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20 Year Old Bodybuilder, dies of heart attack due to 'Severe Dehydration'



Story on Page 23

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## 'One Way or The Other'

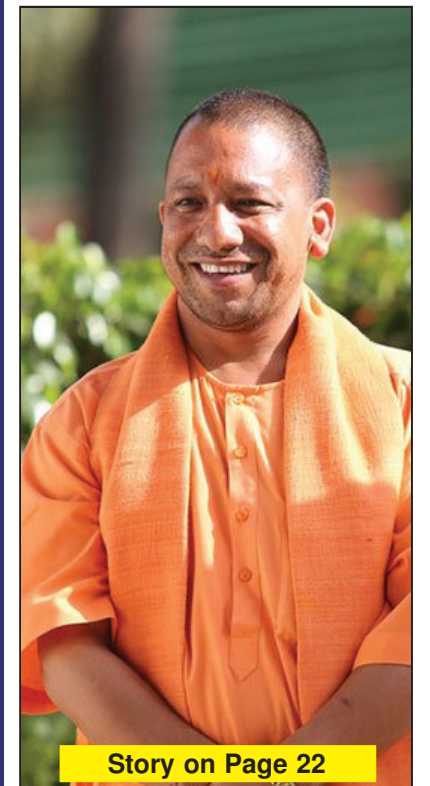
### Trump says will get Panama Canal, Greenland

Donald Trump, who has time and again shared his plans to take back the canal from Panama, said it was meant for Americans.



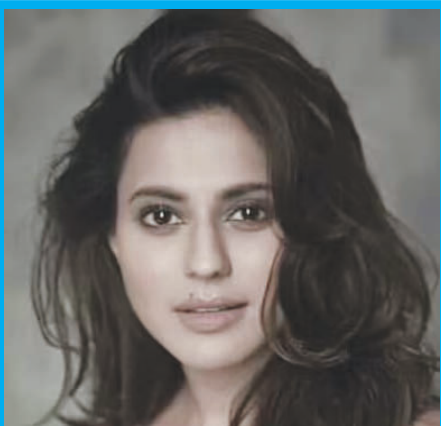
Story on Page 21

### Yogi Adityanath shares success stories of Kumbh



Story on Page 22

Who is Ranya Rao, Kannada actor arrested in Bengaluru for smuggling gold

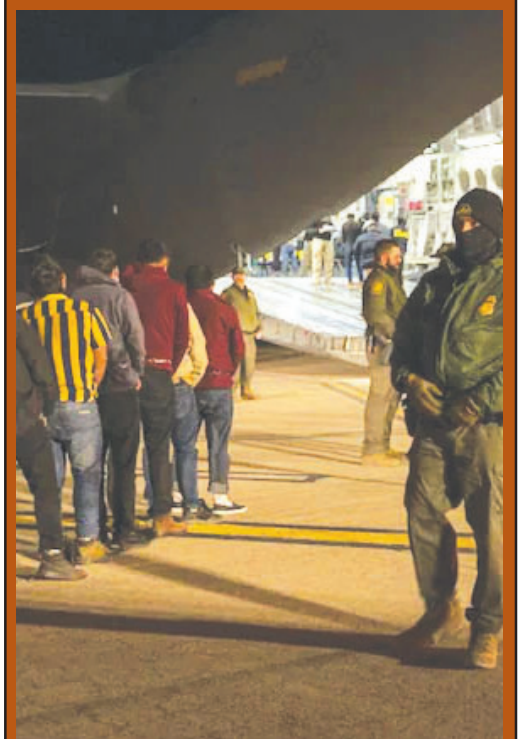


Page 21

Rajasthan minister calls Akbar 'rapist', says Aurangzeb killed 'countless Hindus'

Page 23

US Suspends Military Flights For Deportation Weeks After Sending 'Chained' Migrants To India: Report



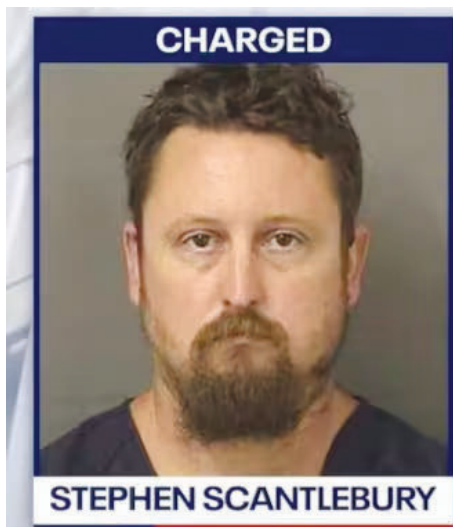
Story on Page 22

Fentanyl And A 50-Minute Call: Trump, Trudeau Showdown Amid Tariff Tensions



Story on Page 22

# Indian-origin nurse subjected to hate crime in US could lose eyesight



Nurse Leelamma Lal was attacked by 33-year-old Stephen Eric Scantlebury, a patient she was attending to in the psychiatric ward at the Palms West Hospital in West Palm Beach in Florida.

