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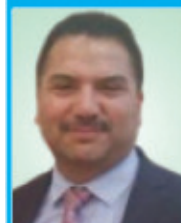


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How Trump used America's leverage to get exactly what he wanted from his trade war

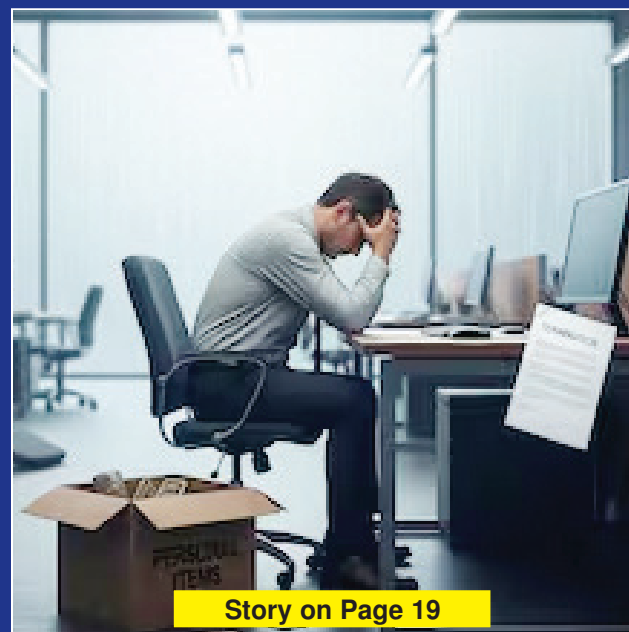
'There was a gross politicization and manipulation of intelligence by the Obama administration,' Gabbard said



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The Biggest Job Engine is Breaking Down: Why AI Is Exposing Fragility Of India's White-Collar Economy

The IT job engine that once lifted millions into stability is slowing. What comes next depends on how quickly the industry and policy makers recognise AI is more than opportunity



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Rahul Gandhi Repeats Trump's 'Dead Economy' Dig, But Not All His Colleagues, Allies Agree

Rahul Gandhi criticised PM Modi's government, agreeing with Trump's "dead economy" remark. Congress leaders Tharoor and Shukla disagreed, defending India's economy.



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'Call Trump A Liar': Why PM Modi Has Done Well By Ignoring Rahul's Dare



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How Many Dead Babies Does A War Need?

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Sikh Man Stabbed To Death In London, 3 Women Among 5 Arrested

The force said its officers had arrested Amardeep Singh, 27, on suspicion of the murder that took place on July 23.

London: A 30-year-old British Sikh man has been stabbed to death in east London in an attack involving people known to each other, the UK police believe.

Gurmuk Singh, known as Gary, died last week in Felbrigge Road, Ilford in East London, and was formally named by Metropolitan Police on Thursday.

The force said its officers had arrested Amardeep Singh, 27, on suspicion of the murder that took place on July 23. He has since been charged with one count of murder and remains in custody until his next court appearance at London's Old Bailey for trial on January 5, 2026.

"Police were called by the London Ambulance Service to reports of an altercation at a residential

address," said the Met Police statement. "Officers attended as Gary was treated for stab wounds. Despite the best efforts of the paramedics, he sadly died at the scene," it said.

Detectives also arrested a 29-year-old man and three women aged 29, 30 and 54 in connection with the fatal stabbing. They have all since been released on bail until October while the police investigation continues. "Gary was a well-loved man who had a remarkable ability to connect with everyone he met," his family said in a statement released by the police.

"A true social butterfly, nothing brought him more joy than being surrounded by his family. Gary will be deeply missed, but his memory will live on in our hearts

forever," they said. A post-mortem examination has indicated the cause of death as a stab wound to the left thigh, with an inquest opened and adjourned while the police investigation into the attack is ongoing. Detective Chief Inspector Joanna Yorke from the Met's Specialist Crime North unit said at the time of the attack that detectives believed it was an "isolated incident". "An incident of this nature sends shockwaves throughout the local area and we understand the direct impact on the community. People can expect to see an uptick in police presence while officers conduct initial investigations. Please do not hesitate to speak to them if you have any concerns at all," she said.

Indian-origin man suffers facial fractures in racist assault in Ireland

A 32-year-old Indian-origin man was attacked by six teenagers in Dublin, leaving him with a fractured cheekbone. The assault, similar to a recent gang attack in Tallaght, has raised concerns. The survivor, Santosh Yadav, accused Irish police of inaction, while activists warn that misinformation is fuelling rising anti-migrant violence.

A 32-year-old Indian-origin man, Santosh Yadav, was brutally attacked by a gang of six teenagers near his Dublin apartment, leaving him with a fractured cheekbone and multiple injuries. The assault comes just days after a 40-year-old Indian man was beaten and stripped by a teenage gang in Tallaght, raising fresh concerns over a surge in racially motivated violence in Ireland.

Yadav, who moved to Ireland in 2021, said he approached the Irish police but accused them of "delaying things."

He also claimed that racist attacks on Indians are increasing across Dublin. Migrant advocacy groups have backed these concerns, warning that inadequate police training has made it harder for victims to report hate crimes. In a social media post, entrepreneur Santosh Yadav alleged the teenagers snatched his glasses and beat him mercilessly. He called it an unprovoked racist attack.

The 32-year-old man, in his LinkedIn post, said, "They (teenagers) snatched my glasses, breaking them, and then beat me relentlessly across my head, face, neck, chest, hands, and legs—leaving me bleeding on the pavement."

He managed to contact the Garda, and an ambulance rushed him to Blanchardstown Hospital, where medical staff confirmed his injuries and referred him for specialist care, according to his post.

Yadav claimed that racist attacks on Indians and other minorities are surging across Dublin.

"This is not an isolated incident. Racist attacks on Indian men and other



minorities are surging across Dublin—on buses, in housing estates, and on public streets," he added.

He accused the Irish government of not taking any action against the attackers.

"The government is silent. There is no action being taken against these perpetrators. They run free and are emboldened to attack again," the post read.

Talking to a Dublin-based news outlet, he said the attackers might have used a small chain to attack him, which he said lasted three minutes before the teenagers fled the spot.

"They had something. It might have been a small chain, but I couldn't identify it because they started hitting me. They hit me on the chest, back, hands, and legs," Dublin Live quoted him as saying.

The incident left Yadav too fearful to step out of his house, according to the report.

The senior data scientist, who came to Ireland in 2021, said, "I'm a bit worried about whether Dublin is a good option to work or to live. This is really disappointing. In my case, I'm a single child. My father passed away when I was very young. I only have my mother in India," Dublin Live reported.

"So I left my own country to come here to work and contribute, to do something good. Every month I pay almost 40% tax, and this happens. This is not a safe place anymore. It's mentally disturbing, frustrating, and disappointing," he was quoted as saying by the news outlet.

DELAYS BY THE IRISH POLICE: INDIAN-ORIGIN MAN

Yadav, who wrote multimodel AI scientist in his LinkedIn bio, said he attempted to report the incident to the guards but claimed the Irish Police were "delaying things".

"Since the incident (which reportedly

occurred last Sunday), the guards have called me two times. They were supposed to come to take the report, but they haven't. They called me today and asked me if I could come to the station. But I'm injured and not in a condition to go to the Garda station, so I asked them to come. They're not taking the case seriously," he told Dublin Live.

The attack comes amid growing concerns about targeted violence against Indians in Dublin. On July 19, another Indian was brutally attacked by a teen gang in Tallaght.

Jennifer Murray, the Irish woman who came to the aid of the Indian man, recounted the brutal assault and noted that it wasn't the first racially motivated incident to occur in the area in recent days.

"At least four Indian men and another man have been facially stabbed by this gang of teenagers in the last four days in Tallaght. How many of you knew that or saw it on the news? (sic)" Murray said in a video posted on July 20.

Murray hinted that teen gang or gangs are operating in Dublin and targeting the Indians.

PROTESTS AGAINST THE RACIST ATTACK IN IRELAND

Hundreds of people took to the streets to protest the horrific attack, according to Dublin Live.

Shashank Chakerwari of Desi Community Against Racism told Dublin Live, "We're seeing a worrying rise in attacks on migrants, including students and workers, with groups of teenagers in Dublin and Cork at the centre of many of these incidents."

Canada Makes First Posting in India Since Diplomatic Row, Envoys May be Appointed This Month

New Delhi: Canada has made its first personnel move into India since withdrawing 41 diplomats, appointing a new head for its consulate in Mumbai – just six weeks after the countries' prime ministers met to reset strained ties.

Global Affairs Canada on Wednesday (July 30) announced four diplomatic postings, including appointments to Jordan, Australia and Libya. Among them was the notice that Jeff David "will become Consul General in Mumbai (Republic of India)", adding that David "will replace Diedrah Kelly".

The low-key announcement effectively marks the end of a freeze on diplomatic postings in Canadian missions in India that began in October 2023, when Canada pulled out 41 diplomats after New Delhi demanded parity in numbers.

Ties had nosedived following former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation that Indian agents were involved in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen proscribed as a Khalistani terrorist by India.

Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Kananaskis,



Alberta, where the two leaders agreed to restore high commissioners to each other's capitals as the first step toward reviving diplomatic engagement.

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While both sides had agreed to start with the high commissioners, diplomatic sources


confirmed that Canada's first actual appointment is to the Mumbai consulate.

Kelly, the previous consul general in Mumbai, left India in 2023 and has been based in Manila since December that year.

Following the initial October 2023 withdrawal, which included officials from Canadian consulates, there was a further round of expulsions. In October 2024, both countries expelled six diplomats each, including their respective high commissioners, in a tit-for-tat exchange after Canadian police alleged a "targeted campaign against Canadian citizens" involving Indian agents.

India began signalling a thaw in April this year following Carney's election as Canadian prime minister, against the backdrop of rising global economic volatility and looming US trade tariffs. After the Modi-Carney meeting in June, a Canadian foreign ministry delegation held talks with counterparts in India's Ministry of External Affairs in July. The Wire has learnt that both sides have formally sought 'agrément' or consent for their respective high commissioner-designates. While the process to give approval usually takes at least three months, sources said it is being expedited as both sides are keen to move quickly. An announcement is likely by the second half of August. India has nominated its current envoy to Spain, Dinesh Patnaik, for the post in Ottawa.

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“Should We Switch Off Our Economy?” Indian Envoy Defends Russian Oil Imports Amid Western Criticism

India's High Commissioner to the UK, Vikram Doraiswami, offered a sharp rebuttal to Western criticism over India's continued oil imports from Russia, stating that no country can be expected to shut down its economy for geopolitical convenience.

Speaking in an interview with Times Radio, Doraiswami questioned the fairness of the criticism, highlighting that several European nations continue to purchase rare earth materials and energy from the very countries they expect India to

avoid. “Don't you think that that seems a little odd?” he asked, pointing out the double standards of some Western partners.

He explained that India, the world's third-largest oil importer, turned to discounted Russian oil only after being squeezed out of traditional markets in the Middle East due to rising competition and sanctions. Doraiswami emphasized India's longstanding ties with Russia, particularly in the areas of security and energy. He noted that many Western countries



refused to sell arms to India during earlier decades, while providing weapons to

neighboring states that posed direct threats.

This historic context, he said, continues to shape India's defense and diplomatic decisions. Addressing energy security, Doraiswami made it clear that India's actions are driven by necessity, not alignment.

With over 80 percent of its energy imported and prices spiking globally, he asked rhetorically, “What would you have us do? Switch off our economy?” He added that other nations maintain relationships based on their own interests,

so expecting India to follow a one-size-fits-all standard is unreasonable. On the broader issue of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Doraiswami reiterated India's consistent stance. He cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public appeals to both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, urging an end to hostilities.

“We are very keen for this terrible conflict to stop, as we are keen for conflicts across the world to stop,” he said, reinforcing India's call for peace through dialogue.

Indian Envoy to Cuba Faces Supreme Court Scrutiny Over Dual Marriage, Customary Divorce

India's ambassador to Cuba, Thongkomang Armstrong Changsan, is at the center of a legal and moral dispute after ending up with two wives, prompting the Supreme Court to intervene and seek a humane resolution to the complex matrimonial issue.

The conflict stems from a 1994 church marriage under the Christian Marriage Act, which was later dissolved through customary tribal practices—an action that India's judiciary now deems invalid.

The Gauhati High Court ruled in 2022 that Changsan's first marriage to Neikhol Changsan, solemnized in a church, could not be annulled by village elders or tribal customs. The court clarified that

such marriages must be dissolved through legal proceedings in a high court or district court under the Divorce Act of 1869. However, relying on tribal practices, Changsan remarried and has a daughter from each marriage. Now, the Supreme Court has taken a firm stance.

During a hearing, Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi noted that the high court's decision was legally correct and expressed “absolutely no sympathy” for the diplomat.

Acknowledging that the ambassador has lived with his second wife for over a decade, the bench aims to find a practical path forward for Neikhol, who has raised their

daughter alone and claims to have been estranged from her due to her husband's manipulative actions. Representing himself, Changsan claimed to have been providing Rs 20,000 per month as maintenance and had given Neikhol a home in Delhi.

Senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy, appearing for the ambassador, said he had financially supported their daughter, who currently resides in Bengaluru. But Neikhol told the court she has had no support raising their child and now feels emotionally abandoned by her as well.

The Supreme Court has asked the ambassador to facilitate a meeting between Neikhol and her daughter in



Bengaluru, covering her travel and accommodations and paying an interim amount of Rs 3 lakh to assist the process.

The court suggested the daughter could play a crucial role in resolving the dispute and urged the ambassador to encourage her to reconnect with her mother. Significantly, the Kuki Inpi of Assam, the highest body governing the Kuki tribe, has also stated that tribal

customary law cannot dissolve a Christian marriage performed in a church, nor can it force reunification against the will of either spouse.

With both legal precedent and tribal leadership opposing the legitimacy of the customary divorce, the Supreme Court is now attempting to chart a course that respects the law while addressing the personal hardship endured by Neikhol.

School Roof Collapse in Rajasthan Kills 7 Children, Injures 21 Others

Tragedy struck a government middle school in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district on Friday morning when the roof of a classroom suddenly collapsed, killing seven students and injuring at least 21 others.

The incident occurred in Piplod village just as students had gathered in their classrooms, moments before the daily school assembly was set to begin.

According to senior police official Amit Kumar, a total of around 35 students were inside the building when the roof gave way. All of the deceased were in seventh and eighth grade. Emergency services quickly

arrived on the scene, and the injured children were rushed to two nearby hospitals for treatment.

The cause of the collapse remains under investigation. Local authorities have yet to confirm whether structural issues, poor maintenance, or recent weather conditions may have played a role in the disaster. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences in a social media post, describing the incident as “tragic” and “deeply saddening.”

He assured that authorities are providing “all possible assistance” to the affected families during this difficult time.



Decathlon to Boost India Sourcing to \$3 Billion by 2030, Creating 300,000 Jobs



French sports retailer Decathlon is significantly scaling up its sourcing operations in India, with plans to increase procurement from the country to \$3 billion by 2030. The company currently sources \$480 million worth of goods from

India for both domestic and international markets. This strategic expansion is aimed at serving growing demand while deepening India's role as a global production hub. At present, India contributes 8% to Decathlon's global sourcing volume. The

company is targeting an increase to 15% by the end of the decade. India is already one of Decathlon's top four sourcing markets, and 70% of all products sold within the country in 2025 were manufactured locally. That number is expected to rise to

90% by 2030. Decathlon operates 132 stores across 55 Indian cities and plans to expand its retail network to over 90 cities within the next five years. According to Frederic Merlevede, Decathlon's head of global production, the decision to ramp up operations reflects confidence in India's growing manufacturing capabilities, particularly in high-demand categories like footwear, fitness gear, and technical equipment. He also pointed out the potential boost from a future India-EU free trade agreement. India's manufacturing strength is evident in Decathlon's current supply chains: 35% of the brand's umbrellas, 60% of its global rugby balls, and more than 20% of its textile needs originate from India. The company plans to diversify further, adding products like alloy-carbon bicycle

frames, technical textiles, sports electronics, and children's accessories to its Indian sourcing portfolio. Deepak D'Souza, who heads Decathlon's India production, highlighted India's robust supply panel and noted the company's strong footprint in backpacks, badminton rackets, gloves, and cricket gear. Rather than building its own factories, Decathlon will continue collaborating with 83 suppliers and 113 third-party manufacturing sites across India, supported by seven production offices. As part of its expansion, the company projects the creation of more than 300,000 direct and indirect jobs. The cricket category, already fully designed and produced in India, will be a key focus, along with sports rooted in Indian culture such as yoga. Decathlon first began sourcing from India in 2000.

Tata Consultancy Services to Cut Over 12,000 Jobs Amid Global Tech Slowdown and AI Transition



Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest IT services firm, has announced plans to cut approximately 12,200 jobs—about 2 percent of its workforce—in the 2026 financial year. The job reductions will primarily affect

mid- and senior-level management, as the company navigates a shift toward emerging technologies and artificial intelligence. In a statement released Sunday, TCS confirmed that the workforce reduction is part of a broader restructuring effort aimed at retraining and redeploying talent to new markets and services.

The company

emphasized that the transition is being handled carefully to avoid disruptions in service delivery for clients.

The move comes as India's \$283 billion IT sector grapples with shrinking global tech budgets, delayed project launches, and prolonged client decision-making. Ongoing economic pressures—including persistent inflation and uncertainty over U.S. trade

policies—have led to reduced spending on non-essential IT services. TCS CEO K. Krithivasan recently acknowledged the slowdown, citing hesitancy among clients to initiate new projects.

Despite these challenges, the company is investing heavily in next-generation technologies, including AI, as it looks to reposition itself for long-term growth.



At least six people have died and more than 30 others were injured following a deadly crowd crush at the Mansa Devi Temple in Haridwar, located in India's northern Uttarakhand state. The tragedy unfolded on Sunday when a high-voltage overhead power line reportedly snapped and fell onto a section of the temple path, triggering panic among the thousands of gathered devotees. According to police officials, the sudden fall of the live wire caused chaos, leading

Six Killed, Dozens Injured in Crowd Crush at Mansa Devi Temple in Haridwar

to a frantic stampede as worshippers scrambled to flee the scene. One person was reportedly electrocuted, while the others succumbed to injuries sustained in the crush that followed. Local authorities quickly responded with emergency personnel and launched a rescue operation, rushing the injured to a nearby hospital.

Vinay Shankar Pandey, a senior Uttarakhand government official, confirmed the fatalities and stated that the situation is now under control.

"The panic led to tragic consequences," Pandey told the Associated Press, adding that the state is investigating the cause of the power line collapse and whether adequate crowd control measures were in place.

The incident has drawn nationwide attention, with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressing his grief on social media and promising a full investigation.

The Mansa Devi Temple is one of Haridwar's

most visited pilgrimage sites, drawing millions annually, especially during the holy months.

Stampedes at religious gatherings remain a recurring tragedy in India, often attributed to poor crowd management, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of emergency protocols. Similar deadly incidents occurred earlier this year in Odisha, Goa, and Uttar Pradesh, underscoring the urgent need for stricter safety measures at large public religious events.

China, Now Trump: Pakistan And The Art Of Somehow Finding Patrons

Since many Indians are upset about the latest oil deal between the US and Pakistan, this move has seemingly achieved its goal before the first drill even touches Pakistani soil. As the announcement is made, predictably on US President Donald Trump's social media handle, on the heels of 25% tariffs announcement for India, it is somewhat natural for New Delhi to feel jilted. Trump seems to have counted on this feeling.

After announcing the India-Pakistan ceasefire in May, and never shutting up about it since then, Trump has been coddling both military and civil establishments in Pakistan. Whether it is the much-discussed hosting of Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir or this latest oil trade deal, the US and Pakistan appear to be inching closer, reminiscent of the War on Terror days. Since the Afghanistan war is officially over for the US, one may wonder why Islamabad has suddenly become relevant for Washington yet again.

A quick answer could be Trump's idiosyncratic foreign policy, wherein what Trump thinks in any moment is what Trump does the next, irrespective of how outlandish the thought may be. A serious deliberation, however, may reveal some other factors in no particular order of importance.

In 2023, Pakistan received USD 1.8 billion in Foreign Direct Investment, as opposed to India's mammoth USD 44.4 billion. What is more perplexing about these figures is that Pakistan received this sum mostly from China in the form of energy investments. This sum, although not significant, may have irked someone in Washington, prompting a reestablishment of the principal-agent relationship between the US and Pakistan. China's influence needs to be contained anyhow, especially if it involves an agent state. Even without Afghanistan in the equation, Pakistan remains an important box in the "Eurasian chessboard" - or so it wants everyone in the West to believe.

