern Israel. Israel, in turn, has also been bombing Hezbollah strongholds. In fact, Hezbollah has been Iran's most faithful proxy group, created in 1982 in Lebanon to fight Israel's presence in Lebanon, as well as, more covertly, preserve the Shia identity and rights in Lebanon's fragmented polity. What distinguishes Hezbollah is that it is a political party in Lebanon with seats in its parliament and also commands its own private army, which has proved its mettle, at least till now. In 2000, it was

Hezbollah that forced an Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon, which is a Shia stronghold. Similarly, in 2006, in the Israel-Hezbollah war, the militia was able to stop Israel from crossing over. Hezbollah also played a pivotal role in battling ISIS and other jihadist groups during the Syrian Civil War. When war broke out between Israel and Hamas in

something understandable, given that Israel has crippled it, rendering it almost non-existent militarily - but it has even gone a step further and called upon Iran to refrain from attacking Gulf countries. This is possibly because Hamas is also heavily dependent on Qatar, which is sheltering many of the group's operatives on its territory and whose funding kept Hamas in control in Gaza till the war began in October 2023. Qatar has also been the main mediator between the group on one hand and Israel and the US on the other. Hamas, as a Sunni group, was a striking example of Iran prioritising the Islamic and Palestinian identity over sectarian ones. This also won Iran a sizable following amongst Sunnis in non-Arab lands, as being the one to stand up for the Palestinians. The silence of the Houthis, however, has been inexplicable. This "twelver" Shiite group of Yemen, which appeared in the 1990s and which has been faithfully nurtured, armed and supported by Iran throughout the country's civil war, enabling it to oust the legitimate government, quickly jumped into the fray when the Hamas-Israel war had started. It targeted shipping in the Red Sea and disrupted global trade as 15% of the world's freight passed through these waterways. Losses ran into billions of dollars as trade through the Suez Canal had to be rerouted along the longer route around the Cape of Good Hope. The Houthis had attacked Israel with drones and missiles; they had earlier also

October 2023, Hezbollah opened up a second front targeting northern Israel. However, this time Israel retaliated aggressively, including through ground invasions, such that the group was significantly degraded and downsized and its senior leadership decapitated. Nevertheless, the Hezbollah has joined in this time around, on behalf of Iran, saying it was avenging the killing of the erstwhile Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei. Israel, though, has inflicted heavy damages and casualties: more than 800 Lebanese are reported killed and a million displaced in this round of conflict, according to Lebanese government estimates. Given the disproportionate balance of power and the damage inflicted, the Lebanese government has wanted to ban Hezbollah. Meanwhile, Israel is preparing a ground assault in Southern Lebanon.

The Hamas's Silence

The real surprise, however, has been the non-engagement by Iran's other two major proxies - Hamas and the Houthis. Hamas has not only been inactive -

attacked Saudi oil facilities during Saudi intervention in Yemen's Civil War. Attacks by Israel, the US, and the UK on them had proved futile.

Strategic Patience?

Yet, their silence today may possibly be hinging on two factors. One is strategic patience. Iran may not want to play all its cards at once. Currently, in the 19th day of the war, Iran has managed to inflict significant damage with its relatively cheaper drones and wreak havoc both inside Israel and on its Gulf neighbours by targeting US military bases there. Its proxies in Iraq and Lebanon are also engaging the US troops and Israel, respectively. Further, Iran, with its selective blockade in the Strait of Hormuz, has managed to disrupt global energy flows and hit the global economy. It may not immediately need the assistance of the Houthis and may be waiting for a future escalation to activate the group. Besides, the Houthis had struck an agreement for ceasefire with the US last year, as also with Saudi Arabia. They may not want further escalation at this point by breaching the agreement. For now, no country has responded to Donald Trump's call to join forces with the US to keep the Strait of Hormuz open. This, however, may change if along with energy flows, global trading is also disrupted. This may be counterproductive. Further, many analysts believe that the Houthis may also be low on weapons, with supply uncertainty, given the asymmetric war that Iran finds itself embroiled in now. Moreover, there is an insurgency taking place in Southern Yemen and the group may be preoccupied with these matters. Yet, it is battle-hardened and has shown its reach in targeting both Israel and Saudi Arabia.

It is doubtful if it would refuse to open up another front if Iran insisted on it. It is, thus, more probable that Iran has not yet called on them to join in. What will be interesting is to see how they respond when - and if - Iran asks for support.

Aditi Bhaduri

The Shadow Of A Truman Moment In The Iran War



Wars often produce moments when leaders feel compelled to seek a decisive stroke that will end the conflict once and for all. History shows that such moments can generate choices that would have seemed unthinkable only months earlier. When Harry S. Truman authorised the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the decision emerged from precisely such wartime pressures. As the conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran intensifies today, the world must ensure that a similar moment of desperate calculation does not arise again.

The lesson of that moment in history is not that such weapons can end wars, but that once the logic of escalation begins to dominate wartime decision-making, even the most unthinkable options can enter the realm of strategic calculation. The mere possibility that such debates could arise is reason enough for policymakers everywhere to approach the present conflict with extreme caution.

An Unravelling War

As the war drags on, both Donald Trump and Benjamin

Netanyahu will face mounting pressure to produce decisive results. Wars rarely remain confined to their original scope once expectations of rapid victory begin to fade. Political leaders must demonstrate progress, military planners search for breakthroughs, and public narratives increasingly revolve around the need for a conclusive outcome. In this environment, media speculation about "exit strategies" or "off-ramps" for Washington can unintentionally increase pressure on decision-makers. Even well-intentioned commentary can shape the climate in which leaders make decisions, potentially nudging them toward harder, more dramatic actions.

The Nuclear Threat Is Very Much There

Neither the United States nor Israel lacks the technological capability associated with advanced nuclear arsenals. The nuclear arsenals of advanced powers today are far more sophisticated than the devices used in 1945. While their existence is intended primarily as deterrence, prolonged wars have historically forced strategic communities to examine every

available option. Even the discussion of such possibilities is deeply unsettling, yet ignoring the pressures that produce such debates can be dangerous.

A Leader Challenged?

For that reason, policymakers and societies on all sides must recognise the full range of choices that prolonged wars can place before leaders. For Iran's leadership and its wider strategic community, absorbing this reality may be essential if catastrophic escalation is to be avoided. From Tehran's perspective, the conflict may well be seen as existential. Yet history also shows that wars framed as existential struggles can generate the most dangerous strategic decisions.

The intellectual climate in Washington has also evolved. A number of influential voices in Washington now argue that the United States has become excessively risk-averse and that restoring global credibility requires a more assertive posture. Such arguments reflect a broader shift toward the language of renewed deterrence and strategic competition. Yet this very logic can make it politically harder for leaders to conclude conflicts without visible

demonstrations of strength.

The 1945 Atomic Bombing

The outcome of this conflict will also be watched closely by other major powers. In 1945, the atomic decision was shaped not only by the desire to end a brutal war but also by the strategic message it sent to rival states observing the emergence of a new geopolitical era. Today, other significant powers will similarly draw lessons from how the United States manages both the conduct and the conclusion of this conflict.

This is why cool judgment is essential at this stage of the war. Whether the original decision to go to war was wise or ill-advised is now largely beside the point. Once a conflict has begun, the overriding priority must be to prevent escalation into something far more dangerous.

India's Unique Position

In such moments, the international system can benefit from the quiet diplomacy of actors that retain a degree of strategic autonomy. Among emerging nations, India stands out as a major emerging power in this regard. Despite its energy dependence on the Gulf and

deep economic engagement with the United States, India has consistently demonstrated a capacity to maintain independent channels of communication across geopolitical divides.

This unique positioning may allow New Delhi to explore, discreetly and without public fanfare, avenues for de-escalation with Washington, Tel Aviv and Tehran alike. At moments of heightened tension in international politics, the world sometimes requires what might be called an "adult in the room": a state capable of engaging all sides while remaining aligned exclusively with none.