A 67-year-old Indian-origin nurse was repeatedly punched in the face by a patient at a Florida hospital in a possible hate crime that could lead to her losing her eyesight, local media has reported. Nurse Leela Lal, also known as Leelamma Lal, was assaulted and "every bone of her face broken" by Stephen Eric Scantlebury, a 33-year-old

patient she was attending to in the psychiatric ward at the Palms West Hospital in West Palm Beach, Florida on February 18, police said.

In a local court, a police officer testified that a video clip showed Scantlebury saying, 'Indians are bad' and 'I just beat the (expletive) out of an Indian doctor,' news channel WPTV.com said. Scantlebury faces a charge of attempted second-degree murder in the attack and also faces a hate crime enhancement, which could result in harsher penalties if he is convicted, the media said.

WPTV.com reported after the incident that HCA Florida HealthCare, which runs the Palm West Hospital, said the attack occurred "within a matter of seconds" and was "witnessed by multiple people" and added that Lal was taken by helicopter to St Mary's Medical Centre in West Palm Beach.

WPTV said it received a video from a viewer that showed the suspect walking shirtless on a nearby prominent road with what looked to be ECG leads still attached to his chest, and it also showed hospital staff and law enforcement following the man onto the busy highway before the deputies took him into custody. The probable cause affidavit filed by law enforcement described Lal's injury as "critical" and said, "Essentially every bone in the victim's face is broken, and the victim is likely to lose the use of both eyes". Because of the extent of the victim's injuries, she was unable to provide a statement to investigators, the WPTV said. Another

WPTV report about the court proceedings on February 27 said that witnesses from the hospital, as well as responding deputies, took the stand and revealed that video from inside the hospital showed the victim was attacked

in a roughly one to two-minute timeframe.

"Following the attack, Palm Beach County Deputy Sgt Beth Newcomb testified that she observed Scantlebury saying, 'Indians are bad' and 'I just beat the (expletive) out of an Indian doctor,'" it added.

Local media quoted Willa Fuller, the executive director of the Florida Nurses Association, as saying that their group has "long been concerned" about the safety of nurses and is seeking "substantive action" to prevent similar tragedies in the future. "We would like to see direct care nurses included in any initiatives related to violence against healthcare workers".

HCA Florida Healthcare said last week: "Our primary concern is with our beloved colleague, and we are praying for her recovery. We are also providing support to our hospital staff who are understandably shaken by this incident".

Meanwhile, "Scantlebury remains jailed" for the February 18 beating of Lal, "with Judge Howard Coates ruling he is a danger to the community," WPBF 25 News, a local news channel, said on Tuesday evening.

## He's going to do a great job: Trump praises FBI's Kash Patel in Congress speech



(Sai Bureau)- US President Donald Trump thanked FBI Director Kash Patel during his first joint session address to Congress, crediting him with restoring trust in a justice system he claimed had been "weaponised" against political opponents. "He's going to do a great job. Thank you Kash," Donald Trump said. Patel received a standing ovation from Republican lawmakers, acknowledging the applause with a silent "thank you" from his seat in the audience. Trump also praised Attorney General Pam Bondi, emphasising his administration's efforts to reshape the Justice Department. Unlike his predecessors, Patel's presence at the address marked a shift, as past

FBI directors traditionally kept their distance from the White House to maintain the bureau's independence. A former federal prosecutor-turned-political operative, Patel now leads the FBI under Trump's direct influence. In a sweeping and emotional joint address to Congress, Donald Trump touched on key policy victories, recognised American heroes, and took a victory lap of his administration's early successes. Among the standout moments was Trump's praise for Tesla CEO Elon Musk, his recognition of 13-year-old cancer survivor DJ Daniel, and a solemn vow to honour the memory of Laken Riley, a Georgia student killed by an undocumented migrant.

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# 4th OUTSTANDING WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS AWARDS GALA 2025

(By Our Staff Reporter) Celebrating the strength, resilience, and remarkable achievements of women, with the aim of inspiring others to understand and value women's inclusion to forge a better world, Indian American Forum honored several dignified and accomplished women of substance at their 14th Annual Women's Achievements Awards Gala this past weekend at the Akbar Banquet in Long Island. Under the leadership of Chairperson Indu

Indian American Forum Founding Member Dr. Bobby Kumar Kalotee with IAF Chair Indu Jaiswal addressing the gathering.