Pride And Persuasion

Pakistan has successfully lobbied Western capitals into believing in its indispensability in the regional strategic landscape. Portraying their country as a victim of terrorism, Pakistan's civil and military establishments have managed to elicit benefits from the West by playing on the latter's security anxieties. The US continues to buy this narrative for various reasons, not discounting the naivete among them.

India may not be thrilled about the latest deal, but bigger maybe the disappointment of Pakistani dissenters. There are growing voices against this

constant duping of the public by the establishment. With each such highfalutin 'deal' - like the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - there is an expectation of a socio-economic turnaround in Pakistan. With a beleaguered economy crumbling under massive international debt, Pakistan has very little going for itself at present. What Pakistan lacks in terms of state-building, it more than makes up for in the realm of being obsequious towards its principal states, be it China or the US.

At Least Someone Is Happy

Going by the public discourse, obtaining an International Monetary Fund loan is a cause for national celebration. Grant announcements from the Arab countries give Pakistan a sense of inflated importance. No hint of irony is lost here. When dissenters question this fiction, they are either killed or jailed. Pakistan's playing the vassal state to global superpowers doesn't translate into the country's development, but it keeps the political and military elite and their coterie well-fed.

At this very moment, Pakistan's human rights activists are protesting alongside Baloch women in Islamabad against forced disappearances. After a violent crackdown on a similar protest in Karachi earlier this year, the Pakistan government is playing deaf this time. Fissures in Pakistan's socio-political structure are getting exacerbated by economic duress. It is, therefore, a question of Pakistan's survival to make outlandish promises, economic and strategic, to whomsoever it may concern.

Keeping America Interested

Since the CPEC has underperformed, partially due to the armed resistance it has faced in the Baloch areas and mainly because Pakistan doesn't have a substantial industrial base to take advantage of the corridor, there may be anxieties in Pakistan around exclusive reliance on China. It is important, therefore, to keep the US interested in the utility of Pakistan. In turn, the US may want to keep its non-NATO ally content with deal announcements, with an eye fixed firmly on China. Locked in an impasse over trade with China, the US has been exploring any and all avenues to check China's geopolitical influence. While Pakistan may not overtly defy China - especially after having used Chinese defence hardware and intelligence against India - its proclivity for the original principal state will lead to certain concessions for the US. Should this rekindling bother India? Definitely. Can India do anything about it? Very little, if at all.

Trump can fix the UN's Gaza failure and end Hamas's stranglehold on aid

Gaza is in freefall. Food is scarce, people are starving, and the very organizations designed to help in these situations, the United Nations and its sprawling web of aid partners, are collapsing under the weight of corruption, incompetence, and cowardice.

The numbers tell the story. Hundreds of UN aid trucks are sitting inside Gaza, fully loaded and going nowhere. But their aid delivery system is paralyzed - crippled by corruption, looting, and its own dangerous entanglements with Hamas. Food convoys routinely disappear into chaos or into the hands of Hamas militants. Distribution centers have been ransacked or sit empty. And the institutions charged with protecting the people have instead defaulted to protecting their relationships and reputations. In the face of that decay, one group has done what the UN and its sprawling network of agencies have not: deliver aid to the people of Gaza without terrorists intervening to loot. In just a few months, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation has delivered more than 95 million meals directly, securely, and without diversion. No middlemen, no corruption, no deals with Hamas, no politics. Just food, handed to the people who need it most.

And that's exactly why Hamas is targeting them. GHF's success exposes Hamas's biggest vulnerability: its reliance on a broken system that keeps aid and control flowing through its hands. A model that proves Hamas isn't needed is a threat to its power. So they've responded the only way they know how: with violence. GHF's Gazan workers have been murdered. American veterans providing humanitarian security have been attacked, including in a recent grenade assault. Palestinian civilians have been executed by Hamas for simply cooperating with aid efforts. Others killed in a stampede incited by Hamas operatives at a GHF site. These aren't isolated incidents, they're part of a campaign to dismantle the only system in Gaza that's delivering results. Because GHF shows what Hamas fears most: a functioning alternative that serves the people, not their

terror. Successful delivery of nourishment to civilians in Gaza will break the back Hamas - no money and no ability to terrorize and extort will be the final nail in the coffin for Iran's Gaza-based proxy.

Enough. The UN may be failing, but there is no one better to fix it than President Trump. Here's how:

First, call out the UN's failure clearly and publicly. Every time a UN truck is looted, every time aid goes missing, every time a convoy vanishes into Hamas hands, the international community turns a blind eye. That ends with President Trump. The UN's reliance on the so-called "blue police," a Hamas front group, isn't neutral. It's enabling terror.

Second, use our leverage. The United States is the UN's biggest funder. We don't need to ask, we need to demand. Not one more dollar without conditions. Require full cooperation with groups like GHF who are actually delivering aid and demand independently verified results. If the UN won't work with the only group getting food into Gaza at scale, then they've forfeited their credibility and the American taxpayers shouldn't fund failure. Third, reward results. GHF isn't part of the old, bloated system and that's why it's working. It bypasses Hamas, it delivers at scale, it's lean, disciplined, and driven by mission, not politics. That's what effectiveness looks like in a war zone. We should be scaling this model so it can actually succeed, not allowing the UN and Hamas to gang up on it just as it is yielding results.

President Trump has always understood something Washington forgets: bureaucracy doesn't solve crises, bold leadership does. The system in Gaza is broken. GHF is fixing it. But they can't do it alone. They need backup. And the United States, under President Trump's leadership, can give it to them. This is a test of resolve. Hamas thrives when the world tolerates failure. The UN has shown it won't change unless forced. Trump knows how to force change. Now is the time to act.



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Beyond Hesitations: Why The India-UK Trade Deal Is An Inflection Point

The recent signing of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between India and the United Kingdom marks far more than a simple reduction in tariffs. It is an inflection point, a strategic pivot that promises to redefine the contours of a historically rich yet often complex relationship.

This landmark agreement, poised to nearly double bilateral trade to over \$112 billion by 2030, is not merely about immediate economic gains; it is a profound testament to a maturing partnership and a critical investment in the prosperity and opportunities for future generations in both nations.

Moving Forward

For too long, the narrative of Indo-UK relations has been shadowed by the echoes of a colonial past. While that history must never be forgotten, it is equally crucial to acknowledge the evolving dynamics of a modern, democratic India and a globally engaged Britain.

The CETA actively seeks to transcend this historical baggage, forging a bond based on mutual respect, shared values, and reciprocal economic benefit. It acknowledges India's emergence as a global economic powerhouse and the UK's post-Brexit aspiration to forge new, dynamic trade alliances. This agreement, therefore, is not a relic of the past, but a blueprint for a forward-looking, contemporary partnership.

What's On Offer

From India's perspective, the agreement offers unprecedented market access to one of the world's most sophisticated economies. With 99% of Indian exports gaining duty-free access to the UK market, sectors like textiles, leather goods, marine products, gems and jewellery, and engineering goods stand to gain immensely. These are often labour-intensive sectors, and



the elimination of tariffs will not only boost export volumes but also create significant employment opportunities across India.

This is a powerful enabler of the 'Make in India' initiative, allowing Indian manufacturers to compete more effectively on a global stage and integrate deeper into international supply chains.

The potential for Indian farmers to access premium UK markets for agricultural produce, with tariffs eliminated on 95% of agricultural and processed food exports, is another significant boon, offering diversification and better prices.

Furthermore, the easing of professional mobility for Indian skilled workers and professionals into 35 UK sectors for up to two years, without the need for a local office, is a game-changer for India's services sector, fostering cross-cultural collaboration and knowledge exchange. From the British point of view, the UK stands to gain substantial access to India's burgeoning market of 1.4 billion people, with our rapidly growing middle class and increasing disposable incomes. The significant reduction in India's

historically high tariffs on key British exports, such as Scotch whisky, automobiles, and medical devices, opens up vast new avenues for British businesses. The immediate halving of whisky duties, with further reductions to 40% over a decade, is a particularly welcome development for a flagship British industry - as Prime Minister Keir Starmer was quick to note.

Similarly, the dramatic tariff reduction on electric vehicles from 110% to 10% under specified quotas signals a strategic opening for UK car manufacturers. Beyond goods, the agreement's comprehensive provisions on services and digital trade are crucial for the UK's service-driven economy, ensuring greater certainty and transparency for businesses. The commitment to streamline customs procedures and reduce technical barriers will make trade faster and more efficient, benefiting businesses of all sizes, particularly SMEs.

Deeper Than Just Trade

The true significance of this agreement, however, lies not just in the immediate economic uptick, but in its potential to shape a qualitatively better

relationship for future generations.

By institutionalising frameworks for cooperation in areas beyond traditional trade, such as innovation, research, climate action, and education, the CETA lays a robust foundation for a truly comprehensive partnership. The 'Vision 2035' roadmap, agreed alongside the CETA, emphasises collaborations in defence, technology, and green energy, recognising the shared strategic interests and global challenges both nations face. Defence is a new development and, given the "hesitations of history", a particularly striking one. This holistic approach ensures that the benefits of the agreement will ripple far beyond mere financial transactions, fostering deeper understanding and shared progress.

A Shared World

For young Indians and Britons, this agreement opens up a world of interconnected opportunities. Easier access to each other's markets will lead to a greater variety of goods and services, potentially lowering prices for consumers.

It will encourage more cross-border investment, leading to job creation and economic dynamism. The provisions for

professional mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications will facilitate educational and career pathways, allowing future generations to learn from and contribute to each other's societies. It will foster a climate of collaboration in cutting-edge fields like AI, clean energy, and healthcare, addressing global challenges through joint research and development. Moreover, the CETA's inclusion of progressive chapters on social and developmental issues, such as labour rights, gender equality, and anti-corruption, sets a new benchmark for India's trade negotiations.

This commitment to ethical and sustainable trade practices underscores a shared vision for responsible globalisation, offering a hopeful precedent for future international agreements. It signals to future generations that economic prosperity need not come at the expense of social justice or environmental responsibility. An Inheritance Of Opportunities In an increasingly fragmented and uncertain global landscape, the Indo-UK Trade Agreement stands as a powerful testament to the enduring value of international cooperation and open markets. It is a bold statement that nations, even with diverse histories, can forge new paths of partnership based on mutual benefit and shared aspirations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has hailed the significance of the trade agreement for future generations.

Indeed, for the young, this agreement is not just a trade deal; it is an inheritance of enhanced opportunities, deeper cultural understanding, and a more interconnected and prosperous world. It is an inflection point - indeed, a turning of the page - to a qualitatively better, and brighter, shared future.

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

President Donald Trump, in a move dripping with transactionalism, has rolled out the red carpet for Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Syed Asim Munir. Recently anointed a "Field Marshal" for saving Pakistan from India's fury by securing a "ceasefire," Asim Munir is now in Washington. He arrives not as a statesman representing a nation, but as an exposed military leader with a begging bowl, seeking to mortgage his country's strategic alignment for his institution's financial and political survival. But this time, there was a crucial and unexpected prologue. Just before meeting Munir, President Trump requested a call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In the 35-minute conversation, PM Modi made India's new doctrine vis-à-vis Pakistan crystal clear. He briefed Trump on Operation Sindoor, framing it as "measured and precise", and made it clear that terrorism is now considered an actual war by India. The operation, he warned, is merely paused, and would resume with renewed ferocity were Pakistan to attempt any misadventure. With that single phone call, Munir's mission was kneecapped before it even began. He arrives not to a blank slate, but to a chessboard where India has already placed his king in check.

THE GENERAL, NOT THE PRIME MINISTER, TAKES THE STAGE

Munir's itinerary, reportedly including meetings with Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, is not a diplomatic courtesy. It is a coronation.

It confirms who truly wields power in Islamabad, and it is not the man with the title of 'Prime Minister.' The meeting between an American President and a Pakistani Army Chief, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is relegated to the sidelines, is the most



profound insult to the very notion of Pakistani "democracy." It is a public declaration from Washington that the fig leaf has fallen. Pakistan is, and has always been, a flimsy façade — a Potemkin village designed to secure IMF loans and maintain the pretense of a 'modern' state.

The real power, the entity that decides matters of war, peace, and nuclear codes, resides in the military's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. By engaging directly with Munir, Trump is simply legitimising Pakistan's military rule. It is a display of strategic myopia, where short-term gains are pursued at the cost of long-term regional stability.

A PIVOT FOR A PRICE: WOOING RAWALPINDI, WORRYING BEIJING

But why now? The timing, as always, is key.

The escalating conflict between Israel and Iran has sent ripples of anxiety through the world. With Pakistan sharing a long and porous border with Iran, its geography once again becomes its greatest, and perhaps only, asset. Washington sees a frontline state, a potential staging ground, and a lever against

Tehran. In this high-stakes game, Trump is making a classic American bet: that the loyalty of the Pakistani military can be bought, or at least rented. He is attempting to pry Pakistan from the tightening embrace of its two most committed patrons: China and Iran. This courtship is aimed squarely at Beijing. For years, China has nurtured Pakistan as its "all-weather" ally, a strategic gateway to the Arabian Sea through CPEC and a loyal customer for its military-industrial complex. Trump's embrace of Munir, with its unspoken offer of American dollars and technology, is a direct challenge to that leverage.

After all, an "all-weather friendship" built on loans can look remarkably fragile when confronted with the immediate gratification of American patronage. Beijing is about to find out just how deep its influence in Rawalpindi truly runs. The second prize is the vast mineral wealth of Balochistan. Since he took office in January, Trump has been scanning the world topography for rare earth elements (REEs).

The India-Pakistan flare-up appears to have brought Balochistan's rare earth deposits to Trump's

attention. Balochistan, currently under Pakistani occupation, is estimated to contain 12 of the 17 known REEs. By gaining influence over the Pakistani security establishment, the US not only disrupts China's access to these deposits but positions itself to control these resources — a manoeuvre combining 19th-century colonial grabbing with 21st-century geostrategic competition.

AN OLD SCRIPT, BUT INDIA HAS FLIPPED THE PAGE

So where does this leave India? More secure than ever. India's mature response is one of quiet, almost amused, detachment, now bolstered by the knowledge that our red lines have been clearly communicated at the highest level. Our attitude should be simple: good luck to all those who wish to get in bed with the Pakistanis.

After all, Prime Minister Modi has made it unequivocally clear to Trump that US mediation is not welcome and that India knows how to deal with Pakistan on its own terms. India learned long ago that American dollars poured into Pakistan do not create a stable, moderate neighbour. Instead, they fund a duplicitous military

establishment that perfects the art of playing both sides. The US has armed Pakistan against the Soviets, only to see those same assets turned into a global jihadist factory that ultimately claimed American lives. It has funded Pakistan for the 'War on Terror', only to find Osama bin Laden living comfortably next to its premier military academy. History provides a brutal record: any nation entangled with the Pakistani state has suffered for it. If President Trump believes he can tame this animal, especially after being explicitly warned by India, then we can only wish him the very best. India will not interrupt its adversary when it is making a mistake.

Trump is not the first American to be entrapped by the Pakistanis, and India knows he will not be the last. Let the US navigate the labyrinth of Pakistani promises.

While America is busy with its old tango with Islamabad, India will continue its economic ascent, building a future based on production, not deception. The meeting between Trump and Munir is not a threat. It is an affirmation of everything we already knew, but with one crucial difference: this time, the world knows that India is not just watching. We have already spoken. The stage is set, the actors are familiar, and we have already delivered our lines. Besides, were Pakistan to mistake American patronage as a safety net to attempt more attacks against India, it would be making a catastrophic miscalculation — one that would invite a response so swift and overwhelming that no global power, not even the United States, would be able to shield Islamabad from.

The cost would not just be military defeat, but the accelerated and inevitable unravelling of a terror state already fraying at the seams. Disintegration would not be a threat. It would be a certainty for Pakistan.

From 'Howdy Modi' to 'Cannot Name Trump': How Modi Has Taken a Hit from Trump's Tariffs and Taunts

New Delhi: US President Donald Trump's announcement of steep tariffs on India, his criticism of the Indian economy as "dead" and his public overtures towards Pakistan have placed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, more than India as a nation, in a uniquely difficult spot. While the impact on India as a country is tangible, it is a moment of political reckoning for Modi, who has been under pressure since the 2024 Lok Sabha elections when the BJP lost its majority in the house. Here are the reasons it places Modi in a tough spot.

Destroys Modi's domestic image of a global statesman

Modi has painstakingly cultivated an image of himself domestically as a top global leader exhibiting close personal friendships with the world's most influential heads of state, particularly in the US. Trump's public insults and punitive tariffs undermine this persona, making Modi appear ineffective or even powerless in protecting Indian interests and standing on the world stage. Under pressure from the US, he has already succumbed to China, even though Beijing continues to pile on pressure and refuses to make any concessions. This severely erodes Modi's political brand at home, where he and his party have used images from his foreign trips to project influence domestically.

Political ammunition for domestic opposition

With Trump – the first for an American president – openly criticising the Indian economy and labelling it "dead", opposition parties such as the Congress



have seized upon these remarks to portray Modi's economic approach and foreign outreach as failures. They argue that Modi's support of Trump during previous years has unravelled, leaving India diplomatically isolated and economically vulnerable. Modi's failure to name Trump in his Lok Sabha speech, despite an open challenge by leader of opposition Rahul Gandhi, has shown him as weak and scared of standing up to the US president. This provides ammunition for the opposition parties to politically target Modi when he is already being challenged by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh on the issue of the election of the new BJP president.

Setbacks undermine Modi's central arguments

The new US tariffs threaten to erode the competitiveness of Indian exports, damage investor sentiment and threaten to bury Modi's faltering attempts to get global manufacturing to India. Key labour-intensive sectors

such as jewellery, textiles and certain electronics face certain job losses. These outcomes create immediate economic pain and threaten Modi's narrative of making India an economic powerhouse as the "fourth-largest economy in the world". If the US also follows through on penalties related to India's Russia policy, the fallout could be even more severe. Energy prices could rise and India's fiscal deficit could increase, putting further pressure on the budget and bringing greater distress to the people.

Hyphenation with Pakistan sours nationalist dreams

Trump's statements and overtures that club India with Pakistan, including praising a new US-Pakistan energy deal and openly patronising Islamabad, are a direct affront to Modi's narrative of India as a regional counterweight to both Pakistan and China. The perception that the US is tilting toward Pakistan, or using India-Pakistan tensions for leverage, is particularly damaging to

Modi's core nationalist constituency, which takes pride in a strong, singular global standing for India. It believed that India cannot be equated with its neighbour or seen as needing US mediation to end the conflict. Modi's inability to secure even this basic gain of the UPA era damages his "desh nahi jhukne doonga" brand among his core Hindutva supporters. Loss of bargaining leverage hurts economy Modi's strategy had relied on fostering goodwill and leveraging the India-US relationship for favourable trade agreements and strategic cooperation. Trump's abrupt imposition of tariffs, at rates higher than those faced by competing Asian economies, signals that Washington is willing to use harsh tactics, regardless of personal or diplomatic ties. This despite Modi rushing to meet Trump after his re-election early this year. New Delhi is now left scrambling for a response, with very limited leverage, and must consider politically costly concessions or risk a further downturn in exports and economic growth. After 11 years of being in power, Modi can't shift the blame on anyone else and will be held accountable for the severe economic downturn in the public eye. In sum, Trump's actions and rhetoric hit directly at pillars propping Modi's domestic political strength and standing, in ways that are both visible and hard to quickly repair. The impact on India will be managed, but it is Modi, as a political leader and as an electoral brand, who now faces the greatest challenge in his eleven years in office.

Trump's economy is already proving the doomsayers completely wrong

So much for the prophecies of Trumponomics doom: Not only did the US economy grow at a 3% rate in the second quarter, the growth was all in the private sector as the government portion shrank. Meanwhile, ADP reports that private-sector employment rose by 104,000 jobs in July, with annual wages jumping 4.4% — well above the rate of inflation, which also remains markedly lower than the conventional-wisdom crew predicted.

That is, growth was half again the consensus forecast for April-June, while July looks like a huge boon for American workers — all as many of President Donald Trump's policies have only begun to kick in.

Trump's tariffs have neither crashed the economy nor kicked off fresh inflation — though of course those predictions largely came from "experts" who never expected the bane

of Bidenflation. For all Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell's fussing, the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation, the Personal Consumption Expenditures index, was up just 2.1% in Q2, down from 3.7% in Q1.

As for the (very real) issue of federal debt: It surely can't hurt that Uncle Sam's spending and "investment" fell at a 3.7% rate in the second quarter, after a 4.6% annualized drop in the first.