If the present conflict continues to intensify, the value of such diplomacy may soon become evident. The most important lesson from 1945 is not only the destructive power of nuclear weapons but the pressures that can drive leaders toward choices that later generations struggle to comprehend. History shows that when wars reach their most desperate phases, restraint remains the only safeguard against catastrophe.

Milinda Moragoda

8 Daily Habits To Boost Your Gut Health, According To A Harvard-Trained Doctor

(New Agency) Health goals usually start with motivation. You plan to eat clean, work out more, and fix your routine overnight. But a few weeks in, it starts to feel exhausting. The routine slips, and you are back to square one.

The truth is, good health is rarely about doing everything perfectly. It is about doing a few simple things consistently. Small habits may not feel powerful in the moment, but over time, they can improve digestion, energy, sleep, and overall well-being in a big way.

Dr Saurabh Sethi, Harvard & Stanford-trained Gastroenterologist, has shared a list of easy, practical habits on Instagram. Based on his years of experience, he explains that these everyday actions can "skyrocket your health" when followed regularly.

Here is a simple breakdown of what he suggests.

1. Start Your Day Without Your Phone

Instead of scrolling first thing in the morning, start your day with a moment of



gratitude. Dr Sethi explains that cortisol levels are already high in the morning. Scrolling can increase stress further, while gratitude helps calm the nervous system and supports digestion.

2. Get Morning Sunlight

Just 10 minutes of sunlight in the morning can help reset your body clock. It improves mood, supports vitamin D levels, and

keeps your internal rhythm in sync.

3. Walk After Meals

A short walk after meals, especially your biggest meal, can help digestion. It also supports better blood sugar control and reduces that heavy, sleepy feeling after eating.

4. Add Fermented Foods

Foods like yoghurt, dahi, kefir, kimchi, or kanji feed your gut

bacteria. These natural probiotics support digestion without needing supplements for most people.

5. Use More Herbs And Spices

Turmeric, ginger, cumin, fennel and black pepper are not just for flavour. They help reduce inflammation and support gut health. They also make it easier to include

more plant diversity in your diet.

6. Follow A 12-Hour Eating Window

Keeping a simple eating window, like 8 am to 8 pm, allows the gut to rest overnight. This supports repair and overall digestive health.

7. Add Berries To Your Diet

Berries are rich in antioxidants. They help reduce stress in the body and support good gut bacteria. Just make sure to wash them well before eating.

8. Focus On Personalised Nutrition

Dr Sethi highlights that the biggest shift in health today is moving away from one-size-fits-all diets. Every gut is different. What works for one person may not work for another.

Small Habits, Big Results

The main takeaway is simple. You do not need extreme changes to improve your health. Small, practical habits done daily can make a real difference over time. Because when it comes to health, consistency matters more than perfection.

Hot Water Has Been India's Favourite Morning Drink For Ages. West Is Just Waking Up To It

(New Agency) "Don't drink warm water on an empty stomach," jokes influencer Krystal in a viral video to her 265K followers, before quickly adding the punchline, "unless you want toxins flushed out of your body."

She then explains how the habit changed her mornings. "I started drinking it and realised I feel warmer, my face isn't puffy anymore, and my skin is glowing."

The clip quickly took off online, with thousands in the comments vowing to try the habit themselves. In an Internet landscape already obsessed with lemon water for immunity, prebiotic sodas for gut health and the so-called "sleepy girl mocktail" for better rest, the newest wellness beverage making waves in the West is surprisingly simple: warm water.

But while social media may be treating it as the latest discovery, for much of Asia, the idea is anything but new.

An Ancient Habit In Eastern Traditions

For centuries, both traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda have recommended drinking warm water, particularly in the morning.

The reasoning is simple: warmth is believed to help stimulate the digestive system and keep bodily processes running smoothly. According to Debjani Gupta, functional nutritionist and founder of Wellness For All, the habit has long been tied to gut health.

"Water has a lot of benefits. It helps clear toxins from the body and supports digestion," she explains. "In Ayurveda it is said to stimulate the digestive fire,

which is why having a glass of warm water first thing in the morning or before meals can be helpful."

However, Gupta stresses that temperature matters. "We don't want boiling hot water because that can damage internal organs. It should always be lukewarm."

In many Indian homes, the practice often goes a step further. Warm water may be infused with spices such as jeera, ajwain, methi or dhanias seeds, each believed to play a different role in supporting digestion and gut health.

"You can soak jeera overnight or boil spices in water and let it cool to a warm temperature. Each of these ingredients has a different function in supporting the gut, and together they can offer multiple health benefits," Gupta says. Why The Morning Glass Matters Health experts say there

may be some logic behind starting the day with water. After hours of sleep, the body wakes up mildly dehydrated. Drinking fluids helps restore hydration and activates the digestive tract.

"When you wake up, digestion has slowed overnight," gastroenterologists often explain. Drinking or eating anything in the morning signals the digestive system to begin working again, triggering contractions in the stomach and intestines that move food, gas and stool along.

That's one reason many people say they feel less bloated or more comfortable after their morning glass of water. Gupta adds that warm water may also help ease digestive discomfort. "If someone feels heavy or bloated after a meal, a glass of warm water with crushed ajwain can provide relief fairly quickly," she says.

From Gut Health To Glowing Skin

Beyond digestion, the Internet credits warm water with a long list of benefits, from weight loss and detoxification to clearer skin.

Some of these claims are overstated, experts say, but hydration itself plays a major role in overall health.

Dr Ridhima Khamesra, Clinical Dietician says Warm water can stimulate gastrointestinal activity that aids digestion, counteracts bloating and helps with easier bowel movements, as water is requisite for various chemical and enzymatic reactions that are catalysts for various metabolic processes, nutrient absorption and digestion. It has a mild effect on smooth muscles but promotes peripheral vasodilation. Infact it also helps in mucus discharge, thereby beneficial in cough and cold. "Hydration is very important.

Oscars 2026 Highlights: Michael B Jordan Best Actor, Jessie Buckley Best Actress, One Battle After Another Best Picture

(New Agency) The 98th Academy Awards ceremony was held at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles.

The live broadcast in India began at 4.30 am IST with the red carpet event, followed by the awards presentation.

This year, the Oscars is being hosted by late-night host Conan O'Brien, who also emceed the 2025 show. Actor-producer Priyanka Chopra presented the Oscar for Best International Feature Film alongside Oscar winner Javier Bardem.

Black Panther director Ryan Coogler's Sinners, which was leading the awards race this season with 16 nods, could manage to win only four awards. They are Best Original Screenplay, Best Original Score, Best Cinematography, and Best



Actor for Michael B Jordan. The biggest winner of the night was One Battle After Another, which took home the top honour of Best Picture along with five more wins. The other categories in which the film won the awards are: Best Casting, Best Supporting Actress, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Director for Paul Thomas Anderson, and Best Editing.

Jessie Buckley, the frontrunner for the Best Actress Oscar, won the award. With three awards in Best Costume, Best Hairstyling And Makeup, and Best Production Design, Frankenstein emerged as the third biggest winner at the 98th Academy Awards.

Highlights For Oscars 2026: Mar 16, 2026 09:45 (IST)

TwitterWhatsApp Facebook Reddit Email Oscars 2026 Saw The Return Of Bare Shoulders From strapless silhouettes to off-the-shoulder draping, the neckline took centre stage this year. Read the full story here. Our fair lady Jessie Buckley showing her love and appreciation. #Oscars pic.twitter.com/ac8GK2nA3r — The Academy (@TheAcademy) March 16, 2026

Quitting smoking was hard. **Screening for lung cancer is easy.**

If you smoked, you may still be at risk, but early detection could save your life. Get **SavedByTheScan.org**

American Lung Association. ad COUNCIL

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

On any given day in America, too many of our mothers, brothers, partners, and friends are taken from us by gun suicide. But tomorrow's deaths could be prevented. Take the next step to store all your guns more securely: locked, unloaded, and away from ammo.