Bizarrely, that counts as harming GDP in the official stats, even though the nation's plainly far better off with the wealth-creating private sector booming while the wealth-consuming public sector goes on a (modest) diet.

Meanwhile, Trump deregulation should offer a huge boost to the economy, with a single move — the repeal of the EPA's



Obama-era "climate endangerment" finding, expected to boost GDP by \$150 billion to \$440 billion a year. The president's push for more and cheaper energy will be another a huge, anti-inflationary spur to growth, and added reason for optimism among

consumers and producers. Trump's first term was a huge win for working Americans up until COVID escaped from that Wuhan lab; now the second term is shaping up even better . . . for everyone except the professional doomsayers, anyway.

'TACO' Routine, And Other Explanations For Trump's Great India Meltdown

The ground beneath the India-US relations is shifting thick and fast. In light of the recently imposed 25% tariffs on India by the Trump administration, two contradictions now define the India-US bilateral relationship. Despite ongoing negotiations that had not yet broken down, the tariffs were unexpectedly introduced, signalling a discord between diplomatic momentum and policy action.

A Dual Challenge

Yet, confidence in the overall trajectory of the bilateral relationship appears to endure. India's response to the tariffs struck a measured tone, maintaining a willingness to continue negotiations while clearly delineating its red lines. Notably, the tariffs levied on India are steeper than those imposed on other Asian economies such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Japan. What may be more troubling than the tariffs themselves is President Trump's invocation of India's energy ties with Russia. This suggests a broader strategic discomfort beyond trade. As the tariff negotiations evolve, India now faces a dual challenge in its relations with the United States: first, managing the domestic economic impact of higher US tariffs, and second, navigating the risk of secondary sanctions stemming from its relationship with Russia, particularly as the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to unfold.

Saving Face?

On the trade front, perhaps the last word on a trade deal is yet to be said or



written. As such, there is a good chance India and the US may continue negotiations to arrive at a better position. Meanwhile, the tariffs may continue. Trump's announcement comes against the backdrop of a series of frustrations both domestically and internationally. Trump had already pushed the initial deadline for the tariffs from July to August, and another extension would further entrench the belief in the 'TACO' - 'Trump Always Chickens Out' - theory. Technically, any extension beyond August 1 would have complicated Washington's other negotiations, most notably with China, which seemed to be progressing satisfactorily to both parties until now. Domestically, a hard posturing vis-à-vis large economies would sell well to douse the political fire in the Beltway due to the ongoing Epstein controversy.

Internationally, posturing against India - a strategic partner with which Trump associates himself closely - could usher in advantageous positions for Washington against Beijing, a more lucrative catch.

The Russia Embarrassment

The other international concern for Trump that he has little control over is the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Trump has tried all the tricks in the book - from isolating Ukraine to rebuking Russia - but has failed to bring Putin to the negotiating table, let alone stop the war. Slowly but steadily, the Russia question has crept up on Trump in the form of the Sanctioning Russia Act of 2025, which has been introduced in the US Congress. As Trump realises the difficulty in stopping the conflict, some of his frustrations could quickly spill over to economic measures used as levers to arm-twist other

stakeholders. India, for itself, may have realised the futility of entering a cycle of retaliation with Donald Trump and has consistently signalled a willingness for measured conciliation in select sectors in its trade negotiations with the US. Needless to say, giving a carte blanche market access to the world's largest economy, which positions itself quite differently on the levers driving its economy, may work to the detriment of a developing economy like India, where income gaps and wealth distribution remain significant challenges.

Tariffs For Everyone

As a growing number of countries fall in line with Trump's tariff tactics, a few trends emerge. From the perspective of a mercurial president who is hell-bent on striking deals on his own terms to restore trade balance for the American economy, Trump is rapidly normalising the practice of tariffing friends, partners and allies alike. Trump's pragmatic approach to relations with other countries takes a unitary view of how the US should gain economically, and functions regardless of the recipient countries' economic or political circumstances. As the largest economy in the world, it does have the privilege to make independent decisions, which imposes costs on others. However, if Trump continues on this path, the new fundamentals imposed by his presidency may become structural to America's relations with other countries.

Trump Tariffs: The West Botched Up Russia ... And Now Wants India To Foot The Bill



Both the US and the EU seek to offload onto our backs some of their continuing failures in dealing with Russia. They have imposed a series of draconian sanctions on Russia for intervening militarily in Ukraine, but these have not caused the economic collapse of the country as they thought it would. Not just that, Trump himself, encouraged by his bludgeoning of the EU and Japan

on the tariffs issues, has also rejected the interim agreement negotiated by the US and Indian sides and is determined to play hardball with India. He has announced a 25% tariff on India and a 'penalty' over that for dealing with Russia. The objective of the US and the EU has been to deprive Russia of financial resources to continue its military operations in Ukraine, given that the export of oil

and gas is Russia's main source of state revenue. In 2022, the Nord Stream pipeline was blown up to break the expanding energy link between Russia and Europe.

Double Standards

The EU has since 2022 progressively reduced the purchase of Russian oil and gas in line with its decision to end its energy dependence on the country. The goal is to end all such purchases, though oil, gas and, especially, refined products, continue to flow to Europe from Russia. This has, of course, opened up Europe to the charge of double standards when they exhort other countries to end oil and gas trade with Russia. To avoid a steep rise in oil prices that would damage the global economy and raise the prices at the pump also for Western consumers, a 'via media' of a price cap of \$60 per barrel was put on Russian crude

oil on December 5, 2022. On February 5, 2023, this was extended to refined petroleum products. The aim was to prevent an oil price shock as well as to put a squeeze on Russia's oil earnings. This cap also prohibited participating countries from providing shipping, insurance, and other services for Russian oil sold above this price, as also prevent Russia from chartering or insuring oil tankers unless they complied with these limits. As it happens, 90% of shipping insurers are Western. All these measures were intended to force countries to buy Russian crude, etc., only at that capped price if they wanted to avoid reprisals.

Russia's Shadow Fleets

Russia has tried to circumvent these sanctions on shipping by creating a so-called "shadow fleet" of oil tankers, numbering anything

from 400 to 1,400, to ply its oil trade with non-Western countries. This fleet is now being targeted by the EU and the UK. There is, of course, no legal basis for these restrictions.

India had come under pressure in 2022 itself to condemn Russia and end oil trade with it. We were being accused of helping finance Russia's war against Ukraine. We were told that we should take a moral position and be on the right side of history. This was total hypocrisy from our point of view, as the history that we have experienced was marked by centuries of colonial depredations and decades of Western sanctions because of our refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and accept international control over our nuclear and missile programmes.

A Rude Awakening For India: Navigating The Trumpian Tempest - By Shashi Tharoor

The recent announcement by US President Donald Trump of a sweeping 25% tariff on Indian goods, coupled with an unspecified "penalty" for our sovereign choices in defence and energy procurement from Russia, is not merely a trade dispute. It is a stark reminder of the volatile landscape of international relations, where economic leverage is increasingly weaponised to dictate geopolitical alignment. As a nation of increasing global heft, India must analyse this development with clear eyes, acknowledging both the immediate challenges and the enduring principles that must guide our response.

A Transactional Worldview

President Trump's remarks, delivered with characteristic bluntness on social media, underscore a transactional worldview that views trade deficits as personal affronts and strategic autonomy as a hostile act. His accusations of "far too high" Indian tariffs and "obnoxious non-monetary trade barriers" are well-worn arguments, often deployed without full appreciation for the developmental imperatives that shape India's economic policies. More concerning, however, is the direct linkage of tariffs to India's independent foreign policy - specifically, our historical and current ties with Russia. This is an attempt to co-opt India into a narrow geopolitical framework, demanding that



we sacrifice our multi-aligned strategy for a singular allegiance. Let us be unequivocal: India's relationship with Russia is rooted in decades of strategic partnership, particularly in defence and energy. This is a matter of national security and economic prudence, not a capricious choice to irk any particular nation. To suggest that India must abandon these longstanding ties under duress is an affront to our sovereignty and an attempt to curtail our strategic autonomy.

A Significant Hit

The economic impact of these tariffs on India's exports, currently valued at around USD 87-90 billion to the US, cannot be understated. Equally troubling is the fact

that our tariffs are significantly higher than those of competitors like Vietnam, Indonesia and other exporter nations (not to mention Trump's current favourite, Pakistan). Our vibrant gems and jewellery sector, the burgeoning automobile components industry, the flourishing iPhone export market to the US, steel, aluminium, and even segments of our electronics manufacturing, are staring at significant headwinds. The prospect of job losses, particularly in our MSMEs and export hubs, is a real concern that demands immediate attention. Many companies contemplating relocating from China to India may now be forced to rethink their plans and move to other countries with lower US tariffs.

Economists rightly warn of a potential drag on our GDP growth, perhaps as much as half a percent of GDP. Yet, to simply "buckle under" would be a profound miscalculation, yielding not just economic ground but strategic dignity. India has consistently championed a rules-based international order, and this unilateral imposition of tariffs, especially with a geopolitical rider, flies in the face of such principles. We must not, and indeed cannot, surrender our right to conduct our foreign policy based on our national interests.

So, what, then, is the prudent course of action for India?

Diplomacy, Diversification, Dialogue. Firstly, strategic resolve and diplomatic firmness. India must make it abundantly clear that while we value our partnership with the United States, our foreign policy choices are non-negotiable and dictated solely by our national interest. We must continue to engage in trade negotiations with sincerity, but without ceding ground on critical issues such as market access for sensitive sectors like agriculture and dairy, or compromising on our data localisation policies. The current tariffs should be viewed as a negotiation tactic, and our negotiators must be empowered to push back against unreasonable demands.

All The Ways Epstein Continues To Haunt Donald Trump

It is fair to say that most political scandals fade with time. Just like red wine stains gradually scrubbed from white linens, they lose their shock value. But not the Epstein affair, it seems. Not the files filled with prominent names. Not the infamous client list. And certainly not Donald Trump's connection to it. No matter how far President Trump flies - whether to Mar-a-Lago, Manhattan or the manicured golf greens of Scotland (from where he returned on Tuesday) - the ghost of Jeffrey Epstein refuses to part with him. Years after the disgraced financier died under suspicious circumstances in a federal prison, his shadow still lingers. It has become an albatross around Trump's neck - a symbol of growing public cynicism about power, secrecy and selective justice. Just last week, as President Trump landed in Scotland to project an image of calm statesmanship and international poise, there was a nice moment of diplomatic triumph: a favourable EU trade deal. Surely, a feather in his cap. But even as he celebrated, reporters circled like hawks round an old, rotting carcass: the Epstein files.

'Terrific Guy'

Questions flew, about trade and foreign policy, but also about the convicted sex offender he once called a "terrific guy". It's

hardly the kind of backdrop any president wants on a global stage. But this is not 2016. Trump, once the disruptor-in-chief who thrived on political and personal scandals, now finds himself increasingly cornered by liberals or "the deep state," as well as by the ghosts of his own political base, which has turned strangely inward. The Epstein controversy is no longer about Epstein. It's about hypocrisy, about broken promises, about firebrands-turned-functionaries who once shouted from the rooftops and now hide behind legalese.

A Little Recap

Let us rewind the tape. According to available records, Trump's association with Epstein dates back to the 1990s, a time when New York's moneyed elite mingled in Mar-a-Lago-style opulence. Trump once praised Epstein's 'taste' in women, noting that "many of them are on the younger side". Later, after Epstein's 2007 conviction for soliciting prostitution from a minor, Trump publicly distanced himself. By 2019, when Epstein was arrested again and subsequently died in prison under murky circumstances, Trump was already president and the traditional media as well as social media were ablaze with speculation. The photos, the guest lists, the deposition quotes. They never really



disappeared. They simply lingered in online forums, social media threads and the corners of Reddit and Telegram where conspiracy theories ferment. But what started as fringe chatter has taken on a more central role in today's political discourse upon Trump's second coming, especially among the very voters Trump relied on to return to the White House.

The Voices That Fell Silent

When the infamous Epstein files were partially unsealed earlier this year as part of civil litigation involving Ghislaine Maxwell, media outlets poured over the documents for salacious details and political implications. While many big

names appeared, it was Trump's name that lingered in headlines the longest. Not because the documents proved guilt or involvement, but because of the administration's handling of the files now. Trump's handpicked officials - FBI Director Kash Patel and Attorney General Pam Bondi - were once warriors in the Epstein-obsessed right-wing media ecosystem. Patel famously hinted at a cover-up involving "the highest levels of government", while Bondi made rounds on cable TV brandishing supposed client lists with grim resolve. But now, as custodians of these same institutions, they are singing a different tune.

Pakistan jails more than 100 members of ex-PM Imran Khan's party for 2023 riots

LAHORE, - A Pakistani anti-terrorism court on Thursday sentenced more than 100 members of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party to prison terms on charges related to riots that targeted military sites in 2023, a court order said. Fifty-eight of the defendants, who included parliamentarians and senior officials, were sentenced to 10 years in prison and the rest were given sentences ranging from one to three years, the court said. The accused include Omar Ayub Khan and Shibli Faraz, the leaders of Khan's opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) in the lower and upper houses of parliament respectively, the court order seen by Reuters read. "The prosecution has proved its case against the accused without a shadow of doubt," it said in announcing the sentences. Khan, who has been in prison since 2023



facing charges of corruption, land fraud and disclosure of official secrets, is being tried separately on similar charges related to the riot. The government accuses him and other leaders of inciting the May 9, 2023, protests, during which demonstrators attacked military and government buildings, including the army headquarters in Rawalpindi. He denies wrongdoing and says all the cases are politically motivated as part of a military-backed crackdown to dismantle his party. The military denies it. Khan's arrest had prompted the countrywide violent

protests.

Thursday's ruling does not directly affect the incitement case against him in which prosecution is still presenting witnesses. The PTI party said it will challenge the verdict.

The ruling is the third such mass conviction this month; Khan's party says they have included at least 14 of its parliamentarians.

They will lose their seats in parliament under Pakistani laws, which will shred Khan's opposition party's strength.

Another 77 were acquitted for lack of evidence in the latest verdict, which is linked to an attack on the office of an intelligence agency in eastern city of Faisalabad, the court said. The party plans new protests starting on August 5, the second anniversary of Khan's jailing, to demand his release.

Trump's call broke deadlock in Thailand-Cambodia border crisis

BANGKOK, July 31 (Reuters) - First came a push from the Malaysian premier, then China reached out, but it was only after U.S. President Donald Trump called Thailand's leader last week that Bangkok agreed to talks with Cambodia to end an escalating military conflict.

A flurry of diplomatic efforts over a 20-hour window sealed Thailand's participation in ceasefire negotiations with Cambodia, hosted in Malaysia, halting the heaviest fighting between two Southeast Asian countries in over a decade. Reuters interviewed four people on both sides of the border to piece together the most detailed account of how the truce was achieved, including previously unreported Thai conditions for joining the talks and the extent of Chinese involvement in the process.

When Trump called Thai Acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai on Saturday, two days after fighting erupted along a 200-km-long stretch of the border, Bangkok had not responded to mediation offers from Malaysia and China, said a Thai government source with direct knowledge. "We told him that we want bilateral talks first before declaring a ceasefire," the source said, asking not to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue. Thailand had already made it clear that it favoured bilateral negotiation and initially did not want third-party mediation to resolve the conflict. On Sunday, a day after his initial call, Trump said that Thailand and Cambodia had



agreed to meet to work out a ceasefire, and that Washington wouldn't move ahead with tariff negotiations with both until the conflict had ended. The source said as the Thai and Cambodian foreign ministries started talking, following Trump's call, Bangkok set out its terms: the meeting must be between the two prime ministers and at a neutral location. "We proposed Malaysia because we want this to be a regional matter," the source said. "The U.S. really pushed for the meeting," a second Thai source said, "We want a peaceful solution to the conflict so we had to show good faith and accept." A Thai government spokesperson did not immediately respond to questions from Reuters.

Cambodia had accepted the initial Malaysian offer for talks but it was Thailand that did not move ahead until Trump's intervention, said Lim Menghour, a Cambodian government official working

on foreign policy. Prime Minister Hun Manet's government also kept a channel open with China, which had shown interest in joining any peace talks between the neighbours, he said, reflecting Phnom Penh's close ties to Beijing. "We exchanged regular communication," Lim Menghour said.

GOOD FAITH

On Monday, Phumtham and Hun Manet went to the Malaysian administrative capital of Putrajaya, where they were hosted by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, also the current chair of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional bloc. At the end of their talks, the two leaders stood on either side of Anwar, who read out a joint statement that said Thailand and Cambodia would enter into a ceasefire from midnight and continue dialogue. The rapid parleys echoed efforts to diffuse severe border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia

in 2011, which took several months including mediation efforts by Indonesia, then chair of ASEAN. But those talks had not directly involved the U.S. and China. The fragile ceasefire was holding as of Thursday, despite distrust on both sides, and neither military has scaled down troop deployment along the frontier.

Thailand and Cambodia have, for decades, quarrelled over undemarcated parts of their 817 km (508 miles) land border, which was first mapped by France in 1907 when the latter was its colony. In recent months, tensions began building between the neighbours after the death of a Cambodian soldier in a skirmish in May and escalated into both militaries bolstering border deployments, alongside a full-blown diplomatic crisis. After a second Thai soldier lost a limb last week to a landmine that Thailand alleged Cambodian troops had planted, Bangkok recalled its ambassador to Phnom Penh and expelled Cambodia's envoy. Cambodia has denied the charge.

The fighting began soon after. Since the ceasefire deal, Hun Manet and Phumtham have been effusive in their praise for Trump, who had threatened 36% tariffs on goods from both countries coming to the U.S., their biggest export market. The Thai sources did not say whether tariff talks had been impacted by the border clashes. Lim Menghour said after the "positive talks, President Donald Trump also showed positive developments" regarding tariffs, without elaborating.

Lunch, Now A State Award: What's With The Growing Pakistan-US Lovefest?

After years of being ignored publicly by recent American administrations, the turnaround in established policy is baffling. What gives?

In terms of sheer turnaround in established policy, it beats description. Recently, the Pakistani Foreign Minister was in Washington, shaking hands with the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, even as American delegations arrived in strength in Pakistan after years of being ignored by previous American administrations. Even heavier for the Pakistanis was the bestowing of Pakistan's highest military honour on General 'Mike' Kurilla. It's enough to make one wonder what the Field Marshal is up to.

Pakistan Brings Out the Champagne

The Foreign Ministry is, of course, portraying the whole saga as a success of no mean order. At one level, that is entirely justified. The Biden administration never invited even the Prime Minister of Pakistan, let alone meet any of their officials. Now there is the highly unprecedented lunch of a sitting Army Chief with the US President and his cringeworthy batting for a Nobel Peace Prize for Trump. Despite the US then bombing a 'brotherly' Muslim country next door - Iran - the Pakistani administration continued to bend over backwards to thank Trump for his 'pro-active role' for peace in the region.

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And now comes the final, almost comical



gesture: the award of the highest military honour for US CENTCOM commander General 'Mike' Kurilla. The sight of a US General representing the most powerful democracy in the world standing at attention in front of a powerless President Zardari is even more cringeworthy. As Kurilla well knows, it is Field Marshal Munir who is in charge, together with Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Chief Lt Gen Asim Malik as National Security Advisor. Earlier, Kurilla had praised Pakistan to the skies for its 'cooperation' in fighting terrorism - this after it handed over one lone terrorist allegedly responsible for a bombing of US troops as they left Afghanistan. This gesture apparently made up for the decades when it facilitated al Qaeda's top leadership on its territory and thereby was directly responsible for some 3,000 dead troops, over 20,000 wounded, not including 26 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel. Now, Pakistan is a 'phenomenal partner'. It's enough to make one gag.

Pakistan's Premature Ululations

Now comes the bitter truth. The read-out of the meeting between Dar and Rubio is terse and to the point, and sheds light on that mysterious lunch. It expresses 'appreciation' for Pakistan's 'constructive role in mediating conversations with Iran'.

That's interesting. As of last week, Pakistan-based Jaish ul Adl had claimed an attack across the border on a packed courthouse. Again, on July 28, Pakistan suspended road travel between the two countries. But here's something to note: not too long ago, Iran's General Mohsen Rezae had claimed that Pakistan had said that if Israel launched nuclear weapons at Iran, Islamabad would nuke Israel. In short, this is Pakistan at its usual game, playing all sides, one against the other. The US read-out also

mentions counterterrorism operations against Islamic State-Khorasan; that means there's a US hand in Afghanistan, which has been resisting Pakistani pressures for quite a while. So, here, too, Pakistan gets its pound of flesh, not to mention possible funds for all of this, at the upcoming US-Pakistan Counterterrorism Dialogue in August. If the US doesn't get this, it needs to look up its files.

The Minerals Hook

There's another 'hook' to reel in the US. Rubio mentions "exploring prospects for enhancing collaboration in the critical minerals and mining sectors". Earlier, a senior State Department official had travelled to Pakistan - again, in April - to "advance U.S. interests in the critical minerals sector at the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum". Naturally, he met with the Army chief, as did a US Congressional delegation, which included the co-chairs of the Pakistan Caucus, Congressmen Jack Bergman and Tom Suozzi. The irony inherent in this was the Pakistani interior minister's statement that his country "stood as a wall between terrorism and the rest of the world".

Meanwhile, it seems that Balochistan has the largest copper and gold resources in the world, according to the CEO of America's Barrick Mining Corporation, which is exploiting the Reko Diq mines. Balochistan reportedly has \$6 to \$8 trillion worth of untapped mineral wealth, including vital rare earth elements like dysprosium, terbium, and yttrium. The fact that the Baloch are being harried and killed by the hundreds doesn't seem to bother Washington at all.

The problem? China is also heavily invested in the same region of Chagai with not just its Saindak mine, but also a host of power projects, not to mention the Gwadar port. Beijing is not going to

take such an ingress lightly, especially since its workers continue to be attacked in the province. Recently, the newly minted Field Marshal Munir was summoned to Beijing, where the declaration of 'iron brothers', etc, aside, it was rumoured that China was deeply unhappy with Rawalpindi's inability to protect its citizens.

Crypto Capital

There's more. Just after Operation Sindoor ended, a newly appointed Pakistani head for Crypto and Blockchain, Bilal Saqib, was touring the US, where he addressed an elite audience that included the Vice President JD Vance and Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr, at the Bitcoin Vegas 2025 in Las Vegas. There, Saqib sold Pakistan as one of the largest freelance markets with 40 million cryptowallets. With a Minister of State rank and an Order of the British Empire under his belt, Saqib is 'sellable' abroad, especially as he also thanked Trump for his 'peacemaking' skills.

None of this crypto talk, however, was backed by Pakistani law, as the State Bank of Pakistan pointed out. It was not until July that an ordinance was promulgated by the President to establish a regulatory authority for the purpose. But Pakistan's regulations are a mess, and the need to push through an ordinance rather than a Parliament-based legislation is being questioned by critics and likened to the Army-controlled Strategic Facilitation Council (SFC), which is completely opaque in its dealings. Pakistan already had a crypto holding of about \$10 billion, even before it was legalised, and ranked third in the Global Crypto Adoption Index in 2020-2021.

Consider that all this activity actually began in April, when the Texas-based logistics firm Fr8Technologies offered to help Pakistan in setting up blockchain products and crypto advice. The firm is linked to World Liberty Financial (WLF), which is owned by members of Trump's family. Since then, given the clear US interest in using Pakistan as a base for its crypto ambitions, other massive names like Binance have weighed in. Irony is that, knowing cryptocurrencies are much in use by terrorists and the criminal underground - as the Financial Action Task Force points out - the US deliberately chose a country that has loose financial oversight (at best) and is entirely army-controlled, to push in billions in potential investment. Nice.

After Trump's 'Dead Economies' Remark, Russian Official's 'Dead Hand' Warning

The 'Dead Hand', also known as Perimeter is a Cold-War era automatic or semi-automatic nuclear weapons control system, that could launch a nuclear counterstrike even if the country's leadership had been wiped out.

Deputy Chairman of Russia's Security Council Dmitry Medvedev, who also served as the President from 2008 to 2012 and Prime Minister from 2012 and 2020, has cautioned US President Donald Trump advising him not to disregard the dangers of those he labels "dead". In a post on Truth Social, Trump hit out at India and Russia and said that he does not care how the two countries deal with each other, and that they "can take their dead economies down together". This is the second time that the two traded blows on social media this summer. The US President's remarks come a day after he announced 25 per cent tariffs on imports from India, plus a penalty for New Delhi's purchases from Russia.

Disapproving of New Delhi's defence deals with



Moscow, the US President said India has "always bought a vast majority of their military equipment from Russia". They "are Russia's largest buyer of energy, along with China, at a time when everyone wants

Russia to stop the killing in Ukraine." Medvedev, in a response, wrote on Telegram, "As for the talk about the 'dead economies' of India and Russia, and 'entering dangerous territory' - maybe he should recall his

favorite movies about 'the walking dead,' and also remember how dangerous the so-called 'Dead Hand,' which doesn't even exist, could be." The 'Dead Hand', also known as Perimeter is a Cold-War era

automatic or semi-automatic nuclear weapons control system, that could launch a nuclear counterstrike even if the country's leadership had been wiped out. Trump had also personally targeted Medvedev in the social post when he added, "Russia and the USA do almost no business together. Let's keep it that way, and tell Medvedev, the failed former President of Russia, who thinks he's still President, to watch his words. He's entering very dangerous territory." In retaliation, Medvedev addressed that in his post when he said, "If a few words from the former president of Russia can provoke such a jittery reaction from the mighty president of the United States, then Russia must be completely in the right," he wrote. "We'll keep moving forward on our own path."

Trump's Global Trade Gamble: Where His Tariff Deals Stand as August Deadline Looms

As U.S. President Donald Trump's August 1 tariff deadline approaches, global markets are watching closely. After vowing to impose sweeping import taxes earlier this year, Trump introduced a 90-day pause in April to avoid economic shock and to negotiate individual deals. Despite promising "90 deals in 90 days," only a few have been finalized, with several more in the framework stage and many lacking concrete implementation timelines.

The most recent and comprehensive agreement came with the European Union. Announced on July 27, the deal sets a 15 percent tariff on 70 percent of European imports to the U.S., averting a threatened 30 percent rate.

Pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, and auto parts are included, though negotiations on the remaining 30 percent are ongoing. Trump also claimed major energy investments from European companies, but not all of these are legally binding. Japan struck a similar deal on



July 22, reducing tariffs on Japanese imports to 15 percent from a proposed 25 percent. In return, Japan agreed to invest \$550 billion into the U.S. and open its markets to American autos and rice. Japanese carmakers like Toyota and Honda stand to benefit, while rival firms from other nations

worry about competitive disadvantages. Deals with the Philippines and Indonesia were also recently announced. After a July 22 meeting, Philippine tariffs were trimmed to 19 percent, with the U.S. promising zero tariffs on its exports to the country. Indonesia reached a similar

understanding on July 15, with U.S. goods reportedly entering duty-free, although further talks are expected to reduce Indonesian tariffs even more. Trump's Vietnam agreement, unveiled July 2, will let U.S. exports enter tariff-free, while Vietnamese goods will face a 20 percent levy. A sharp 40

percent tariff will also target transshipping practices, which the U.S. claims China uses to skirt higher duties. The United Kingdom was one of the earliest signatories, reaching a deal on May 8. The agreement promised tariff reductions on goods like steel, autos, olive oil, and wine. However, its rollout was slow, and the U.K. only received partial relief from Trump's new 50 percent steel and aluminum tariffs, maintaining a 25 percent rate instead. China, the focal point of the trade war, reached a fragile truce in May. Tariffs were scaled back from a staggering 145 percent to 30 percent on Chinese goods and from 125 percent to 10 percent on U.S. products. While China agreed to ease access to rare earth minerals, and the U.S. pledged to lift several restrictions, the full terms remain unclear. Talks in Stockholm on July 29 suggested a mutual desire to delay further tariffs set for August 12, but no final agreement was reached.

Crypto bro in horrific NYC kidnap, torture case sprung on whopping \$1 million bond



One of the crypto bros accused of sadistically tormenting an Italian millionaire in a Manhattan townhouse was sprung on \$1 million bond Thursday after spending two months behind bars.

John Woeltz, 37, was released from Rikers Island just a week after a Manhattan judge granted the accused

madman and his accomplice, William Duplessie, 33, bail in the shocking alleged kidnapping and torture of Italian crypto trader Michael Valentino Teofrasto Carturan. Woeltz dodged questions about whether he tortured Carturan and how it felt to be freed from jail as he walked out of Manhattan

Supreme Court — after trading his prison garb for an oversized purple polo shirt, with a white T-shirt underneath and blue denim jeans. The bond was a combination of cash and property put up by Woeltz's father, according to sources — and was secured by celebrity bondsman Ira Judelson. The alleged kidnapper had been holed up in the city's jail since his arrest on May 23 after prosecutors alleged he tortured Carturan for his Bitcoin password, including lighting him on fire and cutting him with a chainsaw. His release comes after Manhattan Supreme Court Judge Gregory Carro granted the seven-figure bail package on July 23 after attorneys for the crypto bros argued that the so-called torture was akin to "fraternity-like hazing." The judge agreed to spring the pair free — with the stipulation they couldn't pay in cryptocurrency. During the quick hearing Thursday, Woeltz, who appeared in a tan prison jumpsuit, was released to home confinement and placed on electronic monitoring. The judge warned him that the monitoring

bracelet must remain charged while he's out of jail or it could have consequences. "If it happens, you're not going to be on electronic monitoring anymore," Carro said. The judge told Woeltz that he can only leave his home for doctor's appointments, lawyer meetings or during an emergency. The hard-partying duo allegedly tortured Carturan, who has since returned to Italy, at a swanky SoHo townhouse in order to hijack his Bitcoin password worth \$100 million, according to law-enforcement sources. Woeltz, a Kentucky-based cryptocurrency investor, allegedly threatened the 28-year-old victim's family in Italy — while subjecting him to humiliation by having people urinate on him and forcing him to take drugs during captivity, authorities have said. But Woeltz's attorney, Wayne Gosnell, waved off the alleged torture tactics — some of which were captured on video and photo — as a "long running frat party." "Mr. Carturan was there in the role of a pledge. He was essentially pledging and being hazed," Gosnell said at a previous hearing.

Kash Patel's country singer girlfriend fends off 'disheartening' conspiracy theories she's honeypotting FBI boss

FBI director Kash Patel's girlfriend Alexis Wilkins has been forced to fend off the "incredibly disheartening" conspiracy theories that she is honeypotting the bureau's head honcho for a foreign government. The 26-year-old country artist said the skeptics are contorting her backstory, even as she acknowledged she can "understand" it. "I think people see certain pieces and I get it," Wilkins told the "Megyn Kelly Show" on Wednesday. "They want to connect things, they want to justify, some of the pain that they've been through watching the last four years, and there's pieces of this that, you know, I can understand," she continued. "I think that they've taken just these pieces of evidence that you laid out and tie them together in all of the wrong ways." Conspiracy theories about Wilkins exploded on the internet after the Justice Department and FBI's July 6 memo about convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, which concluded that the evidence suggests Epstein killed himself in prison and did not keep an "incriminating client list." Some of the trolls speculated that the Arkansas-raised singer was a Mossad agent intended to compromise Patel, 45, and at least

one of them misidentified her as Jewish. One thread used to make that conspiratorial leap is Wilkins' work for PragerU, a conservative nonprofit that seeks to educate the public on key political issues. The CEO of PragerU, Marissa Streit, previously served in the Israeli army. "Wilkins is Armenian and Christian and does not appear to have any known ties to Israel. When Kelly asked point-blank whether she was a spy for any foreign government, Wilkins replied, 'Definitely not, that is a firm no on that front.'" Earlier this month, the country singer ripped into the online conspiracy theorists, raging that they are "farming" for attention "because their engagement dried up after Trump's win." "It's disappointing to see people with no real contribution to political discourse spin ridiculous conspiracy theories out of thin air," Wilkins bemoaned in an X post. "These accusations are obviously insanely ridiculous."

Patel and Wilkins met at a friend's event in Nashville in 2022 and began dating several months later in early 2023. "We just happened to meet," Wilkins recounted, noting that the 19-year age gap she has with him always felt irrelevant. "I have always liked [him], when I met him, I just liked



that he was so, so honest," Wilkins gushed. "He's exactly who he is all the time. His character is incredible. His values are incredible."

"We both are very patriotic. So obviously there are things there that we definitely agree on, but he's just the most honest, you know, most integrity I've really experienced in a person, he's fantastic."

The country singer, who hosts a Rumble show, acknowledged

there's "not enough information out there about me to glean a real conclusion on all of this kind of vigilante research."

She mused that those gaps have given room for internet trolls to fill with conspiracy theories, which she lamented as "incredibly disheartening." Patel has been "very frustrated" and "unhappy" with the hate and suspicion directed her way over the Epstein drama, Wilkins said.

Trump envoy Steve Witkoff, Mike Huckabee to visit Gaza aid sites as hunger crisis grows

US officials will visit Gaza's aid distribution sites this week amid stepped-up international efforts to ensure more food and key medical supplies make it to those most in need, the White House confirmed Thursday. President Trump's Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff held a "very productive meeting" with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on delivering additional humanitarian assistance to Gaza — which has been beset by a spiraling hunger crisis as supply points are choked off by continued military conflict. "The Special Envoy and the ambassador will brief the president immediately after their visit to approve a final plan for food and aid distribution into the region, and we will provide more details for all of you once that plan is approved and agreed upon by the President of the United States," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters following the meeting. The Aug 1. visit, to be joined by US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee, follows Trump calling for the US and other nations to "get some food" to Gaza's refugee population as reports of famine grow more dire in the Palestinian enclave. On Wednesday, 48 people were reportedly killed while waiting for food in Gaza, as calls from international humanitarian agencies for Israel to allow aid to more freely flow into the region have spiked. Israel has blamed the UN for the lack of food deliveries, officials sharing images showing tons of aid piled up inside the Gaza Strip, which they said is ready and waiting to be distributed to hungry Palestinians. Last week, Israel announced it would cease military operations for 10 hours a day in parts of Gaza to ensure more food and medicine could be delivered after images of starving Palestinian children sparked



outcry around the world. The images even prompted President Trump to contradict Netanyahu, who claimed there was "no starvation" happening in Gaza. Asked by reporters in Scotland whether he agrees with the PM's assessment, Trump said, "not particularly, because

those children look very hungry," he said in reference to images he's seen on TV showing emaciated and crying children. Trump later hit out at Hamas for its role in slowing aid deliveries, writing on Truth Social that, "The fastest way to end the Humanitarian Crises in Gaza is

for Hamas to

SURRENDER AND RELEASE THE HOSTAGES!!!!

Witkoff is likely to meet with Netanyahu during his visit to continue talks on topics including the Gaza cease-fire and the release of Hamas hostages.

Government Urges Air India to End 'Backseat Driving' and Empower Key Safety Officials



The Indian government has issued a strong directive to Air India and its parent company Tata Sons, urging them to end the practice of "backseat driving" within crucial departments tied to flight safety.

In a high-level meeting on Friday, Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, aviation secretary Samir Kumar Sinha, and DGCA chief Faiz Ahmed Kidwai met with Tata Sons and Air India chairman N Chandrasekaran to push for internal reform and stronger

accountability following recent safety concerns. The government emphasized that departments such as safety, training, maintenance, engineering, and the Integrated Operation Control Centre (IOCC) must be led by individuals with full decision-making authority. Officials warned against having figureheads in these roles while actual control rests with unnamed higher-ups—a practice that, they argue, undermines safety and shields those truly responsible from

accountability. The meeting follows several incidents, most notably the June 12 Air India AI 171 crash, which is still under investigation. In the weeks since, post-holders from Air India have been repeatedly summoned by regulatory agencies. However, insiders say regulators often feel helpless knowing that those appearing before them are not the ones making critical decisions. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) previously ordered the removal of three Air India officials responsible for crew scheduling, citing failures in managing crew rest and licensing requirements.

The DGCA warned the airline that ongoing lapses could even result in suspension of operations.

Another issue raised was Air India's controversial decision to display crash relics—such as damaged seats, instruments, and flight data recorders—at its Gurgaon office complex.

Modi Hails Operation Sindoor as Turning Point Ahead of Parliament Debate on Terror and Security



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday reaffirmed India's tough stance on terrorism, asserting that Operation Sindoor had instilled a renewed sense of national confidence and demonstrated that no terrorist or their backers would find safe haven. His remarks, delivered at an event in Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Tamil Nadu, came just a day before Parliament begins its highly anticipated debate on the Pahalgam terror attack and the military response that followed. Addressing a gathering to commemorate the legacy of Chola emperor Rajendra Chola, Modi said the precision strikes carried out under Operation Sindoor sent a

firm message to the world about India's zero-tolerance approach toward threats to its sovereignty. "The operation has created a new self-confidence across the country," he stated, framing the narrative ahead of what is expected to be a marathon debate in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The debate, slated to begin in Lok Sabha on Monday, comes after a week of disruptions during the Monsoon Session and is expected to be both lengthy and contentious. Sources say the government is preparing a strong defense, with Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, and S. Jaishankar all scheduled to address Parliament.

How Trump used America's leverage to get exactly what he wanted from his trade war

In the end, President Donald Trump got exactly what he wanted.

The 120 days since Trump's Rose Garden "Liberation Day" announcement rocked financial markets weren't exactly pretty.

From the Washington to Wall Street and across foreign capitals far and wide, seemingly every day featured a disorienting burst of TACOs (trades based on the notion that "Trump Always Chickens Out") and turbulence, theater and threats, carveouts and looming fear of an imminent rupture to the backbone of 70 years of global commerce. Even today, an explicit declaration of victory would seem shortsighted in the face of economic data that has presented steady stream of contradictory signals and warning signs that in many ways mirror the disorienting nature of a trade policy without modern historical precedent. The executive authority Trump triggered to underpin a wide swath of his tariffs faces an acute risk in court. Trump's tariff approach remains deeply unpopular in public polling.

But as the world approached Trump's August 1 "reciprocal" tariff deadline, Trump and his economic advisers share an unmistakable sense of vindication.

Bilateral deals with major trading partners have rolled in over the last week. The average effective tariff rate on imports to the US sits at its highest level in nearly a century. Tariff revenue is soaring. Financial markets have settled, and stocks have bounced consistently around record highs in recent weeks. Predictions of soaring inflation haven't come to fruition. The broader US economy has remained remarkably resilient through it all.

There's no hedging from a West Wing keenly aware of their distinctly minority position on the efficacy of Trump's tariffs over the course of the last four months.

"Maybe the losers and haters were really just losers and haters," a senior White House official said.

For all the volatility in the weeks after Trump's April 2 "reciprocal" tariff announcement, Trump and his economic advisers held firm in the belief that they'd reach this point. It was a position that ran counter to just about every mainstream economist, was an anathema to the national security and economic pillars of the post-World War II era and cemented the long-running – but no less stunning – ideological evolution on tariffs within the Republican Party that Trump launched with his first presidential campaign.

But at its core was a concept that



been a consistent throughline of an otherwise chaotic economic timeline: leverage.

Trump's unorthodox view of tariffs

That leverage came from the singular importance of the US market to the global economy. Trump's personal belief in the utility of tariffs – and willingness to let them go into place and then, if necessary, escalate to shut down any retaliatory efforts – only served to enhance that reality.

"The dynamic starts to shift pretty dramatically when you realize your counterpart is willing to shoot the hostage," an EU official told CNN after Trump clinched an agreement with the bloc. The Wall Street vs. Trade Warrior construct that defined Trump's first economic team was rife with bureaucratic knife fights, profanity-laced shouting matches and, on more than one occasion, aides on the verge of physical altercation. From the outside, the 2.0 version of Trump's team had initially been viewed in a similar manner, with former hedge fund manager and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett in the "Wall Street" camp and top trade adviser Peter Navarro, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Stephen Miller, the deputy chief of staff for policy, filling the "trade warrior" roster.

While there have been differences on strategy and scale, that simply perception never meshed with reality behind the scenes. Most importantly, unlike in Trump's first term, when advisers like Gary Cohn and Steve Mnuchin made overt efforts to limit the president's tariff impulses, the president's advisers this time have all been explicit that they aren't there to chart their own path. Trump decides, and they execute, whether it was their preferred option or not, White House

officials say.

Trump's first term featured sweeping tariff threats that were inevitably met with resistance within Trump's own advisers and moderated before ever reaching the implementation point.

But Trump did launch a trade war with China, which marked a significant tariff escalation that ran counter to decades of free trade consensus. The results were panned by mainstream economists who saw limited benefit. Trump and his pro-tariff advisers took an entirely different set of lessons away from the effort – lessons that laid the groundwork for a dramatically more expansive tariff approach in a second term tied directly to the leverage provided by the US market.

'Really poorly understood'

Stephen Miran walked to the lectern to deliver remarks at a Washington think tank during a moment of global market chaos. Five days after "Liberation Day," stocks were in the midst of their worst three-day percentage drop since the onset of the Covid Pandemic five years prior. The bond market was sending unnerving signs about faith in US stability.