Advertiser Agent (Public Service Message)

END FAMILY FIRE EndFamilyFire.org

BRADY UNITED AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE ad COUNCIL

The 'World's Most Boring Diet' Can Help Rapid Fat Loss. So, Why Is It Called So?



(New Agency) Social media users, in particular, are documenting their journeys in real time. One creator, Riley Rehl, described it as a way to "improve my relationship with food" and "challenge myself", while being upfront that she's not recommending it yet, just testing it. Another user, hopenberger, shared mid-diet results saying, "food noise has lessened so much... energy and mental clarity increased", alongside a drop from 19 percent to 15 percent body fat. Influencer couple Nico Pico also joined in, reporting a combined weight loss of nearly 9 pounds in just one week.

What Exactly Is The CPB Diet

At its core, the CPB diet is aggressively simple. It focuses on a limited set of whole foods to naturally create a calorie

deficit without tracking anything.

The basic framework looks like this:

Unlimited chicken breast (or tofu for vegetarians) Potatoes as the primary carbohydrate

Broccoli and carrots as the main vegetables Just one tablespoon of olive oil per meal Drinks restricted to water, black coffee, or tea Everything else is largely off the table. No sugary drinks, no artificial sweeteners, no sneaky high-calorie add-ons. Seasonings are allowed, but the idea is to keep food functional rather than indulgent.

The logic is straightforward. High protein plus high fibre equals fullness. Potatoes, often misunderstood, are actually quite satiating, while broccoli and carrots add volume without many calories. Together, they help people eat less without

feeling like they are dieting.

Why Some Are Seeing Fast Results

The results, while impressive on the surface, are not entirely mysterious. This is essentially a high-protein, low-calorie, high-volume diet.

You're eating foods that:

Keep you full for longer

Reduce cravings by cutting out hyper-palatable processed options Simplify decisions so you don't overeat Many users say the biggest change is psychological. The constant urge to snack or think about food, often called "food noise", seems to reduce. When your meals are predictable and repetitive, the emotional pull of food weakens.

There's also a behavioural reset at play. By stripping meals down to basics, the diet forces a break from sugar-heavy, ultra-

processed eating patterns. For some, that alone leads to better energy levels and even clearer skin. The 30-day "Flex"

Recognising that eating the same thing daily is not exactly sustainable, a structured 30-day version has emerged.

Week 1 starts strictly with just the base foods.

Week 2 introduces one new item per category, like lean beef or spinach.

By Week 3, fruits, nuts, and other additions begin to appear.

The idea is to use the first week as a reset, then slowly reintroduce variety to make the diet more realistic long term. Plate portions are also balanced, typically one quarter protein and fats, one quarter carbs, and half vegetables, often paired with strength training and daily movement.

What Science Says

For all its viral success, the CPB diet sits firmly in the "fad with logic" category. It borrows principles from well-established nutrition science but applies them in an extreme, highly restrictive way.

No large-scale scientific studies back this exact diet. The results so far are based on small experiments and personal testimonials.

Some experts say the diet can cause:

Nutrient gaps due to a lack of variety

Low-fat intake, which may affect hormones over time

Digestive issues like bloating or constipation Rapid weight loss risks, such as fatigue or electrolyte imbalance There's also the obvious issue of monotony. Diets that are too restrictive often lead to rebound eating once normal foods return.

Breaking The Overthinking Trap: Simple Lessons From Daniel Chidiac's Book

(By Our Staff Reporter) Often it begins quietly, at 2 a.m. while reaching for a glass of water, or while waiting at a traffic signal. A fleeting thought about a meeting from three days ago suddenly spirals into a mental interrogation: Did I sound unprofessional? Why did I say those exact words? Do they think I'm incompetent?

Slowly, the mind starts replaying the same moment from different angles again and again. Each time, a new possibility appears, a new mistake, a new fear. Gradually, the mind grows exhausted, leaving you not just physically tired but mentally numb.

This is what overthinking really looks like. It is not merely the habit of thinking too much; it is a relentless mental loop that pulls us back to small moments from the past which overwhelm us. The mind becomes an emotional courtroom where we play every role at once, the accused, the judge, and the lawyer, and, more often than not, the verdict is delivered against ourselves.

The more we dwell on a thought, the more confused and helpless we begin to feel. In reality, the moment we keep replaying in our minds has often already been forgotten by everyone else. The truth is that most people don't remember those moments nearly as intensely as we imagine. The meeting we are still replaying in our heads three days later may already be forgotten by everyone else who was there.

That is the biggest illusion of overthinking: it convinces us that every small detail is enormously important, when in reality it often isn't. The problem is that overthinking rarely offers solutions; it only exhausts us.

And this experience is far more common than many people realise. More recent data, such as the Centre Fresh India Overthinking Report, suggests that the scale of the issue is even larger than previously believed. According to the report, up to 81% of Indians say they spend three or more hours a day overthinking, highlighting how deeply this silent mental habit has become embedded in everyday life.

It is this growing phenomenon of overthinking that many modern self-help books attempt to

address. One such book is 'Stop Letting Everything Affect You' by Daniel Chidiac. Through this book, Chidiac explores how people can learn to manage their thoughts and stop letting small events take control of their mental space.

The book emphasises that overthinking is not just a mental habit; it can also have serious consequences for overall well-being. Constant mental stress can slowly affect both mental and physical health, leading to anxiety, exhaustion, and even physical symptoms such as headaches, sleep disturbances, and fatigue.

Chidiac does not propose complex psychological models or elaborate theories to explain the cycle of overthinking, nor are his suggestions rigidly prescriptive. Instead, he draws from day-to-day experiences, examining them within their context and offering insights that feel surprisingly simple, almost as if the solutions had always been in front of us, waiting to be noticed.

By offering practical insights and reflections, Chidiac encourages readers to become more aware of their thought patterns and develop healthier ways of responding to everyday situations, rather than getting trapped in endless cycles of overanalysis.

Chidiac illustrates how the mind easily falls into mental loops through simple, everyday situations. Consider what happens when someone does not reply to a message immediately. Instead of calmly assuming that the person might simply be busy, the mind quickly spirals into self-doubt: Did I say something wrong? Are they upset with me? Are they losing interest?

Similarly, if a friend appears distant, rather than considering that they may be having a difficult day, the mind jumps to a far more personal conclusion: They must be upset with me. Did I do something? What if they no longer want me in their life?

According to Chidiac, the brain is uncomfortable with uncertainty. To fill that gap, it creates a narrative, one that often tilts toward negativity.