Miran used his remarks to lay out the economic case for why White House officials insisted there would be limited retaliation to Trump's sweeping tariffs and US consumers wouldn't bear the burden of the increased costs they would impose. Steep US trade deficits, Miran said, underscored the limited options trading partners had when it came to the US market. That would limit retaliation and incentivize exporters to either eat the cost of the tariffs as the US benefitted from spiking tariff revenues or strike a deal with Trump.

"They failed to appreciate the amount of leverage that the United States has," Miran told CNN of the

widespread fear of a retaliatory spiral that would grip the global economy and short-circuit any trade agreements. "They just failed to appreciate that. President Trump knows, and he understands, the amount of leverage that the United States has and knows how to use that leverage in ways that nobody else could."

That leverage would form the basis of the steady stream of trade agreements Trump has announced in the lead up to the deadline.

But it didn't start that way.

'They didn't think that we were serious'

As the shock of Liberation Day gave way to grappling with the reality, Trump's top trade negotiators – Bessent, Lutnick and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer – were flooded with proposals from countries around the world. Those proposals, however, weren't drafted anywhere near a level that would pass muster with Trump, officials said. Instead, after Trump paused the tariffs on April 9 to allow for negotiations, several large trading partners approached their US counterparts with a belief that a combination of retaliatory threats and general tariff reductions would force the White House to change course.

"At the time they didn't think that we were serious, and they thought that just by threatening to retaliate that they would get us to back off," Miran said. "They weren't serious about negotiating to get to a real deal. Given the extent to which he loves tariffs, getting the President to agree to a deal wasn't going to be some easy thing." Trump's recognition of that dynamic often drove new tariff threats that arrived seemingly out of nowhere at all hours on his Truth Social account.

A similar tactic was deployed to brush back companies who made the mistake of publicly acknowledging potential price increases. The strategy had a deep impact on C-Suites around the country, according to interviews with more than a dozen corporate executives and lobbyists.

"It becomes a business decision," one executive told CNN. "The cost benefit of putting a target on your back with this particular administration simply doesn't net out in your favor."

Still, several executives warned that price increases were nearly inevitable in the months ahead and on earnings calls and inside the economic data there have already been signs that hikes are hitting the most exposed products.

US tariff keeps India in China plus one, for now

HONG KONG, - Donald Trump's shake-up of the world's China-plus-one trade is not creating any decisive winners or losers. The U.S. president's decision on Wednesday to impose a 25% tariff on imports from India is a blow to the South Asian country, but the rate, if it sticks, could still allow it to remain a desirable manufacturing destination for global companies like Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab.

Unlike other world leaders, Narendra Modi did not secure a reduction on Trump's threatened tariff rate for his country, which sent \$87 billion of goods to the U.S. last year. The prime minister's apparent refusal to open up India's agriculture and dairy markets to U.S. imports may be why. Doing so would have risked another showdown with millions of poor and politically powerful farmers. Whether India wins or loses, though, will depend on other factors. The \$4 trillion economy has sought to court companies that want to diversify their supply chains away from the People's Republic. Here India's rivals include Bangladesh, Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia, and to some extent, Mexico. These competitors currently face U.S. import tariffs ranging from 19% to 40%. On the face of it, India will now be less competitive as a manufacturing des-

ination than Vietnam, which Trump slapped with a 20% tariff. India's weighted average tariff rate



would be five to 10 percentage points higher than Asian peers, Citi economists estimate. Its status as a top buyer of Russian energy and weapons is also a negative, with Trump now threatening an unspecified penalty for participating in such trade. Russia accounts for up to 40% of India's crude oil imports and offers it an implied discount of up to \$4 per barrel. Giving up that benefit would be economically and politically disadvantageous for In-

dia. But Southeast Asia's deep links to Chinese exporters and investment mean the bloc faces stiff penalty tariffs, too, if the U.S. president follows through on his threat to crack down on tariff evasion, or transshipment, by Chinese exporters.

In this scenario, Trump would double the levy for goods they send through Vietnam, for example. This risk will only increase with any deterioration of the Sino-American relationship. Some companies may ignore the tariff differential and stick with India because it offers access to a large domestic consumer market, and it is less exposed to China. Whether Trump cares more about brokering peace in Ukraine or containing the world's second-largest economy is anyone's guess. The upshot is that he has negotiated or unilaterally declared trade pacts that set diverging tariffs on all the major China-plus-one countries. Ideally, that ought to have provided some clarity for companies currently stuck in limbo to resume capital expenditure. But the U.S. president's outstanding promises to penalise transshipment and those who deal with Russia will leave global companies in no better position to decide how, if at all, to reconfigure their supply chains.

The Beginning

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OF

NU WAY ADVERTISING

About the Author



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

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

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



The Beginning

MAD MEN OF NU WAY ADVERTISING

Sharanjit Thind Singh

The Beginning

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

Sharanjit Thind Singh



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The Biggest Job Engine is Breaking Down: Why AI Is Exposing Fragility Of India's White-Collar Economy

In the past two years, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest IT services firm, has quietly let go of over 12,000 employees. This is not an isolated case. From 2023 to 2025, India's top five IT companies—TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCLTech, and Tech Mahindra—have cumulatively shed nearly 70,000 jobs, marking a sharp reversal from the hiring frenzy of the Covid-era.

Despite the relentless PR narrative around AI, digital transformation, and consulting pivot strategies, the truth is now evident: the job engine that powered India's middle class is sputtering. This slowdown has an impact on the city economy across the country, and it will also reverberate in the small towns across India. While the leadership of these companies may have failed to plan for this eventuality, the policymakers have also not fully understood the impact of this job engine on future job growth. A close look at the numbers tells a sobering story. Between FY21 and FY22, during the height of the pandemic, IT companies added employees at a record pace. TCS went from 509,000 to nearly 592,000, adding over 100,000 in a single year. Infosys grew aggressively, peaking at 345,000. Wipro, HCLTech, and Tech Mahindra all followed suit, hiring tens of thousands in anticipation of sustained digitisation demand from global clients. Attrition at this time hit unprecedented highs—Infosys saw nearly 28 per cent attrition in FY22—but firms kept onboarding to stay ahead of demand. That hiring momentum came to an abrupt halt by FY23. By FY24, TCS had dropped to 601,000 employees, Infosys to 317,000, and Wipro to 234,000. Tech Mahindra lost nearly 7,000 employees, while only HCLTech held steady with marginal gains. FY24 was the first time in almost two decades that TCS reported a net reduction in its headcount. In total, across just two years, the top five firms lost close to 70,000 jobs. Every job in the IT sector creates 8-12 jobs downstream in the economy. These downstream jobs include the support ecosystem of maids, cleaners, consumption-based jobs in restaurants, and food producers, etc. The downstream jobs are generally blue-collar jobs. In the past, these companies would have moved these people to the bench, where they would be retrained or kept till such time as there were new projects. But the fact that these people have been asked to leave means that they cannot be retrained for new projects. These are not cyclical cuts. They reveal a more profound structural change in the sector. The Indian IT industry was a manpower-based billing model—charging clients based on hours worked, not value delivered. India's top IT services companies—TCS, Infosys, HCLTech, Wipro,



and Tech Mahindra—have undergone a fundamental transformation in how they grow. For much of the last two decades, revenue expansion in Indian IT was almost always accompanied by aggressive hiring. But that link is now broken.

In the last two years, these companies have seen revenues grow, profits improve, and margins stabilise or even rise—all while headcount has either remained flat or gone down. This shift signals not just a cyclical slowdown in hiring but a structural pivot in how the industry scales operations now and in the future, increasingly relying on AI, automation, and specialised roles. This changes the hiring practices of the past, freshers and middle layers are most at risk, now.

TCS grew its revenues by around 3.8 per cent in FY24 to \$29.9 billion, while net profit rose by nearly 8 per cent. But this growth came despite a headcount drop of over 13,000 employees in FY24—its first annual decline in almost two decades. Infosys, similarly, recorded a 7.5 per cent year-on-year growth in revenue in the latest quarter and saw its net profit rise by over 8 per cent, even as it shed nearly 7,500 employees over the last year. HCLTech and Wipro saw similar patterns—mild to negative revenue growth, a reduction in employee strength, but gains in operating margins and profitability.

Wipro offers a particularly telling case. Despite its revenues declining for a second consecutive year, its profits jumped nearly 19 per cent in FY25, driven by cost control as its headcount shrank by over 5,000 in the last fiscal year. Yet it achieved greater revenue per employee and healthier bottom-line metrics. Tech Mahindra, too, has been on a cautious headcount trajectory, trimming employees even as it reorients toward higher-margin segments like AI, 5G, and digital transformation.

A consistent pattern across all these firms is the rise in revenue per employee, a critical marker of produc-

tivity. For TCS, it reached nearly \$50,000; for Infosys, over \$60,000; and for HCLTech, a similar level. These numbers reflect a shift away from labour-intensive, billing-hour models to outcome-based engagements powered by AI-based digital platforms. Tools like GitHub Copilot, AI Ops, and custom LLM integrations are enabling developers and engineers to deliver more code or value per unit of time, reducing dependency on sheer manpower.

This decoupling of revenue from hiring reflects a new stage in the Indian IT industry. The earlier era, built on linear growth—more projects meant more people—is giving way to a non-linear growth model driven by AI-based platforms, and AI-powered productivity. Automation is now being seen not just as a cost optimiser, but as a growth enabler. Instead of expanding campuses to onboard thousands of freshers, companies are focusing on hiring only domain specialists and investing in generative AI-led productivity tools that amplify the output of smaller teams.

This transition has implications far beyond quarterly numbers—it challenges the traditional model of IT employment as a middle-class engine of job creation. The HR departments that hired aggressively during the Covid boom are now implementing stealth layoffs, forcing “voluntary” exits, and reducing new hires. Workforce planning has collapsed, and the industry is quietly retreating from campus hiring. For lakhs of engineering graduates, especially from Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns, the pipeline to a middle-class life—however modest—has been severed.

This collapse is not just about freshers. The more dangerous tremor is hitting the middle layers of these organisations—the so-called email warriors. These are program managers, delivery leads, support staff, and PMO operatives—roles that primarily involve coordination, documentation, and oversight. With the advent of AI tools that can summarise meetings,

auto-generate documentation, write code, and predict bottlenecks, these middle functions are rapidly being automated. These roles may not command headlines like coder layoffs, but their disappearance has far greater impact on urban economies.

In cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Gurgaon, this segment forms the backbone of the local economy. They buy flats, pay EMIs, send their kids to expensive schools, frequent malls, and invest in SIPs. Their income flows sustain real estate, services, and urban consumption. A significant decline in their numbers—either through layoffs or salary freezes—will create a cascading impact on local economies. Already, reports from Bengaluru's real estate sector show growing inventory in mid-tier housing and rising defaults in rental agreements by IT tenants. The ripple effect is real.

Now, many are pinning hopes on the GCCs to absorb the displaced workforce. But that's a dangerous illusion. GCCs are leaner, more automated, and far less sensitive to domestic job sentiments. They will adopt AI faster and fire without warning—because they don't depend on India for market perception, only cost arbitrage. If IT firms were the soft landings of the past, GCCs are likely to be the first to implement hard pivots.

What makes this more worrying is the government's lack of recognition of the problem. White-collar job losses don't show up in unemployment data. EPFO additions still show positives because of lag and contractual workers. There is no granular metric to track job loss in mid-tier urban tech roles. Policymakers continue to peddle a fantasy of AI creating lakhs of jobs. The recent narrative around “prompt engineering” as a career is one such example. While prompt engineers exist, the role is neither scalable nor foundational. It is transitional, a bridge skill—certainly not a substitute for the coding workforce of a million engineers.

The bigger challenge lies in our education pipeline. Engineering colleges across India, especially the private institutions that mushroomed in the last 20 years, were built to supply coders and testers to the IT services sector. That conveyor belt is now broken. If engineering education is to survive, it must reinvent itself—not around IT services, but around entrepreneurship, product building, climate tech, robotics, and domain-driven innovation. A civil engineer should not be taking a Java course to get a job. He should be designing infrastructure solutions using digital tools. AI should not be taught as a buzzword, but as a system-level capability integrated into domain learning.

Rahul Gandhi Repeats Trump's 'Dead Economy' Dig, But Not All His Colleagues, Allies Agree

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday endorsed US President Donald Trump's "dead economy" remark, saying that the Republican leader is right in saying that the Indian economy is "dead". He lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government and claimed that the BJP has finished the economy to benefit some people.

However, the Leader of the Opposition's criticism of the government unexpectedly has backfired, with his party colleagues and allies taking an opposite stand.

What Rahul Gandhi Said?

The Congress MP questioned the Prime Minister over 25% tariff imposed on Indian goods by the US.

When asked to comment on Trump's dead economy remark, Rahul Gandhi said that he agreed with the US President. "Yes, he is right. Everybody knows this except the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister. Everybody knows that the Indian economy is a dead economy. I am glad that President Trump has stated a fact... The entire world knows that the Indian economy is a dead economy. BJP has finished the economy to help Adani..." Gandhi said.

Gandhi further alleged that the BJP government has destroyed India's economic, defence and foreign policy. "PM Modi works only for one person-Adani. This (India-US trade) deal will take place, and PM Modi will do exactly what Trump says," he said.

"Foreign Minister gives a speech and says that we have a genius foreign policy. On one hand, America is abusing you; on the other hand, China is behind you. When you send your delegation to the world, no country condemns Pakistan. How are they running this country? There is total confusion... He (PM Modi in his speech) did not take the name of Trump, China... The military chief of Pakistan who did this Pahalgam attack, President Trump is having lunch with him, and they are saying we had a huge success," he added.

Shashi Tharoor's View

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader and Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor, whose remarks on Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor have drawn snubs from some Congress leaders, took a different stand from Gandhi and said that the ongoing trade talks between the US and India are "challenging".

"We have ongoing negotiations with the EU, we already concluded a deal with the UK, and we are talking with other countries also. If we can't compete in America, we may have to diversify our markets outside of America. We are not out of options," he said as quoted by news agency ANI.

"If America is completely unreasonable

with its demands, we have to move elsewhere. That is the strength of India; we are not a totally export-dependent economy like China. We have a good and strong domestic market. We must give strong support to our negotiators to find the best deal possible. If a good deal is not possible, we may have to walk away..." he added.

Tharoor further said India must not "buckle under" and negotiate hard with the United States on trade.

In a column for NDTV, Tharoor strongly criticised Trump's remarks on India's trade and foreign policy. He argued that Trump's comments reflect a transactional and oversimplified worldview, where trade deficits are treated as personal insults and independent foreign policies are seen as threats. Tharoor has rejected Trump's complaints about Indian tariffs and trade barriers, calling them tired arguments that ignore the economic realities of developing nations like India.

What Rajiv Shukla Said?

Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Rajiv Shukla said that Trump's statement is "completely wrong".

"The Indian economy is not dead. Economic reforms were made when PV Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh were there. Atal Bihari Vajpayee took those reforms forward. Manmohan Singh strengthened it in the 10 years. The current government has also worked on it. Our economic condition is not at all weak. If someone claims they can finish us economically, it's likely due to a misunderstanding. Trump is living in a delusion. Imposing tariffs is wrong. Every nation has the right to trade with the nation it wants. Restricting them, speaking against the BRICS, speaking against trade and import from Russia, this is not right..." he told news agency ANI.

Priyanka Chaturvedi Says India's Economy Is In Top 5

Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi slammed the US President for his arrogance and said that there is enough data to know that the Indian economy is among the top five in the world.

"Not that one needs to say it there's enough legitimate data available to know that Indian economy is in the top 5 of the world and one of the fastest growing economies. Calling it a dead economy can only come from a position of arrogance or ignorance. Thank you for your attention to this matter!," she said in a post on X.

BJP Hits Back At Rahul Gandhi

BJP's IT Cell chief Amit Malviya said Rahul Gandhi's constant attempts to belittle India's economic rise are not mere "political jabs" but they're direct insults to the 140 crore Indians working hard to

build a better future.

Malviya pointed out that key economic indicators showed robust India's growth, with inflation at a 6-year low, tractor retail sales up 8.7% in June, three-wheeler production rising 8.6%, air cargo increasing by 8.1% and port cargo by 5.6%. Additionally, steel consumption grew 7.9%, renewable electricity generation surged 18.2%, crude steel rose 12.2%, finished steel by 12.5%, tractor production climbed 9.8%, cement production was up 7%, and capital goods output (IIP) jumped 14.1% in May 2025. Rahul Gandhi has hit a new low by echoing "dead economy" jibe — a shameful insult to the aspirations, achievements, and well-being of the Indian people. But let's be honest — the only thing truly "dead" here is Rahul Gandhi's own political credibility and legacy.

Trump's 25% Tariff Move

Earlier on Wednesday, the US President Trump announced to impose a 25 per cent tariff on all goods coming from India starting August 1, plus an unspecified penalty for buying Russian crude oil and military equipment.

In a post on his social media platform Truth Social, Trump cited India's high tariffs, stringent non-monetary trade barriers and continued military and

energy ties with Russia as the basis for the move.

"India is our friend, but we have... done relatively little business with them because their tariffs are far too high... and they have the most strenuous and obnoxious non monetary trade barriers of any country," Donald Trump wrote.

He further criticised India's defense and energy relationship with Russia, saying, "They have always bought a vast majority of their military equipment from Russia, and are Russia's largest buyer of ENERGY, along with China, at a time when everyone wants Russia to STOP THE KILLING IN UKRAINE- ALL THINGS NOT GOOD!"

"INDIA WILL THEREFORE BE PAYING A TARIFF OF 25%, PLUS A PENALTY FOR THE ABOVE, STARTING ON AUGUST FIRST," he concluded.

Later, he criticised India's trade policies and its ties with Russia. In his post, Trump dismissed concerns over India's relationship with Moscow, stating, "I don't care what India does with Russia. They can take their dead economies down together, for all I care." "The Government has taken note of a statement by the US President on bilateral trade. The Government is studying its implications," an official statement said.



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How Many Dead Babies Does A War Need?

How many dead babies are enough to avenge an infiltration attack claiming the lives of military personnel, civilians of all ages, and dogs? It appears Benjamin Netanyahu has thrown out his computing gadgets lest he be held for a number-to-number stocktaking of his vengeance. No number is enough to satiate the bloodlust of a once-discredited political leader who has not only made a political comeback by unleashing a never-ending war on Palestine, but also radicalised a large number of his countrymen, possibly irrevocably.

Gaza is starving. Nobody cares.

At least nobody in a position to stop Netanyahu cares. The President of the United States, Donald Trump, for instance, demands an effusive thank you for sending aid for food. He may not realise, but starvation - that he acknowledged - impairs cognitive, motor, and speech functions before causing death. Starving people cannot possibly sing paeans. But expect Trump to mention this 'ingratitude' at least 18 times in different contexts.

India Knows

Recently, at the United Nations Security Council, India emphasised the need for sustained humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine and a two-state solution. But what do such utterances even mean on the ground? India, a country that has known man-made famines far too well, understands starvation. Indian children remain stunted and malnourished, owing to skewed wealth distribution. India must speak louder than anyone else about it.

India once spoke, nay, thundered, in the western capital cities, demanding justice for a beleaguered people. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi raised the issue of atrocities unleashed by West Pakistanis on their Bengali compatriots in East Pakistan in 1971. Surely, even then, the West did not care. Just like it has turned a blind eye towards a genocide unfolding and televised in real time.

Remember 'Blood Telegram'?

The few conscientious objectors, such as Archer Blood, the US Consul General posted in Dhaka, along with a handful of his diplomatic colleagues on the ground, were the exceptions proving the rule. Blood's communication to Washington about the massacre of Bengali-speaking Muslims and Hindus was duly rewarded by Presi-



dent Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger with an immediate recall. 'Blood Telegram', as the dissenting communication was later famous, was a strongly worded letter. Sample this: "Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy... But we have chosen not to intervene, even morally, on the grounds that the Awami conflict, in which unfortunately the overworked term genocide is applicable, is purely an internal matter of a sovereign state."

Academics, security analysts, diplomats, and politicians across the world can continue to quibble about the word "genocide" while children continue to be killed. It was contested during Bangladesh's war of independence, and it's being contested now. People continue to die. Those who care more for semantics than human beings now have blood on their hands. The situation is so bad in Gaza that even the television media in India has got its tongue back, and there is a trickle of coverage on what has been transpiring for almost two years. The situation is so bad that even some fundamentalist Hindu ideologues are vocal about the trauma and tribulations of the children of Gaza.