Over time, these are not just passing thoughts; they begin to harden into core beliefs that shape how we see ourselves and

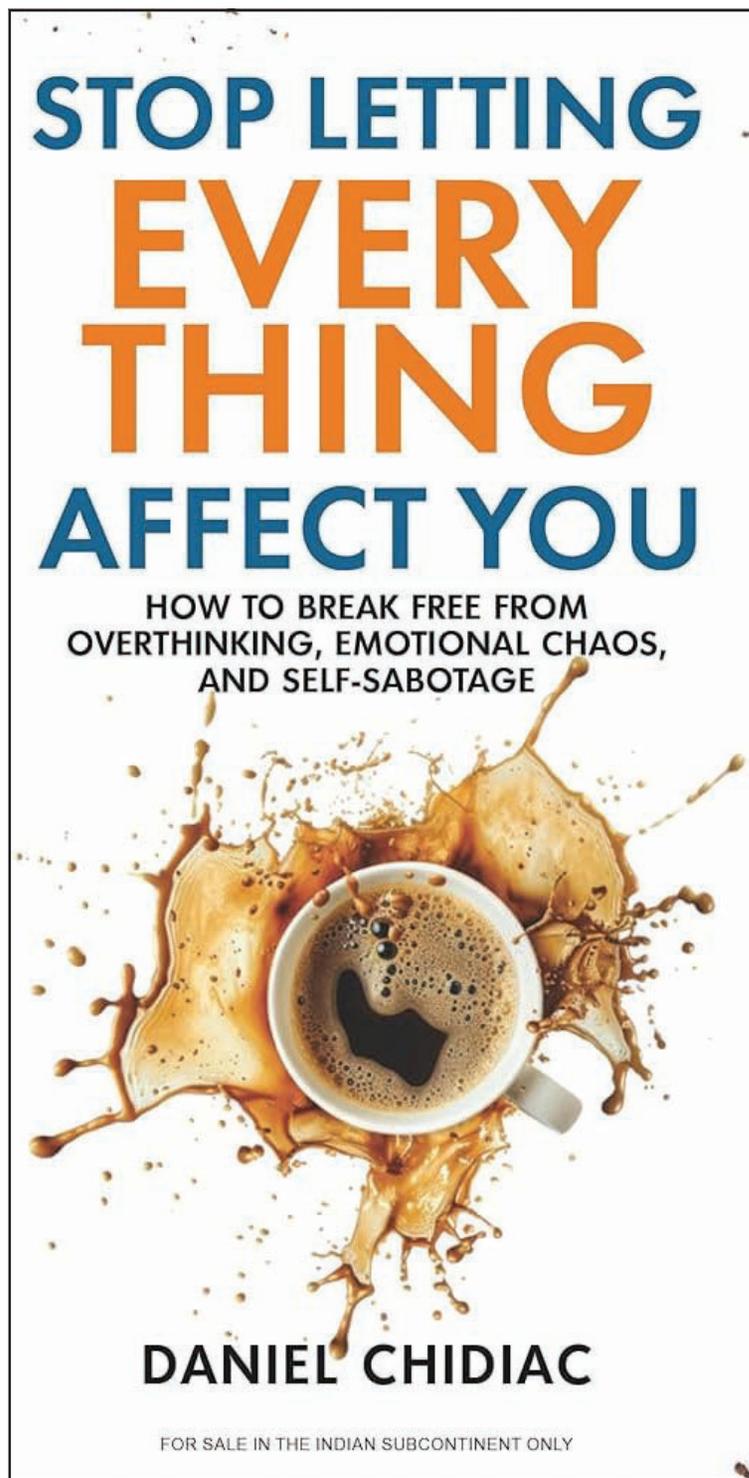
interpret the world around us.

Chidiac writes, "This cycle of hope and disappointment is further enabled by your lack of boundaries. People don't automatically know how to treat you—you show them. Every time you tolerate something that makes you uncomfortable, every time you bite your tongue instead of speaking up, every time you say yes when you really mean no, you send a message. And the message is this: My feelings don't matter. My needs don't matter. You can treat me however you want, and I will accept it." Through such reflections, Chidiac reminds readers that the habit of overthinking is often tied not just to the mind but also to the patterns we allow to develop in our relationships. Learning to set boundaries, therefore, becomes a necessary step toward reclaiming emotional balance and protecting one's mental space. While almost everyone slips into overthinking at times, for some people, it gradually hardens into a persistent pattern. Thoughts begin to circle endlessly, with one worry giving birth to another, creating a loop that affects both emotional balance and even physical well-being. Yet research offers a reassuring perspective: nearly three-quarters of those who receive appropriate help are able to recover, suggesting that overthinking is not a fixed personality trait but a habit of mind that can be unlearned.

Highlighting this fact, the author goes beyond merely identifying the genesis of the problem of overthinking and offers advice to tackle it, which is both practical and easy to follow.

In the third part of the book, where Chidiac turns to solutions, he again avoids presenting a rigid list of complicated dos and don'ts. Instead, he focuses on simple but often overlooked truths, things we already know but rarely pause to acknowledge or accept.

One such insight comes when he writes that the first step toward emotional freedom is recognising that carrying everyone else's emotional weight is not compassion; it is a learned pattern that often begins long before we even have the language to describe it. Research in developmental psychology, he notes, suggests that many chronic over-givers were



once children who learned that their worth depended on how well they could attend to the needs of others. To begin breaking this pattern, Chidiac suggests what he calls an "energy exchange audit." The idea is straightforward: track your significant interactions and note three things—How you felt before the interaction: energised, neutral, or depleted.

What emotional weight did you carry during the interaction?

How did you feel afterwards?

By doing this consistently, the reader is encouraged to look for patterns: Which interactions leave you drained? In which situations do you find yourself carrying emotional burdens that are not really yours?

Chidiac makes it clear that the purpose of this exercise is not to

judge others. Rather, it is to develop a clearer awareness of where one's emotional energy is being spent—and often, unknowingly, depleted. This quiet awareness, he suggests, is the beginning of reclaiming one's mental space.

It is in this context that Daniel Chidiac's 'Stop Letting Everything Affect You' becomes particularly relevant. Rather than presenting dense psychological frameworks or complex therapeutic prescriptions, the book acts as a practical guide for navigating everyday emotional struggles. Chidiac approaches the problem through familiar life situations, gently unpacking the patterns that keep people trapped in cycles of doubt, disappointment and emotional exhaustion.

Pragati Pandey

Adobe To Pay \$75 Million In U.S. Penalties Over Subscription Practices

(New Agency) The U.S. Department of Justice has moved to settle a case against software company Adobe Inc. over allegations that its online subscription practices misled consumers and made it difficult for users to cancel their plans.

According to an official news release published on March 13, federal prosecutors said the government has filed a proposed stipulated order in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California that, if approved by the court, would resolve the case against Adobe and two of its employees, Maninder Sawhney and David Wadhvani. Tech-Biz Articles

Under the proposed settlement, Adobe would pay \$75 million in civil penalties and provide another \$75 million worth of free services to customers.

The case centers on alleged violations of the Restore Online Shoppers' Confidence Act, known as ROSCA. The law requires companies that offer online subscriptions to clearly disclose key

terms of their services and provide customers with straightforward ways to cancel their subscriptions.

According to the complaint, the government alleged that Adobe failed to properly disclose important details about its subscription plans. Prosecutors said the company "used fine print and inconspicuous hyperlinks to hide information" about subscription conditions, including the possibility of a large early termination fee if customers canceled their plans before the end of a contract period. Authorities also alleged that Adobe created complicated cancellation procedures that made it difficult for subscribers to end their services. The complaint stated that customers attempting to cancel their subscriptions were required to go through multiple steps and delays and were often confronted with repeated offers and warnings that discouraged them from completing the cancellation process.

If the court approves the proposed order, Adobe will be required to make



several changes to how it presents and manages its subscription services. The company will need to clearly disclose any early termination fees and explain how those fees are calculated before customers sign up for a subscription.

The order would also require Adobe to send reminders to customers who enroll

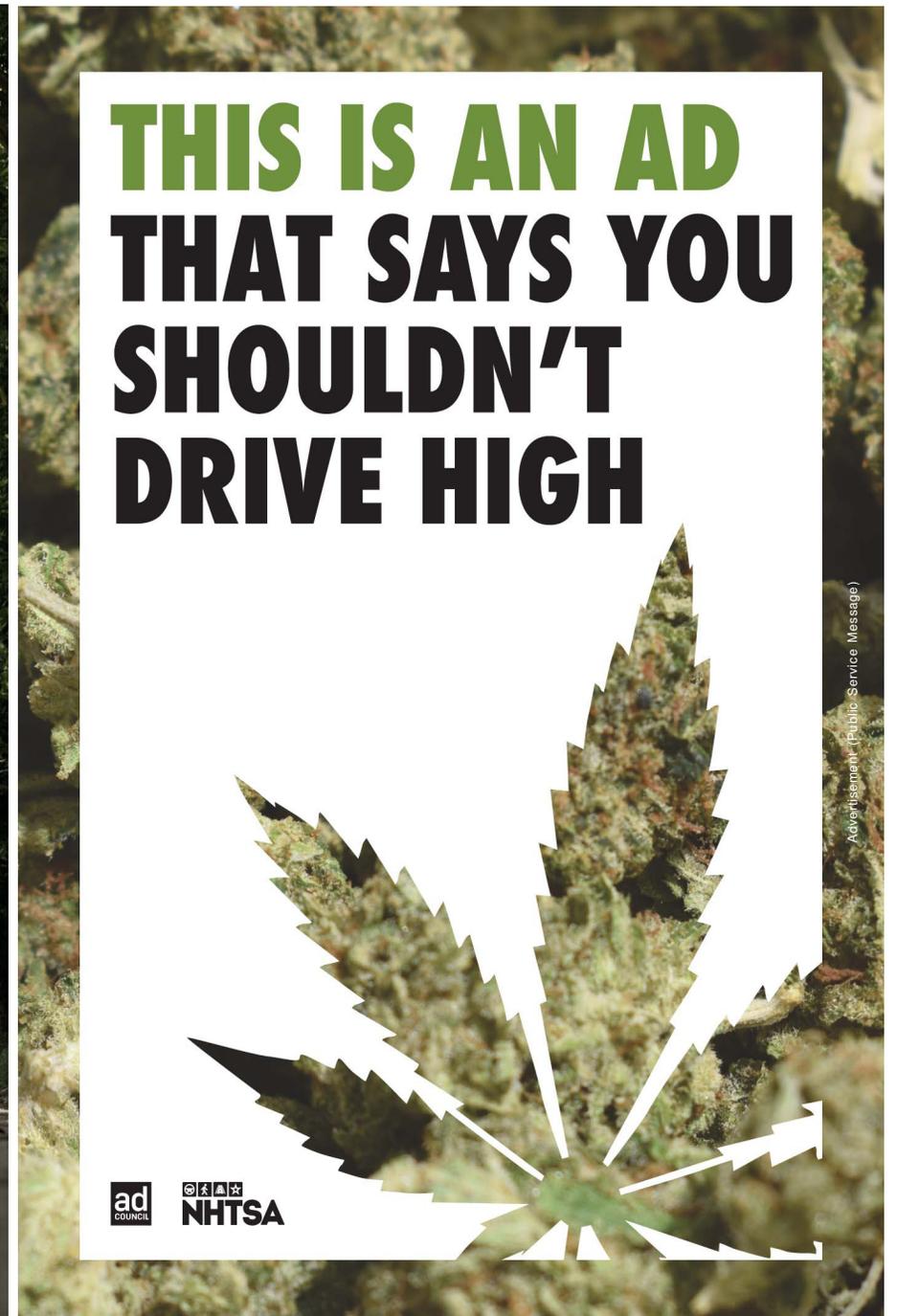
in free trials lasting longer than seven days before those trials convert into paid subscriptions that include early termination fees. In addition, the company must provide customers with simpler and more accessible ways to cancel their subscriptions. Indian American Doctors.



#Dadication



fatherhood.gov



THIS IS AN AD THAT SAYS YOU SHOULDN'T DRIVE HIGH



Mystery drones spotted over US base where Rubio, Hegseth live: Washington Post

(News Agency) Amid the widening crisis in the Middle East, mysterious drones were spotted over a Washington Military base, named Fort McNair, on Thursday (Indian standard time). The base houses the residences of the United States Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, and the Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth. The officials have not yet determined where the drones came from.

According to a report by the Washington Post, the detection prompted US officials to weigh relocations of both Rubio and Hegseth. However, the movement of both of the officials is unknown yet, as the Pentagon and the US State Department did not respond to requests for comments. Chief Pentagon spokesperson

Sean Parnell refused to talk about Hegseth's movement, citing security reasons to the newspaper. "The department cannot comment on the secretary's (Hegseth's) movements for security reasons, and reporting on such movements is grossly irresponsible, he told The Washington Post.

Following the detection of the drones, the White House held high-level meetings with senior officials. In addition, a high alert was issued for the US Army, amid possibilities of Iranian retaliation, after the killings of security chief Ali Larjani and the Minister of Intelligence, Esmael Khatib. Protection levels for several US bases have been raised to FPCON Charlie (a protection condition



of the US Defence, issued to prevent US military forces are monitoring potential terrorist attacks), and a global security alert has also been issued for heightened alert level over the U.S. and US diplomatic missions. Meanwhile, the Israeli war against Iran.

Why an Iran at war draws strength from pre-Islamic Persian warriors

(News Agency) Wearing a Faravahar locket, a Zoroastrian symbol of a guardian spirit, would be considered haraam by the Muslim community globally. But that's not the case in Iran — the world's largest Shia Muslim nation, with over 90% of its population following Islam. Experts of the Persian culture say the Zoroaster insignia is sold openly across Iran, and even worn by many Shias. That's how multifaceted cultural identity is in the country. Today, amid the war with Israel and the US, these Persian roots have seemingly strengthened Iran's resolve. The Faravahar is just one of the examples of Iran's Persian roots showing through. Images of Achaemenid soldiers, from one of ancient Persia's greatest empires; statues and posters of the legendary archer Arash, a symbol of sacrifice; and Rostam, a hero from Persian mythology — all have ap-

peared in Iran, from billboards to TV programmes, or in the form of statues.

Before the Arab conquest of Iran, the land saw a thousand-year rule by Zoroastrian empires, beginning with the Achaemenid Empire of Cyrus the Great. These pre-Islamic empires were among the biggest of their times. And while the Caliphates merged Iran with the Arabian empire, the Zoroastrian roots remained deep. For centuries, the Zoroastrian heritage and symbols remained key for Iranians to assert their distinct identity from the Arabs. Even the Shahs of Iran used the old Persian empires to justify their rule in Iran from 1925 to 1979, when the Iranian Revolution was used to usher in the Ayatollah regime.

In recent years too, whenever Iranians have protested against the clerical regime, slogans have been raised in support of



the Shah's rule, which was overthrown in 1979 during the Enqelab-e Eslami, aka the Islamic Revolution. In some such protests, crowds were dotted with symbols like the Lion and Sun flags, also rooted in Iran's pre-Islamic identity.

The latest example of this was seen soon after the killing of Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei in the US-Israeli strikes, when lakhs of Iranians poured into the streets across the country. They chanted, "Long live the Shah" — calls for the return of the crown prince of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, the son of the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The Pahlavis took great pride in their Persian heritage.

Why is China intervening in the Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict now?

(News Agency) Tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have escalated sharply following a fresh round of airstrikes in Kabul, raising fears of a wider regional conflict and prompting urgent diplomatic intervention by China. Pakistan said it carried out the strikes under "Operation Ghazab Lil Haq," targeting what it described as militant infrastructure. However, the Afghan Taliban have strongly contested this version, claiming that the strikes hit a drug rehabilitation hospital, with reports suggesting up to 400 people may have been killed. Islamabad has firmly denied these allegations, insisting that no civil-



ian facilities were targeted. The latest escalation is rooted in long-standing tensions between the two neighbours. Islamabad has repeatedly accused the Taliban-led government in Kabul of providing a haven and logistical support to the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a militant group

responsible for a surge in deadly attacks within Pakistan. The Taliban authorities have consistently denied these accusations, calling them baseless. Compounding the situation is the decades-old dispute over the Durand Line, a contentious border that has remained a flashpoint between the two countries.