The Logic Of Vengeance

Not only is all this noise too insignificant, but it is too late. A miracle of human will is needed to stop this destruction that has gone beyond all frontiers of logical warfare. But this is how the logic of vengeance works. This is why the vengeance-seeker was chased by the Furies, the most dreadful creatures in Greek mythology. This is why the Mahabharata does not condone vengeance even in a deadly battle. Because once vengeance is unleashed, there is no way to control its trajectory or outcome. What we are seeing today is Netanyahu's further manipulation of vengeance. He has successfully

weaponised the fear complex of Israelis. What he has also succeeded in doing is creating a hostile, even threatening, environment for Jews everywhere in the world. Antisemitism is on the rise, and even those Jews who have nothing to do with Israel's actions against the people of Palestine are not spared the hate.

The 2018 Visit

One could argue that India's silence on the issue of starvation in Gaza is not necessarily due to apathy, but rather reflects its complex foreign policy calculus. It still does

not make sense. Given New Delhi's historical support for Palestine, this supposed 'neutrality', citing a strategic relationship with Israel, is incongruous. PM Narendra Modi is the only Indian head of government to have visited Ramallah in the West Bank, in 2018 - an unprecedented act of solidarity. Many compare India to Israel and seek to justify the latter's actions against Palestine as they would against Pakistan. Is it time for that fallacy to be junked?

The secular democratic India has nothing in common with a state founded on religious exclusion that has now ached the art of weaponising persecution complex to massacre those who do not belong. Indians may find a similar state in their neighbourhood.

India must speak out, loud and clear, on Gaza. Because, as Martin Luther King Jr once said, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." Whom do the deliberately, systematically starved children of Gaza not affect?

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‘Call Trump A Liar’: Why PM Modi Has Done Well By Ignoring Rahul’s Dare



Rahul Gandhi has set the Prime Minister a test. Speaking in the Lok Sabha, the Congress scion taunted the Prime Minister thus: “If Modi ji has even 50% of the courage that Indira Gandhi had, then clearly he must say in Parliament – Donald Trump (U.S. President) is lying... Trump you’re a liar you did not make a ceasefire...”

The taunt caparisons a shrill campaign launched by the Congress aimed at providing Modi some sort of gateway to redemption in the public sphere as if he needed one. For the past few weeks, the principal opposition party has sought to establish that Modi “surrendered” India’s strategic autonomy—that he did so by agreeing to a Donald Trump-dictated ceasefire just as India’s armed forces had gained the upper hand over Pakistan’s military during Op Sindoor. Trump has inadvertently helped the Congress party’s cause by repeatedly crediting himself for “brokering a truce” between his “two great friends”—Modi and General Asim Munir. Nevertheless, to call upon Prime Minister Modi to publicly label the head of a partner nation—a key strategic ally—as a liar is shallow, inflammatory, and counterproductive.

If not Rahul Gandhi himself, then surely his so-called seasoned advisors in the Congress party should recognise that

performative diplomacy is, at best, a tone-deaf spectacle—and at worst, a ham-fisted ploy deployed by image-obsessed egomaniacs. History offers no shortage of such self-defeating pageants of brinkmanship. While a leader may gain short-term traction on the domestic front, such gambits almost always squander strategic capital abroad.

Consider the example of Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu. For a while, he sought to consolidate his domestic base by donning T-shirts emblazoned with the highly charged ‘India Out’ slogan. Encouraged by the domestic reception to this symbolic provocation, Muizzu escalated by pointedly declining an invitation to attend Modi’s swearing-in ceremony after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections—a clear and highly personalised diplomatic snub. But the decision to trade goodwill with a reliable regional ally for applause at home came at a steep cost. India reviewed its aid and financial cooperation, and tourist inflow from India plummeted—crippling the economy of the heavily tourism-dependent island nation. With livelihoods at stake, the public mood shifted. Muizzu was soon accused by his own base of jeopardizing the country’s economic prospects. Chastened, the once-combative President reversed course. Just

two years after his ill-judged flex, Muizzu rolled out the red carpet for Modi. An even earlier generation of Indians will remember a similar episode of needless performative antipathy – this time from Washington. A taped conversation from June 1971 reveals that then-U.S. President Richard Nixon referred to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as “that old witch” and a “cold-blooded b*tch.” These remarks, shared privately with aides like Henry Kissinger, were more than casual misogyny; they seeped into U.S. foreign policy posture. India, already wary of American double standards, was alienated further. The resulting diplomatic chill pushed New Delhi into closer alignment with Moscow, altering the regional balance of power for decades.

Today, India is at the high table of global diplomacy. The positions it adopts, the relationships it nurtures, and the battles it chooses to fight carry consequences not only for Indian citizens, but for the wider world. As CEO of the world’s largest democracy, Prime Minister Modi cannot afford to lose sight of India’s unique place in the global order—or the responsibility that comes with leading it. He has far more to gain, and much less to lose, by rejecting Rahul Gandhi’s petulant test of performance politics.

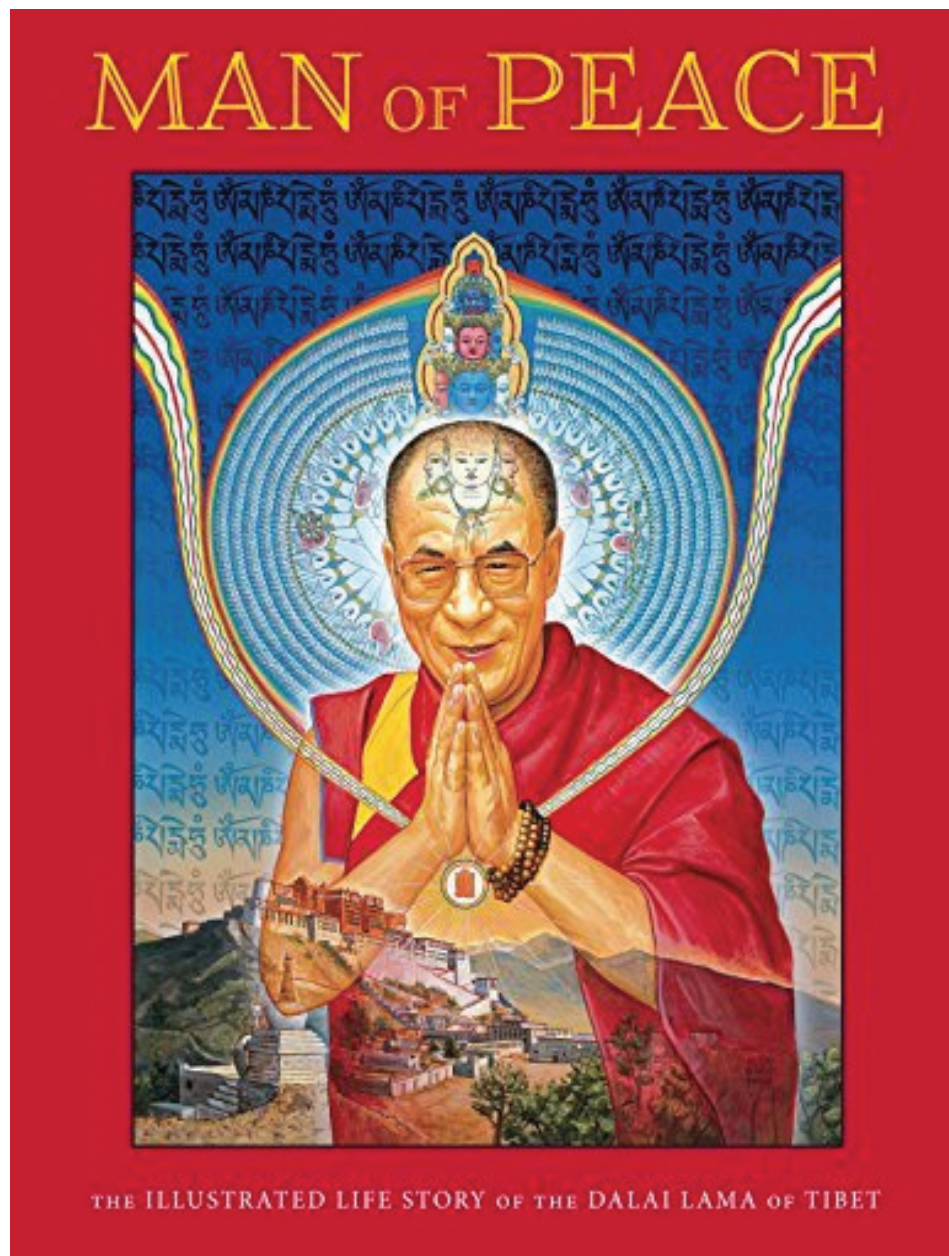
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'Man of Peace' Is More Than Just A Biography Of The Dalai Lama Of Tibet



Man of Peace: The Illustrated Life Story of the Dalai Lama of Tibet' is a powerful illustrated non-fiction graphic novel written by William Meyers, Robert Thurman, and Michael

G. Burbank. The illustrations are presented by Steve Buccellato, Donald Hudson, Kinsun Loh, Miranda Meeks and Andrey Pervukhin. It is a vivid exploration of the life and spiritual journey of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, presented against the turbulent backdrop of Tibet's modern political history. Spanning over a century—from the British invasion of Tibet in 1904 to recent global activism—this book inculcates geopolitics, history, spirituality, and human rights into a visually compelling narrative.

Divided into ten parts, the book documents the Dalai Lama's journey from his birth to his recognition as a global symbol of peace, compassion and resistance. It explores the political turmoil of the 20th century, particularly the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the cultural genocide

that followed. The book confronts difficult realities head-on. It portrays the brutalities of the Chinese invasion, the 1959 Tibetan Uprising, and the massive loss of Tibetan lives, while simultaneously showcasing the resilience and compassion of His Holiness. The first part sets the geopolitical stage, highlighting Tibet's geographic significance and the interplay between powers such as British India, China, Russia, and Mongolia. The visuals combined with historical context—like the Younghusband mission and the 13th Dalai Lama's pilgrimage to India—help readers understand how the Tibetan cause was not just local, but political as well.

The second part focuses on the early years of Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, and his enthronement. His training at Drepung Monastery's Gomang College, where emphasis was laid on logic and debate, is a testament to the deeply scholastic tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

The third and fourth parts capture

the growing tension with Mao Zedong's China. While the Dalai Lama initially tried diplomacy—attending the National Assembly in Beijing and meeting Mao, the atrocities in Amdo and Kham revealed China's true intentions. The supposed peace guaranteed in the 1951 Seventeen Point Agreement was betrayed. By 1959, over 15,000 Tibetans were killed in a matter of days during a violent crackdown. The book provides statistics, maps, and real quotes that reflect emotions arising out of painful historical events. The fifth part shifts to India, where a 23-year-old Dalai Lama finds refuge after fleeing Tibet. His dialogue with Prime Minister Nehru and the UN's 1959 Resolution on Tibet marked the beginning of Tibet's internationalization. While India's support remained mostly humanitarian, the global recognition of the Tibetan cause was a turning point.

In the sixth and seventh parts, the book traces the 1960s and 1970s. The Dalai Lama is shown engaging with world leaders, including Indira Gandhi, while atrocities in Tibet continued. The narration is explained in the backdrop of global events which includes Cold War dynamics, China-US rapprochement, and Vietnam—which shaped the Dalai Lama's path. Simultaneously, he began spreading his spiritual teachings, notably the Kalachakra teachings, making Tibetan Buddhism accessible to Western audiences.

The eighth part presents the Dalai Lama's 1987 Five-Point Peace Plan and his address at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. This section is rich with political nuance from the Tiananmen Square massacre to his receipt of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, the Dalai Lama emerges not just as a spiritual leader, but as a statesman advocating for peaceful solutions rooted in compassion. The ninth and tenth parts cover his increasing global recognition and the challenges he continues to face. From the Lhasa Riots to widespread self-immolations in Tibet to countries hesitating to welcome His Holiness under Chinese pressure, the struggle for Tibetan autonomy remains unresolved. The book ends with the Dalai Lama's three lifelong commitments—as a human being, a Buddhist monk, and a Tibetan.

What makes this book truly stand out is the graphic novel format, which allows complex ideas such as geopolitical negotiations, refugee trauma, spiritual wisdom—to be presented in a way that is accessible, yet keeping the details intact. Readers unfamiliar with the China-Tibet issue will benefit from the concise timelines, maps, and infographics embedded within the book.

However, there are some limitations. It may not be suitable for children under 12, as it contains graphic depictions of violence, politically sensitive language, and mature themes such as torture and immolation. The reading experience can also be dense at times, requiring readers to pause, reflect, and sometimes research further. The readers may find it a bit tedious to read this book in a single sitting as the reading demands attention and emotional engagement. The authors made concerted efforts in deepening the understanding of the Tibetan cause and to induce feelings of courage, patience, and standing up for what is right, even when the odds are against the situation. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's character which embodies resilience, gentleness and pragmatism is beautifully portrayed. The scenes of cultural preservation, like the founding of Tibet House in the U.S., or the construction of Kalachakra temple in St. Petersburg, Russia reveal how deeply rooted he is in his spiritual tradition while being open to modern dialogue.

Ultimately, Man of Peace is more than just a biography. It is a dialogue on identity crisis, loss, resistance, and hope. For students of international relations, it offers insight into realpolitik, diplomacy, and moral leadership. For readers seeking the spiritual aspect, it presents a lived example of non-violence and inner strength. And for everyone else, it's a reminder that one person's life can transcend beyond their territory. This book will be enticing for anyone interested in world history, peace movements, and spiritual resilience. It will instill a shift in perspective regarding leadership and invoke a renewed belief in the power of compassion as a tool of resistance.

How Smartwatches Can Help You Take Control of Your Health

In today's fast-paced world, staying on top of your health can feel like a challenge. But with the rise of wearable technology, particularly smartwatches, managing your well-being has become easier and more efficient. These wrist-worn devices are more than just trendy gadgets; they're powerful health companions that provide real-time insights into your body's functions, helping you build healthier habits with data-backed motivation. One of the key benefits of a smartwatch is its ability to monitor your heart rate continuously throughout the day. This feature allows users to detect unusual patterns, track cardiovascular fitness, and even catch early signs of stress or overexertion. Many smartwatches also come equipped with ECG (electrocardiogram) capabilities, allowing users to monitor heart rhythm irregularities from the comfort of home—potentially flagging



issues before they become serious. Another valuable feature is sleep tracking. A good night's rest is crucial for both mental and physical health, and smartwatches provide insights into sleep duration, quality, and cycles. With this information, users can make better lifestyle choices, such as adjusting their bedtime routines or limiting caffeine intake. Over time, this can lead to improved energy levels, better focus, and a stronger immune system. Smartwatches also encourage users to stay active by tracking steps,

setting movement goals, and offering reminders to get up and stretch throughout the day. More advanced models even track specific workouts, calculate calories burned, and provide feedback on pace and progress. For those managing weight, chronic conditions like diabetes, or simply aiming to stay fit, this data is a powerful tool for accountability and consistency. Finally, the integration of mindfulness and stress management features in many smartwatches, such as guided breathing sessions and stress level tracking, highlights their role in mental well-being. In a world where burnout is common, these gentle reminders to pause and breathe can make a significant difference in managing daily pressure. Smartwatches are no longer just luxury items—they're practical tools that empower individuals to take control of their health.

Anti-ageing products in your 20s? What dermatologists say

The skincare industry has seen a major shift from a 3-step cleansing routines to prioritising anti-ageing products.

Previously, products specifically reserved for older age groups like retinol (a derivative of vitamin A) are now found in the beauty drawers of millennials and Gen Z. But what is driving this trend? Is it an educated choice based on skincare science or just a byproduct of changing beauty standards and skincare attitude? Although these products promise long-term gains, they also require careful usage and guidance to truly be effective and safe.

CULTURAL, SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCES

Society's obsession with "youthful" and "glowing" skin has created an environment where proactive skincare is celebrated. With Instagram,



healthcare routines have transformed into a content-creation ritual, a habit showcased to the public rather than solely for personal upkeep. Social media influencers tirelessly promote and disseminate "anti-ageing" tricks,

alongside endless viral transformation highlights and product suggestion videos. "I started using anti-ageing products like retinol at around 19, although I don't use them very often. I was influenced mostly by social media and the people around me who were starting to focus on skincare," said 21-year-old Maria, who thinks that anti-ageing products could delay her wrinkles. The idea of "preventive care" has become popular online, not just with dermatologists but also among lifestyle creators. Preventing wrinkles, fine lines and dullness before they appear is now seen by many as responsible self-care. Beauty brands have cleverly promoted anti-ageing products as crucial youthful investments, appealing even to individuals showing no signs of ageing.



Why eczema in babies is on the rise and what parents can do about it

In recent years, doctors are noticing a steady rise in babies developing a severe skin condition called eczema, also known as atopic dermatitis. This common but often distressing skin condition typically shows up within the first few months of life and can leave newborns uncomfortable, itchy, and cranky. While it's treatable, experts say it's important for parents to understand the condition early to take preventive steps. "Eczema often begins as dry or red patches on the cheeks, scalp, or behind the ears. Over time, it can spread to the belly, arms, or legs. Unlike heat rashes or baby acne that come and go quickly, eczema lingers, and it itches a lot. Babies might even scratch during their sleep, which worsens the irritation," explains Dr. Ruby Sachdev, Consultant Aesthetic Physician at Gleneagles Hospital, Bengaluru. According to Dr. Vittal Kumar Kesireddy, Consultant & In-charge, Department of Paediatrics at CARE Hospitals, Hyderabad, "In infants, the rash commonly appears with tiny blisters or crusting. It's different from conditions like cradle cap or seborrheic dermatitis, which are less itchy and typically affect the scalp and eyelids." Doctors say both genetics and modern environments are to blame for this increase.

How nutritious is your diet?

Maintaining a good diet and keeping a check on your nutritional intake is easy now with cools apps and gadgets



One of the key factors of staying healthy is maintaining a good diet and keeping a check on your nutritional intake. Most people just focus on their workout routines or opt for self-

researched crash diet programs, but thankfully, like with most things these days, there are smarter and seamless ways to go about it now. If you use a Fitbit or Apple Watch

or similar wearables, you can keep a tab on your calorie count by logging your food intake on their companion apps. But that's that. If you are in the market for a new

one, you might want to consider GOQii, a fitness tracker that is backed by an ecosystem of nutritionists, personal trainers, and wellness experts. GOQii aims to tap the otherwise meaningless stream of data that fitness wearables throw at you and make it useful for you via intervention of qualified experts remotely.

An easy way to get started with diet management is via smartphone apps that help you with logging your food intake and keeping a tab on your diet, with additional features like customized diet plans, nutrition charts, weight tracking, et al. Calorie Counter by FatSecret is a basic, and completely free, dietary diary to keep a record of the food that you eat and the calories that you burn. It also features a diet calendar and a reference guide to check nutritional value of a variety of foods. Then there's Fooducate that goes beyond diet and weight loss management by not just counting your calories but also helping you analyze the value of the calories consumed to improve your diet.

If you use other fitness apps already to track your runs or workouts, you should look at apps like Lose It!, Lifesum, MyFitnessPal, or MyNetDiary which sync with RunKeeper, Endomondo, Strava, et al as well as Apple HealthKit, Google Fit, and Samsung Health.

Lifesum is actually very good and includes meal plans for several popular diets like keto, low carb, and others. You can also try MyNetDiary if you want to keep a track of things like your blood glucose, heart rate, cholesterol, and more. MyFitnessPal is one of the more popular and older ones in this segment and is easily one of the most well-rounded fitness and nutrition app.

There's also HealthifyMe which is quite popular in India since as a homegrown service, it has the broadest catalogue of Indian food items.

These apps also connect to your Fitbit, Misfit, and Garmin wearables so that your workouts and everything else are also integrated for comprehensive health management.

New drug to treat deadliest TB approved by US drug regulator

Pretamonid, a novel compound developed by the non-profit organization TB Alliance, was approved by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) on August 14.

The US drug regulator has approved a new tuberculosis (TB) drug for treating hard-to-treat drug-resistant TB that makes the treatment regimen shorter and simpler.

Pretamonid, a novel compound developed by the non-profit organization TB Alliance, was approved by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) on August 14.

TB is the leading infectious cause of death worldwide, killing at least 1.6 million people annually. There are more than half a million cases of multi drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) annually, with about 6% of those cases being extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) cases. India accounts for nearly a quarter of the global TB cases.

The new drug was approved under the Limited Population Pathway for Antibacterial and

Antifungal Drugs (LPAD pathway) as part of a three-drug, six-month, all-oral regimen for the treatment of people with XDR-TB or MDR-TB, who are treatment-intolerant or non-responsive.