Periodic cross-border strikes and retaliatory actions have intensified friction, particularly in recent months. Amid growing instability, China has stepped up its diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has held talks with officials from both

Islamabad and Kabul, urging restraint, an immediate ceasefire, and direct dialogue. Beijing has also deployed its special envoy, who has been shuttling between the two capitals in an attempt to broker peace. China's involvement is driven by significant strategic interests. Beijing has invested more than \$65 billion in Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of its Belt and Road Initiative. Continued instability along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border threatens key infrastructure and transit routes that are central to China's regional connectivity ambitions.

Has Israel killed Ali Larijani to keep the Iran war going?



(News Agency) It was meant to break Iran's hardline leadership, believed the Israelis and Americans. Instead, their actions might have hardened the Iranian regime further, which could bite the duo back. This is exactly what several experts are saying about the killing of Iran's secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, in an Israeli airstrike. Larijani had emerged as the key architect of the country's military and diplomatic strategy since the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the military brass on February 28. With the killing of the "pragmatic" Larijani, the Israelis have narrowed the Iranian leadership circle, which might choose to prolong the war. Larijani was seen as one of the top Iranian officials who would have been open to talks

with Iran's "adversaries", the US and Israel, who huddled to decapitate the leadership in Tehran.

Israeli newspaper Haaretz recently described Larijani as the "flesh and blood" of the Iranian clerical regime. One of the primary objectives of the strikes on Iran was the removal of the hardline leadership. Ironically, the US and Israel might be pushing Iran into deeper hardline hands. "With every assassination, the US and Israel are engineering greater radicalisation of Iran's leadership," said Vali Nasr, an expert on the Middle East.

The other theory, according to an expert, is that Israel has taken out Larijani to keep the war going. Israel doesn't want the war to stop before degrading Iran's military power to the extent that it is un-

able to strike it in decades. Larijani's killing comes just weeks after the US-Israel strikes eliminated Khamenei, in a bid to trigger a regime change. The move that was supposed to shake the very core of the Islamic Republic. But what followed was consolidation. In a week, Tehran named the next Ayatollah, Mojtaba Khamenei, who experts say is a "more radical and apocalypse-obsessed" man who is "uniquely dangerous" and "more dangerous than 50 nuclear bombs". Now, with Larijani gone, the pattern might be

repeating itself. Each American and Israeli strike aimed at "decapitation" might instead be narrowing Iran's leadership, who would have to sit down for talks. The IRGC has already rejected de-escalation overtures conveyed by intermediaries and are now demanding that the US and Israel "accept defeat" first.

While Washington and Jerusalem might be achieving something tactically, they are also losing strategically. The war is not ending, and it's now being driven by a more hardline leadership.

Explained: Meningitis outbreak in England and why students are at risk

(News Agency) A meningitis outbreak in southeast England has led to the deaths of a university student and a pupil from a nearby school, prompting public health officials to quickly roll out medical interventions. The outbreak in the county of Kent was described Wednesday as unprecedented by UK Health Secretary Wes Streeting, owing to the high number of cases appearing in such a short space of time. The first case was confirmed on Friday, and it had risen to 20 by Wednesday. Most of them were linked to the University of Kent in the historic Cathedral City of Canterbury. Students, many of whom have gone home for an end-of-term break, are being offered anti-

biotics as well as a vaccination against the strain identified as the source of the outbreak. With public health officials highly visible, and students jittery, here is what to know:

DEFINITION OF MENINGITIS

Meningitis is an infection of the membranes around the brain and spinal cord and can be caused by either viruses or bacteria. Contracting meningitis can lead to a severe blood infection that is called meningococcal sepsis, which often manifests itself as a rash. It can be life-threatening if not treated rapidly. Meningitis can also lead to limb amputations. The most dangerous outbreaks are usually a result of bacteria.

Iran-Israel war hits global energy as gas fields and LNG hubs come under fire



(News Agency) The Iran-Israel conflict has taken a sharp turn into the energy sector, with strikes on one of the world's largest gas fields and a major LNG hub raising fears of wider disruption to global supply.

Iranian state media said Wednesday that Israel attacked the South Pars natural gas field, a critical energy source for the country located along its Gulf

coastline near Asaluyeh.

Fires were reported at facilities linked to the field, which supplies about 80% of Iran's natural gas.

The strike marks a significant escalation, shifting the focus from military targets to economic infrastructure at the heart of the region's energy system.

STRIKES SPREAD

ACROSS KEY ENERGY SITES

Within hours of the South Pars attack, Iran retaliated by targeting energy infrastructure

in the Gulf. Qatar said five Iranian ballistic missiles were launched toward its territory, with one striking the Ras Laffan Industrial City — the world's

largest liquefied natural gas export terminal. Qatar's foreign ministry condemned the strike, saying it caused fires and "significant damage" to the facility.

What a loser: Former White House official rips Joe Kent, calls Iran exit a stunt

(News Agency) Joe Kent, the intelligence official who quit over the Iran war, is facing a fierce backlash from within Donald Trump's own camp — with one former aide branding his exit a self-serving stunt. Taylor Budowich, who served as Trump's deputy chief of staff, dismissed Kent's resignation as anything but principled after the former official posted his exit letter on X.

"Joe Kent is a crazed egomaniac who was often at the center of national security leaks, while rarely (never?) producing any actual work," Budowich wrote. He went further, alleging that Kent spent all of his time working to subvert the chain of command and undermine the President of the United States. Dismissing the timing of the resignation, Budowich added: "This isn't some principled resignation — he just wanted to make a splash before getting canned What a

loser."

Kent, an Army veteran and former Republican congressional candidate, had announced his resignation citing opposition to the ongoing conflict with Iran. "I cannot in good conscience support the ongoing war in Iran," Kent wrote, arguing that Tehran posed "no imminent threat" and suggesting the conflict was driven by pressure from Israel and its allies in the United States. Kent served as a senior deputy to Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, at a time when the intelligence community was already grappling with internal tensions over alleged leaks. Gabbard had previously referred three individuals to the Justice Department in connection with such cases. President Trump, reacting to Kent's departure, struck a more measured tone but did not hold back his criticism.

Pakistan-Afghanistan announce Eid ceasefire after deadly Kabul hospital strike

(News Agency) Pakistan and Afghanistan on Wednesday announced a "temporary pause" in fighting in view of Eid-ul-Fitr and at the request of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar, a day after the Afghan government accused the Islamabad of killing 400 people in an attack on a rehabilitation hospital in Kabul. Pakistan's Information Minister Ataullah Tarar made the announcement in a post on X, hours after his country carried out fresh attacks on alleged Taliban positions in the border region. "In view of the upcoming Islamic festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, upon its own initiative as well as on the request from the brotherly Islamic countries" of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkiye, Pakistan has decided to announce a temporary pause amidst ongoing Operation Ghazab-lil-Haq, he

said. Tarar said the pause would be applicable from "midnight March 18/19 to midnight March 23/24". He, however, added that in case of any cross-border attack, drone attack or any terrorist incident inside Pakistan, the operation will immediately resume. Hours later, Afghan government spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said the security and defence forces of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr and at the request of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar announce the temporary suspension of the defensive operations. He, however, said that Kabul "will respond courageously to any aggression in the event of a threat." Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil Haq on February 26 in response to alleged attacks by the Afghan



Taliban forces along the 2,600-km-long border. So far, at least 707 Afghan Taliban personnel have been killed, and more than 938 have been injured, according to the Pakistani government. Security forces carried out strong "retaliatory actions" against the Afghan Taliban and Fitna al-Khawarij in the South Waziristan sector under Operation Ghazab lil-Haq, sources said.

FBI hunts Indian national Kalpeshkumar Patel in US-wide fraud scheme case



(News Agency) The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has launched a manhunt for an Indian national accused of orchestrating a years-long fraud scheme across the United States, urging the public to come forward with information on his whereabouts.

In a post on X, the FBI said Kalpeshkumar Rasikbhai Patel, also known as Kenny Patel, is "wanted by the FBI" for his alleged role in a nationwide operation that targeted multiple victims between 2017 and 2021. The FBI said Patel, who worked as a fuel station attendant, is wanted for his alleged participation in a nationwide scheme to defraud multiple victims into transmitting large sums of money between 2017 and 2021. The FBI said Patel, about 35 years old, is believed to be residing in or travelling between Illinois and Pennsylvania.

"Many victims were contacted via telephone communications and deceived into believing their personal information or identities were associated with criminal activities," the agency said.

Victims were then convinced into sending large sums of money, often in the form of cash or prepaid debit cards, to addresses across the United States. On June 22, 2023, a federal arrest warrant was issued for Patel in the United States District Court, Eastern District of Kentucky, London, Kentucky, after he was charged with Mail and Wire Fraud Conspiracy. The agency described Patel as a fugitive and said any information about his location should be treated as "significant and actionable." The FBI has asked to share information about Patel with the local FBI office or the nearest American Embassy or Consulate.

Israel drove US into war: Ex-US counterterrorism chief Joe Kent tells Tucker Carlson

(News Agency) Joe Kent, who resigned as head of the National Counterterrorism Center over the Iran war, has accused Israel of pulling the United States into the conflict and shaping its Middle East policy.

In his first interview since stepping down, Kent told Tucker Carlson that the decision to strike Iran was driven not by an imminent threat from Tehran, but by Israel's actions and influence. "So, the imminent threat was not from Iran, it's from Israel," Kent said, agreeing with Carlson's framing of the situation. Kent argued that US policymakers misread intelligence and overstated the risk posed by Iran. "There was no intelligence that said the Iranians are going to launch this big sneak attack there was none of that intelligence," he said.

He pointed to earlier remarks by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who had said the US anticipated Iran might retaliate if Israel attacked. Kent dismissed that reasoning as flawed. "The Israelis drove the decision to take this action," he said, adding that Washington had the leverage to stop it. "We could have simply said to the Israelis, no, you will not." Instead, Kent suggested, Israel acted with the expectation of US backing. "The Israelis felt emboldened that no matter

what they did they could go ahead and take this action and we would just have to react," he said. He also alleged broader political pressure behind the decision. "It just shows that there was a lobby pushing for us to go to war," Kent said. Kent had announced his resignation a day earlier, writing that he could not support the war because "Iran posed no imminent threat" and that the conflict had been driven by "pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby."



The White House has strongly rejected his claims, calling them false and maintaining that Iran posed a serious threat to US interests. President Donald Trump also criticised Kent following his departure, saying it was "a good thing" he had left and insisting Iran remained a significant threat.

Kent's remarks have added to the growing debate in Washington over the origins of the Iran conflict and the extent of US involvement, particularly as the war continues to widen across the region.

Dhurandhar 2 X reviews: Fans say film is grand, gritty, but not flawless

(News Agency) Dhurandhar: The Revenge has set social media abuzz, with early reactions on X pouring in soon after its release. While many have hailed the film as a grand cinematic spectacle, others feel the sequel doesn't quite live up to the legacy of the original. Ranveer Singh's performance has emerged as a major talking point, with fans describing it as energetic and gripping. Many users have termed the film a "pure entertainer," applauding its mix of stylised action and emotional beats. The cinematography, too, has received widespread appreciation for its scale and execution.

Directed by Aditya Dhar, the film is being widely praised for its scale and visual ambition. Several users on X have lauded Dhar's "fantastic vision," particularly highlighting the interval sequence featuring Aari Aari as a standout moment. The placement of Man Atkeya has also caught viewers' attention, with many calling it a high point in the narrative. However, the response on X remains divided. A section of viewers has



pointed out that the sequel lacks the emotional depth of the first Dhurandhar, with some calling parts of it slow and stretched. The film's runtime has also been flagged, while the music has drawn mixed reactions, with comparisons to the original album continuing to surface. The film's political undertones have further

fuelled the conversation online. While some users have praised its bold and direct storytelling, others have criticised it as polarising. The debate has added to the film's strong online traction. Meanwhile, fans of Yash have even joked that his upcoming film Toxic may have benefited from avoiding a box-office clash

with Dhurandhar: The Revenge, given the scale of its release and buzz. For now, Dhurandhar: The Revenge has achieved what few films manage, dominating the conversation. Whether it ultimately matches its predecessor or not, the X verdict is clear: it's big, bold and impossible to ignore.

Sarke Chunar Teri Controversy: Fatwa Issued Against Nora Fatehi, Muslim Body Slams 'Vulgar Content'



(News Agency) Nora Fatehi has been facing backlash for her recently released song, Sarke Chunar Teri. Now, the Muslim Personal Darul Ifta in Aligarh has also issued a fatwa against the Bollywood actress over her appearance in the music video. As reported by the news agency ANI, the Muslim body has slammed the controversial track and described it as "obscene dance moves and vulgar content". In a statement that cleric Maulana Chaudhary Ibraheem Hussain in Uttar Pradesh issued, he expressed disappointment with the song and claimed that such tracks are against morals values. The fatwa urged people to boycott such songs and appealed to filmmakers and artists to ensure that entertainment

content is presented responsibly.

NCW Issues Summons To Nora Fatehi, Sanjay Dutt

This comes hours after the National Commission for Women also issued summons to actors Nora Fatehi and Sanjay Dutt in connection with the controversy. The Commission has taken suo motu cognisance of the issue amid allegations that the song promotes obscenity and vulgarity. As reported by IANS, according to the Commission, the content prima facie appears to be sexually suggestive, objectionable and potentially violative of provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act,

2012. NCW has not only issued Commission Also Objects Previously, the summons to Nora Fatehi and Sanjay Dutt National Human Rights Commission but also to lyricist Raqueeb Alam, (NHRC) also issued a notice over the producer Venkat K Narayana and director alleged use of objectionable and double-Kiran Kumar. All of them have been asked meaning lyrics in the song. to appear before the Commission on March 24 at 12:30 PM. Additionally, advocate and social activist Vineet Jindal also filed a complaint

The commission has also with the cyber cell of the Delhi Police, warned these people of consequences if asking for legal action against the makers they fail to appear. Human Rights of the track.

Mirzapur The Film Release Date Out: Makers Unveil Intense Poster Ahead Of Big Screen Debut

(News Agency) The world of Mirzapur familiar lawless energy of Mirzapur is no longer staying confined to reimagined against a scorching desert streaming. After three seasons of blood-soaked power games, betrayals and cult characters, the franchise is now heading to cinemas with Mirzapur: The Film, slated for release on September 4, 2026. Prime Video India has now intensified the buzz by unveiling a new poster that hints at a more expansive and visually charged chapter for the underworld saga.

New Poster Hints At A More Brutal, Large-Scale World

In the newly unveiled poster, the



advances through the barren terrain. In one of the most striking visuals, a body appears to be dragged behind a vehicle, leaving a trail of blood across the sand, immediately reinforcing the franchise's trademark brutality. The blazing sky, the isolation of the desert and the violent imagery together suggest that the film is aiming for a grander, more cinematic scale while retaining the savage essence that made the series a phenomenon.

Priyanka Chopra To Anne Hathaway, Best-Dressed Celebrities At Oscars 2026

(News Agency) The night of the 98th Academy Awards was a star-studded event, celebrating the most talented artists and technical achievements in cinema. From Priyanka Chopra and Anne Hathaway to Demi Moore and Kylie Jenner, the celebrities arrived in their finest ensembles for one of the most prestigious nights of the year.

Priyanka Chopra And Nick Jonas At The Oscars 2026

Priyanka Chopra arrived on the Oscars 2026 red carpet with Nick Jonas. She was wearing a custom Dior gown, while Nick Jonas accompanied her in a tailored suit, looking dashing.