The LPAD pathway was established by FDA as a tool to encourage further development of antibacterial and antifungal drugs to treat serious, life-threatening infections that affect a limited population of patients with unmet needs.

"FDA approval of this treatment represents a victory for the people suffering from these highly drug-resistant forms of the world's deadliest infectious disease," said Mel Spigelman, MD, president and CEO of TB Alliance. "The associated novel regimen will hopefully provide a shorter, more easily manageable and highly efficacious treatment for those in need."

The three-drug regimen consisting of bedaquiline, pretomanid and linezolid - collectively referred to as the BPAL regimen - was studied in the pivotal Nix-TB trial across three sites in South Africa. The trial enrolled 109 people with XDR-TB and also MDR-TB.

Nix-TB data demonstrated a successful outcome in 95 of the first 107 patients after six months of treatment with BPAL and six months of post-treatment follow-up. For two patients, treatment was extended to nine months. TB, in all forms, is treated with a combination of drugs; the most drug-sensitive forms of TB require six months of treatment using four anti-TB drugs.

Treatment of XDR-TB or MDR-TB takes longer and is more expensive, with patients currently taking a combination of as many as eight antibiotics,



some involving daily injections, for 18 months or longer.

"Until very recently, people infected with highly drug-resistant TB had poor treatment options and a poor prognosis," said Dr. Francesca Conradie, principal investigator of the Nix-TB trial. "This new regimen provides hope with 9 out of 10 patients achieving culture negative status at 6 months post-treatment with this short, all-oral regimen."

The drug is likely to be available in the US markets by the end of 2019.

TB activists want the drug to be made affordable so that poor

patients could also access it.

"As the third new drug developed for TB in over half a century, and the first to be developed as part of a ready-to-use treatment regimen, pretomanid's approval represents another potent tool for tackling difficult-to-treat drug-resistant forms of TB," said Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), in a statement.

"However, it must be made affordable to everyone who needs it, especially considering the substantial taxpayer and philanthropic contributions that went into its development," it added.

Kyunki Tulsī is back...

Nostalgia is in the air with Smriti Irani's Tulsī Virani back on the small screen to unravel the Virani family saga, the *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* reboot promising a familiar story rooted in tradition 25 years after it sparked a daily soap trend. The show, which began airing on Star Plus and JioHotstar on Tuesday night, is remembered for bringing families together in front of the television as they breathlessly watched the goings-on in the affluent joint family. The first episode focuses on the 38th wedding anniversary of the main protagonists, Mihir and Tulsī. The ideal daughter-in-law is now at the helm of affairs in

the Virani family mansion Shanti Niketan and the story opens with her praying to a tulsī plant and reciting the Gayatri Mantra. The tone is set — apparently not very different from 2000 when the Ekta Kapoor show first began airing. It went on for 1,800 more episodes right up to 2008. Two main characters have died — Ba and Savita Virani are now pictures on the wall and Tulsī is seen reminiscing about the days gone by and speaking to them. Several old-timers made sure to tune into the show, which created a buzz with BJP leader Smriti Irani returning to acting after a long hiatus.

Naseer to play JRD Tata

On the 121st birth anniversary of Indian visionary and Bharat Ratna recipient, JRD Tata, Amazon MX Player and Almighty Motion Picture unveiled the first look of their upcoming series *Made in India – A Titan Story*, offering a glimpse of the cinematic JRD Tata, portrayed by veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah. Produced by Prabhleen Sandhu, directed by Robby Grewal and written by Karan Vyas, the series captures the remarkable journey of vision, enterprise, and nation-building that defined JRD Tata's legacy. The show also stars Jim Sarbh as Xerxes Desai, the pioneering founder of Titan Watch Company, alongside a stellar ensemble cast featuring Namita Dubey, Vaibhav Tatwawadi, Kaveri Seth, Lakshvir Saran and Paresh Ganatra. *Made in India – A Titan Story* is slated for an early next year release on Amazon MX Player.



Shilpa Shetty Reflects on the Golden '90s, Life Lessons, and Choosing Roles That Matter

Shilpa Shetty, a name synonymous with elegance and evolution, continues to embrace each phase of life with grace and grit. In a recent conversation with Femina, the Bollywood icon opened up about her deep-rooted nostalgia for the 1990s, her purposeful career choices, and the emotional toll of transformative roles that shaped not just her career but her identity as a woman. Calling the '90s her favorite era in cinema, Shilpa said, "The '90s were gold." It wasn't just about box office success or glamour—it was about freedom and joy. She reminisced about playing cards with co-stars into the early hours, sharing biryani on set, and living life without the constant intrusion of paparazzi. That era, she says, allowed actors to be fully present, both on and off-screen. "We could live," she said, reflecting on a time when connection and camaraderie were central to the film experience. Despite her fondness for the past, Shilpa's journey since then has been anything but stagnant. As the 2000s unfolded, she chose a more intentional path. While many in the industry focused on increasing their film count, Shilpa became more selective. Prioritizing

"depth over dilution," she started taking on roles that aligned with her values and life changes, particularly after becoming a mother to Viaan in 2012 and Samisha in 2020. Her guiding principle: every project must be significant enough to justify time away from her children. One such defining role was in *Phir Milenge*, where she portrayed an HIV-positive corporate lawyer. The performance demanded not just emotional depth but personal vulnerability. "I would sit in my room after doing the scene... I burst out crying and I was inconsolable for a very long time," she shared. The experience left such a profound impact that she donated her earnings from the film to AIDS-related charities, a gesture reflecting her compassion beyond the screen. Shilpa's boundless enthusiasm, which she calls her "non-stop, next-thing energy," has fueled her diverse ventures—from acting and wellness to business and parenting. Proudly owning her Gemini nature, she joked, "Why would I want to slow the Gemini down? I'm so happy and fortunate that I'm born as one and got two for free!" Her drive for excellence and aversion to mediocrity continue to guide her evolving legacy.



Salman Khan Reflects on Powerful Life Lesson from Father Salim Khan: “Mistakes Repeated Become Your Character”



Salman Khan, known for his mass appeal and larger-than-life screen presence, recently took a reflective turn on social media, sharing a profound piece of advice given to him by his father, legendary screenwriter Salim Khan. In a post that quickly caught the attention of fans, Salman paired a brooding black t-shirt photo with a caption that went far deeper than just style. “Present becomes your past, past catches up to your future. Present is a gift, do right with it. Mistakes repeated become a habit, and then your character. Don’t blame anyone. No one can make you do anything you don’t want to,” he wrote, quoting his father’s words. The actor added his own introspective note, admitting, “Kash I heard this earlier but never too late,” signaling both reflection and growth. Fans were quick to praise the candid post. One admirer commented, “When the man speaks, it’s not just a caption... it’s a life lesson.” Another added, “Beautiful words,” while others

highlighted the emotional maturity and vulnerability Salman showed. His post struck a chord with many, blending wisdom, personal accountability, and an evolving outlook on life. In addition to the thoughtful message, fans couldn’t help but notice his physical transformation, complimenting his look and visible fitness. Comments were filled with admiration for both his appearance and the depth of his message. On the professional front, Salman Khan is gearing up for his next big release, *Battle of Galwan*, a film that has already generated buzz thanks to his striking new look. He was last seen in *Sikandar*, and his fans are eagerly awaiting what’s next from the actor both on screen and off. •With this heartfelt post, Salman reminded his audience that stardom aside, he remains grounded in the timeless values and life lessons passed down by his father—lessons he now seems ready to embrace more fully.

Vidya Balan's debut film *Parineeta* to re-release in theatres after 20 years

Vidya Balan's iconic film 'Parineeta' is set to re-release in theatres. The film's comeback in theatres marks its 20th anniversary.

'Parineeta' is making a grand return to the big screen. To mark 20 years since its original release in 2005, the iconic romantic drama is being re-released in select theatres across India by PVR INOX. The restored and remastered version is part of a larger celebration that not only commemorates the film but also honours 20 years of Vidya Balan in cinema and 50 years of Vinod Chopra Films. The film will hit theatres on August 29. The re-release holds a special place in the actor's heart. "This is a very emotional moment for me. 'Parineeta' is where it all began. Every frame of the film carries a piece of my heart, and I'll forever be grateful to Pradeep da (my Dada) and Mr Vinod Chopra for believing in me. I owe so much of who I am as an actor to this film. Even after all these years, people remember the film, the songs, and how it made them feel. People say every frame in the film is like a painting, and that is Pradeep Sarkar's magic. So I do hope people and the

new generation discover old-world love through 'Parineeta'."

Actor Saif Ali Khan, who starred opposite Vidya, also recalled the film's impact on his career. "'Parineeta' was a turning point for me, a film that allowed me to explore a quieter, more restrained side of my personality. It had elegance, depth, and a certain old-world charm that's rare to come by. Working with Vidya, Pradeep da, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Sanju, and the entire team was truly special. I have very warm memories of the film, and it will always hold a meaningful place in my journey," he said.

Reflecting on the re-release, producer Vidhu Vinod Chopra said, "Parineeta has always held a special place in my heart. It's more than just a film, it's a journey of love, elegance, and soulful music. Every frame carries its own emotion, evolving with the story in a way that touches something deep within. And now, in the restored and remastered 8k version, the visuals are even richer and the beautiful locations



even more beautiful. I am so proud of Pradeep Sarkar for the way he made this film, the way he captured the grandeur of old Kolkata and infused it with timeless beauty that still lingers." *Parineeta*, directed by the late

Pradeep Sarkar and produced by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, is based on Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's 1914 Bengali novel. The film is known for its music by Shantanu Moitra and its beautiful Kolkata backdrop.

LINDSAY LOHAN EMBRACES QUIET LIFE IN DUBAI

"I Feel Very Safe, Far from Hollywood's Spotlight"

Hollywood actress Lindsay Lohan has opened up about her peaceful and private life in Dubai, where she now resides with her husband, financier Bader Shammass, and their son, Luai. Speaking during an appearance on Live with Kelly and Mark to promote her upcoming film *Freakier Friday*, Lohan reflected on the contrast between her past life in the U.S. entertainment spotlight and her current life in the UAE. Lohan, who rose to fame as a child actor in films like *The Parent Trap* (1998), *Freaky Friday* (2003), and *Mean Girls* (2004), said she now enjoys a much more relaxed lifestyle. "It's just far away from Hollywood. I live a very normal life," she explained. "There's no worry of, like, 'I can't eat at this place because someone's going to take a picture of my son.' I feel very safe." She added that privacy laws in Dubai prohibit people from taking photographs without consent. "You can't even take a picture of someone else if you're at

a restaurant unless you ask. That's a big difference. The privacy is unique," she said, noting how different that experience is compared to life in the U.S., where paparazzi culture is intense. However, not everything is perfect in paradise. When asked if she had found New York-style pizza in Dubai, Lohan admitted, "Not like New York. No. The first thing I do when I visit New York is get a bagel and pizza. My husband's talked about bringing New York pizza to Dubai." Lohan moved to Dubai in 2014, got engaged to Shammass in 2021, and married him in 2022. The couple welcomed their son in July 2023. Now, she's preparing for the August 8 release of *Freakier Friday*, a sequel to the beloved Disney hit. Lohan reprises her role as Anna Coleman, alongside returning stars Jamie Lee Curtis and Chad Michael Murray. This time, she also serves as executive producer on the film.

Mrunal Thakur cheers for Dhadak 2 ahead of clash with Son of Sardaar 2. Triptii reacts

Actor Mrunal Thakur expressed her excitement for the upcoming release of 'Son of Sardaar 2' and 'Dhadak 2'. Despite her own film releasing on the same day, she extended her best wishes to the team of *Dhadak 2*. Both films are slated to hit theatres on August 1. 'Dhadak 2' actor Triptii Dimri responded to the post, saying she hopes both films 'find the love they deserve'. On Tuesday, Thakur posted on her Instagram story: "It's release week and the excitement is real. Such an incredible moment for #TeamSOS2 and #TeamDhadak2. Just four days to go and I can hardly contain it! Massive

congratulations and all the best to Siddhant Chaturvedi, Triptii Dimri and the entire *Dhadak 2* team. Here's to two beautiful releases and all the love coming our way. Originally scheduled for a July 25 release, 'Son of Sardaar 2' was moved to August 1. 'Son of Sardaar 2' is a spiritual sequel to the 2012 blockbuster 'Son of Sardaar', with actor Ajay Devgn leading the ensemble. Along with Devgn and Thakur, the movie also stars Ravi Kishan, Neeru Bajwa, Deepak Dobriyal, Kubbra Sait, Chunky Panday and Sanjay Mishra, among others.



Akshay Kumar confirms return of Hera Pheri trio, says announcement coming soon

After much speculation and buzz in recent months, actor Akshay Kumar has finally confirmed the third installment of the iconic 2000s comedy 'Hera Pheri'. From legal issues to cast exits, fans were left unsure whether the beloved trio would reunite again. Now, putting all doubts to rest, Akshay Kumar has confirmed that the film is very much in the works and that all issues have been resolved.

In a recent conversation on The Right Angle with Sonal Kalra Season 2, produced by Gautam Thakker Films, Akshay said, "Nahi, yeh publicity stunt nahi hai (No, this is not a publicity stunt.)

The things went legal, so when legal things are involved, we cannot call it a publicity stunt; it is a real thing." He further reassured fans by adding, "But ab sab kuch thik ho gaya hai (But now everything is fine.) Very soon, some kind of announcement can come. Yes, there were some ups and downs. But now everything is solved, and we are back together, and we have always been together. Yes, that's it!" His statement comes as a major relief to fans who were disheartened by earlier reports of creative and contractual conflicts, including rumours that Paresh Rawal had walked

out and that Akshay himself had stepped away from the film. A few weeks after saying Paresh Rawal had left 'Hera Pheri 3', the actor has now confirmed that he is back in the film. While talking to Himanshu Mehta on his podcast, the actor also spoke about the issues related



to the movie and praised Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, and director Priyadarshan.

TERROR ACCUSED TO MP TO ACQUITTAL

Behind The Fall And Rise Of Pragya Thakur

“Blessing in disguise” and “opportunity in adversity” are phrases that have proven true for Pragya Singh, the saffron-clad woman from Madhya Pradesh, whom her followers address as a sadhvi.

In 2008, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) labelled her a “terrorist,” but that very tag paved her way to a seat in the Lok Sabha. She was elected Member of Parliament (MP) from Bhopal on a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ticket.

On September 29, 2008, a powerful blast tore through Malegaon, a town in northern Maharashtra. Initially, the ATS suspected the involvement of banned Muslim extremist organisations like the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), as prior blast cases across India had revealed the role of Pakistani and homegrown terror groups. However, the ATS, led by the late IPS officer Hemant Karkare, shocked the nation with its findings. They revealed that the Malegaon blast was an act of “saffron terror,” with all perpetrators being Hindus. This was unsettling, as it was one of the first cases in recent decades, at least of this magnitude, where Hindus were accused of such a terrorist act.

The ATS investigation traced the blast to a motorcycle, which led them to Pragya Singh. The bomb was allegedly planted on the bike, which belonged to her. Pragya Singh, the daughter of an ayurvedic practitioner and a motorcycle enthusiast, is from Bhind in Madhya Pradesh. During her student days, she was associated with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the BJP’s ideological mentor Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

In later years, she joined several other RSS-affiliated women’s organisations. The ATS arrested her, and after interrogating her and other accused, concluded that she was the mastermind of the Malegaon blast, which claimed six lives and left hundreds injured. Pragya Singh alleged she was tortured in ATS custody and made specific accusations of ill-treatment against then-ATS chief Hemant



Karkare and Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Parambir Singh. She detailed the alleged atrocities in an affidavit filed before the court. Her bitterness toward the ATS was evident in her reaction to the news of Hemant Karkare’s death at the hands of Pakistani terrorists on November 26, 2008. She said his death was the result of her curse. The Human Rights Commission

conducted an inquiry, but the allegations of torture could not be substantiated. Pragya Singh’s arrest occurred when the Congress-NCP alliance ruled Maharashtra, and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA-1) was in power at the centre. The BJP and other allied organisations rallied in her support, alleging that the “saffron terror” narrative was fabricated to appease

Muslim voters ahead of the 2009 Maharashtra assembly election. Adding to the sympathy for Pragya Singh was the news of her cancer diagnosis during her incarceration. She caused a stir by claiming she was cured of the disease by consuming cow urine and panchagavya. While the investigating agency portrayed her as the prime conspirator in the Malegaon blast, many

rightwing organisations publicised her as a symbol of alleged atrocities against Hindus during the Congress-NCP regime. Capitalizing on this image, the BJP offered her a ticket for the Bhopal Lok Sabha seat in 2019. She won by a margin of 364,822 votes, defeating Congress leader Digvijay Singh. However, the BJP did not field her as a candidate in 2024, choosing Alok Sharma instead. A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court acquitted Pragya Singh and dismissed the prosecution’s case. The prosecution failed to prove that the explosives were planted on the motorcycle or that the motorcycle belonged to her. Key figures in the government appeared satisfied with the prosecution’s defeat in the legal battle. The government’s response suggested it will not challenge the order in a higher court. However, the families of the Malegaon victims have announced their intent to contest the order in the high court.

INDIAN RAILWAY STATIONS ARE FAILING WOMEN. DARK CORNERS, BROKEN CCTVS, LOITERING MEN, RAPE

When 35-year-old N left home after a fight with her husband and reached Kurukshetra station in Haryana, two men offered to help. They said they’d take her somewhere safe. Instead, they led her into an empty coach and sexually assaulted her. Two days later, she was found near the tracks in Sonapat, bleeding, her leg severed by a train. Still dazed and recovering at the government hospital in Rohtak, N says the men told her they had been sent by her husband. She realised something was wrong when they put their hands on her. At least two other men allegedly joined them. They took turns raping her and guarding the door. She says she had been drugged and could barely move. “I screamed and pleaded with them to stop touching me,” whispered N, left weak and emaciated after the ordeal. “I told them I lost my son a few months ago, they did not listen.” After the 24 June gang-rape incident became public, there was widespread outrage online. Women spoke up about feeling unsafe at stations after dark. Poor CCTV coverage, porous entry points, and unguarded gates have turned railway stations into easy hunting grounds. These are transient spaces, often chaotic, where women travel alone, wait overnight, or fall asleep mid-journey. Among them are vulnerable groups like runaway teenagers

and women escaping poverty in villages. “When even the train is no longer safe... then where should girls go?” asked an X user. Another called it “heart-wrenching” that a woman who “thought railway travel was safe and trustworthy” could be attacked by “monsters” without anyone noticing. On 17 July, the National Human Rights Commission took cognisance of the matter and issued notices to the Railway Board chairman, Ministry of Railways, and the Haryana Director General of Police. It demanded a detailed report within two weeks, including whether the authorities had provided compensation to the victim. The Kurukshetra case reinforces that trains and stations have proved as dangerous as any dark alley for many women. On 30 June, a man kidnapped a 16-year-old girl from Thane district and raped her on an Akola-bound train. In April, a woman travelling from Kerala to Bihar was raped near a poorly lit stretch close to Bengaluru’s KR Puram station, where she had stepped out to buy food. A similar incident took place at Bareilly Junction in March, when a 14-year-old girl was sexually assaulted and left in critical condition after she got down from a moving train to look for her father. Law and order at railway stations is split between the Government Railway Police (GRP) and the

Railway Protection Force (RPF). The GRP, under state governments, handles criminal cases and can file FIRs. The RPF, under the Ministry of Railways, is tasked with safeguarding railway property and ensuring passenger safety, but cannot register criminal complaints. The GRP reported 331 cases of assault against women with intent to outrage the modesty and 24 rape and attempted rape cases in 2022, according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau report. In 2019, before train travel was disrupted by Covid-19 restrictions, it recorded 224 cases of assault on women and 28 cases of rape and attempted rape. But these statistics don’t account for unreported cases, ranging from harassment and molestation to men entering women-only coaches. “Women have raised alarms over safety issues, and a lot of measures have been introduced by both police and Railways. But unlike airports, stations aren’t sealed properties, and they’re much cheaper than buses, hence crowd management is a big issue” said Lalit Chandra Trivedi, former general manager of East Central Railway, who has worked across railway zones for 38 years. “Leveraging technology and ensuring stations remain non-porous can make them safer.”