Anne Hathaway At The Oscars 2026

Anne Hathaway was a sight to behold at the Oscars 2026 in black Valentino haute couture. The strapless gown featured floral patterns, and a broad belt cinched the waist. The actor opted for velvet gloves and the new Bvlgari Eclettica High Jewelry necklace and earrings.

Chris Evans And Alba Baptista At The Oscars 2026

Chris Evans and Alba Baptista arrived together at the Oscars 2026. While Evans was spotted in a Giorgio Armani double-breasted tuxedo, Baptista opted for a white satin Zuhair Murad gown.

Pedro Pascal At The Oscars 2026

Pedro Pascal looked dapper on the Oscars 2026 red carpet in a crisp white shirt with floral detailing, paired with high-waisted black tuxedo trousers. He completed the look with a clean-shaven appearance.

Demi Moore At The Oscars 2026

Demi Moore turned heads at the Oscars 2026 in a Gucci gown with feather



details and fish-scale-like embellishments around the bodice. Jessie Buckley stole the spotlight on the Oscars 2026 red carpet in a custom Chanel gown in red and pink. She styled it with a diamond necklace and opted for a sleek hairstyle.

Rose Byrne At The Oscars 2026

Rose Byrne was spotted in a custom black Christian Dior gown. To further elevate her look, the actor paired the strapless ensemble with a gold necklace and opted for a centre-parted hairstyle.

Chase Infiniti At The Oscars 2026

Chase Infiniti looked ravishing in a lavender-hued Louis Vuitton gown, featuring a halter neck and ruffled details on the train. She completed the look with a diamond-studded necklace. Kylie Jenner And Timothee Chalamet At The Oscars 2026 Kylie Jenner arrived on the Oscars 2026 red carpet wearing a body-hugging red Schiaparelli gown. Timothee Chalamet opted for an all-white structured suit designed by British designer Sarah Burton for Givenchy.

Elle Fanning At The Oscars 2026

Elle Fanning brought the drama in a custom Givenchy ballgown. The strapless

ensemble featured leaf detailing throughout, complemented by a necklace in a similar pattern.

Teyana Taylor At The Oscars 2026

Teyana Taylor stole the limelight in a custom Chanel gown. The shimmering outfit was sheer around the waist and boasted fur details from the waist down to the train.

Nicole Kidman At The Oscars 2026

Nicole Kidman was spotted on the Oscars red carpet wearing a peplum Chanel dress. It featured feather details near the waist and hem.

Kylie Jenner Repeats Silver Schiaparelli Gown In Red For Oscars 2026



(News Agency) Kylie Jenner is known as one of pop culture's most influential fashion figures. From her early reality TV days to becoming the founder of Kylie Cosmetics, the diva's style evolution has been the talk of the town. Over the years, the beauty mogul has delivered several fashion moments to remember.

This time, Kylie stepped onto the Academy Awards 2026 red carpet wearing a striking red Schiaparelli keyhole gown as she attended the ceremony in support of boyfriend Timothée Chalamet. The look reminded fans of a similar design she previously wore in silver at a 2023 Schiaparelli show. The sequin number featured a dramatic halter neckline, a signature keyhole cutout and a body-hugging silhouette that showcased the label's flair for theatrical glamour. The dress evoked the spirit of classic Hollywood bombshells such as Jessica Rabbit, whom Kylie also mentioned in her Instagram post. Kylie Jenner made a stunning statement with her jewellery choice, opting

for a dazzling suite of diamond pieces from Lorraine Schwartz. Her selection included statement earrings, rings and an eye-catching necklace. For her glam, Kylie stuck to a tried-and-true formula with luminous skin, softly bronzed eyes and a matte pink-nude lip. She paired it with a generous blush for added warmth and dimension. Her long brunette hair was styled in sweeping, voluminous waves. Four months ago, Kylie Jenner sat down with Vogue to record a Life in Looks video and reflected on some of her most iconic outfits. In the clip, the beauty mogul gave a special shoutout to the stunning silver Schiaparelli keyhole gown. She said, "Any time I'm trying to figure out what to wear to an event, I'm like, 'Should I just wear the keyhole dress again?' I think I need another moment in this dress, or maybe another colour. Daniel, call me." Kylie was referring to Daniel Roseberry, the creative director of Schiaparelli, who seemed to get the message loud and clear as he recreated the look in red for her Oscars outing.

Fearless Voice of the Community

The South Asian Insider

23 Glorious Years, Always a Step Ahead

The South Asian INSIDER
Voice of South Asian Community Since March 2002

Venezuela's Maria Machado dedicates Nobel Prize to Trump
Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, who won the Nobel Peace Prize 2025 and asked Donald Trump a dozen of winning the prize, praised the US President for supporting the Venezuelans working to establish democracy and end President Nicolas Maduro's dictatorship.
Story on Page 26

British and Indian prime ministers promote trade deal during visit by Starmer
Story on Page 28

The American Dream turned nightmare, Gujaratis in Peril in US Motel Business?
Story on Page 3

The Road from Patna to Pennsylvania Avenue: How Bihar's Verdict Will Shape Modi's Hand in US Trade Talks
Story on Page 11

Big Crackdown Coming: India To Audit All Cough Syrup Makers
Story on Page 34

Brazilian influencer's death after 'fox eyes' surgery exposes beauty culture's dark side
Story on Page 24

As Afghan Taliban Minister Begins 1st India Visit, Delhi Has A Flag Dilemma
Story on Page 27

The South Asian INSIDER
Voice of South Asian Community Since March 2002

Who is Ashley Tellis, Indian-American Expert Charged Over Top Secret Files
Story on Page 21

Inside India's Scariest Scam, And How To Stop It
Digital scams are proliferating as India's elderly population embraces the internet. Scammers are highly effective, preying on the inherent vulnerabilities of seniors, such as respect for authority, fear of legal trouble, and loneliness.
Story on Page 25

Starship Hits the Bullseye: Lands in Indian Ocean and Crashes Exactly Where Musk Predicted
Story on Page 28

Mass Surrender: Naxal Commander and 50 Cadres Lay Down Arms in Maharashtra
Story on Page 26

Rs 60-crore cheating and fraud case: Why don't you turn approver against Raj Kundra, High Court asks Shilpa Shetty
Story on Page 26

Vijay Mallya Abandons UK Bid to End Bankruptcy
Story on Page 18

The South Asian INSIDER
Voice of South Asian Community Since March 2002

Social Media and Political Violence: A Complex Relationship
Does Social Media fans political violence?
Story on Page 28

China saw it coming: The long game of geo-nationalism
Story on Page 24

India to crack down on deepfakes, new rule may force companies to label AI-generated content
Story on Page 34

What's kafala that turns millions of Indians into slaves in the Gulf?
Story on Page 21

Not just fake paneer, India has an egg problem as well
Story on Page 22

The South Asian INSIDER
Voice of South Asian Community Since March 2002

US Acknowledges 'Armed Conflict' Against 'Terrorist' Drug Cartels
Story on Page 26

US-India Diplomacy in Focus: Modi-Trump Meeting Eyed Ahead of Quad Summit
Story on Page 28

India's Enduring Fascination: From Delhi 'Baba' to Ram Rahim and Asaram, The Saga of Godmen
Story on Page 34

From Prison Walls to Murders
The Jharkhand High Court has granted bail to a convict in the 2008 murder of a prominent politician.
Story on Page 28

SRK Enters Billionaire Club For First Time. See Bollywood's Top 5 Richest
Story on Page 28

Should TVK Chief Vijay Be Made Accused in Karur Stampede Case?
Story on Page 28

Meet India's Youngest Billionaire: His Net Worth Is Rs 21,190 Crore
Story on Page 28

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Uncompromised and Unbiased