Silence Is Violence: Speak Up and Act to Stop Child Trafficking



New Delhi: July 30 is the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, and the theme this year is as direct as it is urgent: “Human trafficking is Organized Crime – End the Exploitation”. Yet we still hear people ask, “Is trafficking really such a big issue?” “What can we really do about it?” Trafficking is any process that results in exploitation. In India, Article 23 of the Constitution prohibits trafficking as a fundamental right that prescribes punishment and criminality. Human trafficking is the second-largest crime in the world. It generates \$150 billion a year, according to global estimates. One out of every three trafficked persons is a child. With the advancement in communication, technology and permeation of social media, trafficking is no longer a poverty-driven issue. It has become an organised crime with the potential to enter our homes, here and now. If today, we choose to look the other way we will become an ostrich, and also a part of the problem itself. Trafficking Is Hidden In Plain Sight

Before we talk about laws and systems, we have to understand how trafficking operates around us — quietly, invisibly and often in ways that we refuse to acknowledge. A child can be trafficked anywhere through a message, a photograph, or a threat. Trafficking happens in our homes inadvertently when girls brought from Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Bengal by unregistered placement agencies work as domestic help without contracts, wages or protection, often facing physical and sexual abuse that remains invisible behind closed doors. Many times these acts are recorded and used to continue their exploitation through blackmail. We see this play out around us, and still, we remain ignorant. In Bihar, girls are trafficked under the pretext of orchestra performances. They are forced to dance at weddings and strip in front of crowds. Hundreds watch but no one speaks up. The truth is,

trafficking hides behind excuses — poverty, helplessness, demand. The worst part is not that it's happening. It's that we see it and do nothing. Until people speak out, silence is violence. Prosecution As A Tipping Point India has one of the toughest anti-trafficking laws in the world. Traffic in human beings, begar and similar forms of forced labour are offences and must be punished by law. The Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) defines trafficking as a stringent organised crime. Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receiving a person through force, fraud, coercion, abduction or deception of a vulnerable person for exploitation is punishable by up to life imprisonment. Laws mean little to a child who is being exploited and remain meaningless unless enforced. Real protection lies not in legislation alone, but in its ability to reach those who need it most. This is where civil society has stepped in. Just Rights for Children's Access to Justice for Children programme, the largest civil society initiative against child exploitation and sexual abuse in the country, has shown what is possible when the rule of law is made real for the vulnerable.

Between April 2023 and March 2025, JRC achieved over 54,000 prosecutions across 28 states, rescuing more than 85,000 children, mostly from child labour. Centre for Legal Action and Behaviour Change (C-LAB) report, Building the Case for Zero: How Prosecution Acts as the Tipping Point to End Child Labour – The Case from India, drew data from 24 states to show prosecution is key to justice. As per the report, the Just Rights for Children network partners assisted in the rescue of 53,651 children from trafficking and kidnapping in 27,320 raids in 2024–25. Nearly 90 percent were in the worst forms of child labour. Top states were Telangana, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. In 2023, 18,774 prosecutions for human trafficking occurred worldwide, according to the 2024 U.S. TIP Report (India's data wasn't

included). India alone had more than double that number in one year. This is scale. Scale is what organised crime demands. To combat trafficking, prevention must come before protection, protection before prosecution, and prosecution must create the deterrence that leads back to prevention.

Follow The Money, Break The Chain

Prosecution is the beginning of the end of trafficking. As to dismantle an organised crime, we must strike where it hurts. We must start with two principles: look beneath the surface and follow the money. Every trafficked child is part of a chain: source, transit and destination. The trafficker is part of a system. The only way to stop the system is to break every link. That means prosecuting recruiters, transporters and buyers, not just employers. We must cut off the tentacles of trafficking by making it economically unviable — attaching properties, imposing fines, cancelling procurement, blacklisting repeat offenders and shutting down premises.

Without consequences, there is no deterrence. At the same time, we have to ensure long-term support and justice for survivors. We must identify vulnerable families and ensure every government scheme, scholarships, entitlements, protections, reach them. When a child is in school, they are far less likely to be trafficked. Therefore, ensuring universal access to education is critical. India has recognised education as a fundamental right until the age of 14. But to meaningfully reduce vulnerability, education must be free till 18.

A National Strategy With Local Action

Ending trafficking demands a nationwide push rooted in local intelligence. From data to digital tools, the response must be sharp, adaptive and led by those closest to the ground. India has one of the largest offender databases — the National Database of Sex Offenders (NDSO). It helps track patterns,

identify hotspots and build heat maps of high-risk zones. This intelligence comes from survivors. They know who trafficked them. Use it. Share it. Act on it. At Just Rights for Children, our strategy follows the PICKET framework -- Policy, Institutional capacity, Convergence, Knowledge, Economics and Technology.

It begins with strong, clear Policy that supports zero tolerance to child labour and trafficking in supply chains of government and corporate procurement, nimble policies that adapt with the changing nature of trafficking and accountability for implementation of existing laws. Institutions must be equipped and mandated to monitor, prosecute offenders and support survivors in their recovery. From specialised anti-human trafficking units to local village panchayats maintaining migration registers, building institutional strength is critical. Convergence across agencies is vital. NGOs, police, media and citizens must coordinate to share intelligence. Knowledge empowers children, families and communities to recognise and resist exploitation. Survivor insights provide powerful tools to dismantle trafficking networks. Economic deterrents such as attaching properties, imposing fines, cancelling procurement and blacklisting repeat offenders make trafficking financially risky. Technology is a powerful tool. Databases, artificial intelligence, machine learning, heat maps and predictive analytics track traffickers, identify hotspots and predict movement patterns.

Facial recognition systems are already being used at some railway stations. They must be scaled up to identify sex offenders and traffickers. This is how a girl trafficked from West Bengal to the Andamans was rescued in 24 hours. A local NGO alerted police, who contacted the NGO at the destination, and everyone acted. That is coordination. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has saved countless children at stations. Real-time alerts, trained officers, and shared

intelligence make a huge difference.

What Can One Person Do?

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of trafficking, but real change often begins with individual action. We might ask, can one person really make a difference? Recently, one of my colleagues noticed a young girl crying at a traffic signal. Concerned, she stopped to check on her and discovered that the 15-year-old was a victim of child trafficking, rape, forced domestic labour and child marriage.

To hundreds of passersby, she was just another child, invisible in plain sight. But when someone finally stopped to help, that person became her saviour. If you think, one person can't change the world, think again, because the world has always been changed by one person at a time. See. Speak. Report. Act. If you see a child being exploited, speak up. Call the police. Call a helpline. Don't let it pass. What you do in that moment could mean the world to that child.

In massage parlours, spas, orchestras and placement agencies, our response must be faster and stronger. Institutions cannot do this alone. Civil society, media, families and communities have to act together. Political will exists, but enforcement and public resolve are key to ending trafficking. There are still 138 million children trapped in the worst forms of child labour around the world, according to estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF. We have already missed our Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 deadline.

Today, India is leading by example — rescuing one child at a time, securing one prosecution at a time, holding one trafficker accountable at a time. It's time for the world to follow this model, because these 138 million children are not statistics, they are children. And the time to act is not tomorrow, it is now.



The Online Right's Favorite Nativist Slogan Is Gaining Traction in the Real World

Daniel Boone, burial plots and no birthright citizen: Welcome to the MAGA world of “Heritage America.”

Like many social media users, the conservative writer and entrepreneur C.Jay Engel uses his short bio on X to list a few phrases describing himself and his background: “Son of the California Sierras”; “Classical Protestant”; and, in a nod to his proudly reactionary politics, “Counter-Revolutionary.” But the first descriptor in Engel’s bio is the most notable: “Heritage American.”

It’s not a term that the average social media user has likely encountered, let alone heard in casual conversation. But among a certain cohort of young and well-connected conservatives, “heritage American” — used to describe people who trace their roots to the founding generations of the United States — is gaining traction as a kind of slogan of the new nativist right that’s coalesced behind Donald Trump and the MAGA movement.

The term is popping up with more and more frequency among the online right: “Who are Heritage Americans?” reads the headline of a recent Substack post that made the rounds on social media; “Heritage America — Who are they? Why does it matter?” was the title of a recent live-streamed discussion on X. The borders of heritage America, however, are extending beyond the conservative internet. As the Trump administration doubles down on its immigration crackdown and seeks to close long-established pathways to U.S. citizenship, the idea embedded in the slogan — that American identity is defined by ancestry rather than by

adherence to universal principles — is finding real-world expression in the politics and policies of Trump’s GOP.

“Major players in the mainstream are starting to absorb some of the things that we’re thinking about,” said Engel, whose writings on the topic helped popularize the term. “There’s a zeitgeist at play.”

Like a lot of phrases drawn from internet discourse, the precise definition of “heritage America” can get a bit fuzzy around the edges, and its exact meaning remains the subject of some debate. But in its most basic sense, the phrase refers to present-day Americans who trace their ancestral roots to the colonial period, or shortly thereafter. Depending on whom you ask, the category also includes the offspring of Indigenous Americans and the ADOS, or “American descendants of slavery.” But at its most fundamental, said Engel, “heritage American” refers to the offspring of the Anglo-Protestant and Scotch-Irish settlers — in other words, the white people — who populated the original colonies before heading west to settle the American frontier.

Heritage America isn’t just a demographic category, though. It’s also, for lack of a better word, a “vibe,” as the conservative writer and documentarian Jon Harris, who has written about the heritage America debate, put it. Online, a loose aesthetic has developed around the term, cultivated via

memes and viral posts. This aesthetic draws heavily on the nostalgic symbolism of the colonial period and the 19th-century frontier, supplemented by a hefty dose of gauzy Americana. Images of Daniel Boone and his coon-skin-capped pioneers abound, alongside Norman Rockwell paintings of mid-20th-century American life.

“It’s the knight, the cavalier and then the cowboy,” said Harris, who claims direct ancestry from Daniel Boone’s father, Squire Boone. “It’s about what it looks like to be gallant and to have these virtuous characteristics that we associate with the leaders of our civilization.”

While the specific worldview surrounding “heritage America” may have been incubated online, it is increasingly finding its way into the policies and rhetoric of the Trump administration. In a speech at the conservative think tank the Claremont Institute in July, Vice President JD Vance urged conservatives to reject the view that America is founded exclusively on a common creed, reviving a theme from his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention last year. “America is not just an idea — we’re a particular place with a particular people and a particular set of beliefs and way of life,” said Vance, pointing to the frontier mentality that allowed “our ancestors ... to tame a wild continent.” If the subtext wasn’t clear enough, he added: “That is our heritage as Americans.”

The iconography of the heritage

America movement has surfaced in the Trump administration’s messaging in less subtle ways as well. In early July, the Department of Homeland Security’s official account on X posted a painting of a pioneer couple cradling a baby in the back of a covered wagon, under the caption: “Remember your Homeland’s Heritage.” Later the same month, DHS followed that post up with another one featuring John Gast’s painting American Progress, captioned “A Heritage to be proud of, a Homeland worth Defending.” “If the media needs a history lesson on the brave men and women who blazed the trails and forged this Republic from the sweat of their brow, we are happy to send them a history textbook,” said DHS spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin in a written response to a question about the posts. “This administration is unapologetically proud of American history and American heritage.”

When Engel saw the first post from DHS, he was blown away. “It’s kind of jarring to see a department of the federal government recognizing and asserting the goodness of heritage America,” he recalled. But after his initial sense of surprise wore off, it was quickly replaced by amazement. “We’re all partaking in the same process, from Vance down to Twitter people,” he said. “It’s delightful. The self-identified members of heritage America know what you’re probably

thinking: isn’t the term just a not-so-subtle euphemism for “white”? Indeed, as the term has gained traction on the right, critics have charged that conservatives have adopted the term principally as a way “to launder white nationalism with facially neutral language,” as the New York Times’ Ezekiel Kkweku recently put it. Others charge that it’s little more than blood-and-soil nationalism rebranded under a new label.

Engel concedes that some conservatives may use the term this way, but he maintains that the essence of heritage America isn’t reducible to racial or ethnic categories. (A second-generation immigrant from Sweden might be white, he said, but they’re not a heritage American.) Instead, the term is supposed to denote a type of nationalism that threads the needle between creedal nationalism — the idea that American identity derives from universal principles — and purely ethnic or racial nationalism on the other. “A lot of this was me trying to find a third way” between those two positions, Engel said. “I wanted a more classical, more traditional approach to these questions of national identity.”

The origins of the term are, much like its definition, subject to some debate. A pseudonymous influencer who goes by the handle @Indian_Bronson claims to have coined the term sometime in 2021, beginning with a series

Peter Thiel's Transhumanism and the Fear of Human Finitude

A sort of controversy recently made news following Peter Thiel's long and winding interview with the New York Times. Thiel who is a direct backer of J.D. Vance and very close to Donald Trump, is regarded as a highly niche brain among the Silicon Valley tech gurus – one of those supposedly super-intelligent humans for whom every major advance in technology and AI is too little and too late, a sign of a deep-rooted inertia.

Thiel pitches his work and vision at the level of epoch-making disruptions that would end human finitude and usher in eternal immortality. Thiel and others like Marc Andreessen talk as though they are offering liberation to humankind.

The guy who gave the world PayPal payments system and the Palantir surveillance system working closely with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), is also offering the path of human liberation. Palantir's creation myth has it that the firm helped track Osama Bin Laden. Now they are closely aligned with Trump's very own deep state, as Palantir gets an even deeper foothold.

How can we not notice them?

Liberation and human finitude

For a broad contextualisation of what is going on, think of the many promises of liberation the world has seen from the time of the great saints and prophets.

Buddha showed humanity the way to liberation. And so did many other great saints and prophets from Lord Mahavira, Lord Jesus to Prophet Mohammed. No matter how one estimates these great endeavours, we can agree about the following.

In each case, the liberation of humans remained true to the character of humans as finite, limited and suffering beings. Liberation was not about humans striving to be what they are not, humans aspiring to be Gods, humans replacing Gods. Hubris could not be admitted here.

The Buddha shunned such hubris. For him liberation was all about hard ardent work (meditation) on the finite self and body, this little five-foot long body. While rejecting attachment and desire, the Buddha still regarded our earthly existence as who we really are, as fundamental to us.

Liberation was to occur from within the human condition. The human condition was no limit, no disability, no handicap, but the condition to take us to transcendent levels. The finite is the enabling condition for the infinite.

Indeed, closer to our time, Jacques Derrida gave a famous interpretation of Descartes's well known, "I think therefore I am". Derrida showed that Descartes here wanted to highlight our mortality and finitude as precisely what enabled us to soar higher, that is, engage in limitless thought. The latter "I" in "I am", which is the living being subject to death, lives on beyond death as thought, as "I think". Hence, "I think therefore I am".

Not just that. Our finiteness and mortality is integral to us as human beings. It is as mortal beings that we could, as thought, transcend and become universal.

Will humans endure?

But today there are many who seek to achieve liberation not by transcending the limited, finite character of humans but by denying it. They want to somehow exit the human condition and directly devolve into a sovereign and autonomous machinic intelligence, forever immortal and perhaps timeless.

In this approach, humans must cease for immortality to appear. And hence intelligence must be outsourced so that it is no longer subject to the finitude and mortality of humans.

In the interview with the New York Times, Peter Thiel proposed that the trans-in transsexual or transgender should be stretched all the way to trans-human or trans-humanism. He proposed transcending the human condition, into immortality.

"The ideal was this radical transformation where your human, natural body gets transformed into an immortal body".

Ross Douthat, the interviewer, asked, do you think humans will endure? Thiel paused looking rather blank. Douthat seemed restless and jumped right in, gleefully exclaiming, "This is a long hesitation", clearly feeling vindicated. Here was something sensational, a viral gotcha moment, a scoop, for the NYT. As intended, cheap theatrics followed. Soon word went around that Thiel does not want humans to endure and wants big tech to take over the world.

Critics of Thiel would see in his vision the Doomsday dystopia where humans would be slave to machine intelligence – conveniently forgetting that precisely this formulation is flipped around by Thiel and presented as the promise of immortality. "Humans shall not endure" then does not as such put Thiel and his cohorts on the defensive, for this is precisely see a promise of immortality for the new humans or rather humanoids.

Also, not to forget: this long path towards this tech-driven immortality is already a lived experience for much of the world today as it translates into immediate plans. Large tracts of land in the fields of California and the coasts of Honduras are dedicated to the project to build new city-states funded by Peter Thiel among others. The reports title says it all, From Praxis to Prospera, Silicon Valley longs to break free. We know of Freedom cities dreamed of by Trump not in his MAGA moment but in his Peter Thiel moment.

We also know of Trump's backing of blockchain and crypto that are supposed to take care of all decisions as no one, no authority or even elected representative will have to decide anything. In a clearly libertarian mode, they propose the model of zero governance, ushering in frictionless efficiency.

But it is not just about the new forms of organising society and economy, but of a new biologically superior breed of super-humans, as we know from this report in the Washington Post, "Inside the Silicon Valley push to breed super-babies".

Inhuman superintelligence

In other words, for Thiel, machinic intelligence and algorithmic reasoning are not similar (or homological) to human philosophical thought. Thiel would reject any such homology or isomorphism. This allows billionaire tech bros to present what is essentially a social process of technological advancement as their own exceptional creation, innovation or invention.

No wonder Thiel, Musk, Marc Andreessen are touted as super-intelligent billionaires, those working so hard to take us beyond our finite, limited suffering condition and rocket us into immortality. We are supposed to think of them as something like the Nietzschean *Übermensch* of the digital nomadic age, striving to raise humanity out of their self-imposed mediocrity and slave morality! What we get is immortality through superintelligence monetised into billions and billions of dollars. The equivalence between this supposed super-intelligence and tremendous concentration of wealth is established in a way which looks increasingly unassailable to the usual discourses about inequality and income disparities. At one level, this retailing of immortality does look no different than the medieval Church offering redemption and forgiveness by selling well-priced indulgences that the rich could buy. For now Silicon Valley seeks to sell immortality through machinic intelligence and by stealing data from citizens. The difference is of course that now it is about being a higher superior non-human, rather than trying to address a specifically human issue, the problem of suffering or sin.

The corruption of the Church selling indulgences was very human, while the intended clean break with the human that machine intelligence promises, is inhuman – and in fact phony, misleading. Now it is a relation of the inhuman (rather than superhuman) with the human, a higher intelligence lording over humans. Thus we already hear of the rise of a "cognitive elite", what Yuval Noah Harari calls a superior biological caste.

But when immortality gets tied to super intelligence or to a particular purportedly all-powerful mind then it does become pertinent to ask: which mind? The collective, social mind or the mind of the avant-garde higher caste elite lording over humans?

Transhumanism and Marx

We must here take a pause here and broaden our view.

For we soon realise that at one level, indeed at a more fundamental level, there is no problem with transhumanism as such. For when have humans not been about transformation, change, revolution and disruption?

Humans have always transformed nature and in that process transformed themselves. Such were the views that Karl Marx expressed in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844. The cooperative powers of humans produce an intelligence which is homological to

the social dimension. In this view, intelligence cannot be privately appropriated and presented as the super-intelligence which produces billionaires. But this is what capitalism does.

Marx understood and explained that capitalism is really like an incubator of a new kind of intelligence, based on private appropriation of social intelligence. Such are his views in his 1858 *Fragment on Machines*. Capital, in its outer limits, constantly tends towards what Marx called "general intellect". Capital exploits labour-power but ideally it would dream of generating value without labour-power. Marx notes capital's tendency to "reduce labour time to a minimum".

He writes: "capital itself is a moving contradiction, in that it presses to reduce labour time to a minimum, while it posits labour time, on the other side, as sole measure and source of wealth".

There is an ardent desire to detach the capacity of work from the worker. The desire to extract and store the creative powers of labour-power once and for all so that, from then on, value can be created freely in perpetuity. Think of it as a version of killing the goose who lays the golden eggs. You want to kill the goose and still have all the golden eggs forever!

Exploitation of labour-power generates a tendency towards finding an apparatus, a paraphernalia, productive assets or GPUs and servers, to freeze and preserve the capacity and the intelligence. This historical tendency of capital is so clearly seen in machine learning which is at the very basis of machine intelligence and AI. Humans train machines, and the point is to train them such that human intelligence is congealed in them such that they will now function autonomously, as the new sovereigns.

Capitalist exploitation of labour would appear as the pre-history to the emergence of capital as now completely free of its dependence on labour. Labour would have eventually outsourced its real qualities and capacities. That is part of the impossible capitalist utopia which Marx is well aware of in the late 19th century. That this will also be suggested as the path of liberation is perhaps a more recent development.

Future in the present: Terminator

But look at the crucial difference in the way Marx saw the role and function of this utopia and promised liberation, and the way in which this is presented by the tech bros and others today.

The transhumanist narrative is such that it wants us to be preoccupied with incremental tech advances that are supposed to be "revolutionary" even as they are all always already obsolete. Each moment is only an anticipation of what's next. This constant state of incitement means that there is never a Now-time, the time of the now, never a present we can really talk about. Every moment is borrowed time, in a disorienting swirl, where the present is always mortgaged to the future.