IAF Gala Chair -Shammi Singh, Honoree. Dr. Leena Doshi. IAF Chair Indu Jaiswal and Past Honoree Pinky Rangji



IAF Chair Indu Jaiswal, the Nassau County Comptroller Elaine Phillips and IAF Gala Chair Shammi Singh.



Students of Hamsaasya Dance School performing.



Nassau County Legislator Rose Marie Walker, Deputy Town Supervisor, Town of Hempstead Dorothy Goosby and The Nassau County Comptroller Elaine Phillips



IAF Chair, Indu Jaiswal with Mrs. Universe North East USA, Shilpa Shetty.



Town of North Hempstead Town Supervisor Jennifer DeSena addressing the gathering.



Honoree. Dr. Jagmohan Kalra, Honoree. Falu (Falguni) Shah, Deputy Town Supervisor, Town of Hempstead - Dorothy Goosby, Honoree. Sanjana Iyer, Honoree. Dr. Leena Doshi and Honoree. Dr. Nita Mehta



IAF Gala Committee members and Dignitaries with Honoree Falu Shah.



IAF Gala Board and committee members with Honorees.



Left to right : Dr. Kukkar, Manju Kukkar, Gala chair Shammi Singh, Honoree Dr. Leena Doshi, Dr. Doshi and IAF Chair Indu Jaiswal.

# 4th OUTSTANDING WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS AWARDS GALA 2025

Jaiswal and Gala Chair Shammi Singh, presence of many accomplished known for their strong commitment and dedication to the community cause, along with the entire team of IAF, were the organizing force behind the GALA, celebrating the success of the outstanding achievements by these distinguished personalities in the



Lighting the lamp by IAF Founding Member Dr. Bobby Kumar Kalotee ( center with Town Supervisor ) , Government Officials , Dignitaries and Community Leaders

of Hempstead, Town of North Hempstead distinguished awardees and honorees included: Dr. Jagmohan Kalra, MD -> Board certified Hematologist-oncologist, a renowned community leader and Karaoke group owner and singer. Dr. Leena Doshi – Founder of Doshi Diagnostics and non-profit Doshi Smiles, an athlete, philanthropist and painter. Dr. Nita Mehta – Specialization in Ophthalmology and glaucoma. Board member of Indian Cultural Unit at Parker Jewish Institute and on the board/committee of several organizations like Rotary, Indo-American Senior citizen center of NY, India Home and GGKLI.

Sarina Jain – Founder of Masala Bhangra - A trailblazer in fitness and a dynamic cultural ambassador revolutionizing fitness through culture and movement celebrating over 30 years in the fitness industry. Falu (Falguni Shah) – Grammy Award winning multi-lingual singer/song-writer, recognized by Economic Times as one of the 20 most influential Indian women and named as one of the Top 50 Global leaders from India in Business and Arts. Sanjana Iyer – Youth Empowerment Syosset school senior and professional Bharatnatyam dancer and musician, Two times DECA state qualifier, Two time speech and debate LIFA qualifier using her professional dance experience for Parkinson's research fund raising.



Harry Malhotra - Chairman South Asian Advisory Board, Town of Oyster Bay, IAF Gala Chair Shammi Singh, Dr. Prachi Dua, Honoree Dr. Leena Doshi, IAF Chair Indu Jaiswal, Town Of North Hempstead Town Supervisor Jennifer DeSena and Pragma Singh from Consul General of India.



Honoree Sarina Jain 3rd from left



IAF Board of Trustee Dr. Bhupi Patel, Gala Chair Shammi Singh, IAF Chair Indu Jaiswal, Honoree Dr. Nita Mehta, Dr. Pratichi Goenka, Town Supervisor Jennifer DeSena, Pragma Singh -Consulate General of India, New York and Ravishankar Bhooplapur -President Xavier University, School of Medicine, Aruba



16. Honoree Falu Shah -6th from left.



17. Presidents of various Organizations with Town Supervisor, Town of North Hempstead Jennifer DeSena and Honoree Sanjana Iyer.



18. IAF Board of Trustee Dr. Bhupi Patel, IDP President Vimal Goyal, IAF Chair Indu Jaiswal, Town Supervisor, Town of North Hempstead Jennifer Desena, Pragma Singh from Consulate General of India, NY, Honorees - Dr. Jagmohan Kalra, Falu (Falgun ) Shah, Dr. Nita Mehta, Sanjana Iyer, Sarina Jain, Dr. Leena Doshi, IAF Gala Chair Shammi Singh and IAF Founding Member Dr. Bobby Kumar Kalotee.

## India deplores security breach during Jaishankar's UK visit



(Sai Bureau)- Hours after pro-Khalistan protesters staged a demonstration outside the venue in London where External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was speaking on Wednesday, the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday called it a "security breach" and asked the UK to "meet its diplomatic obligations" and ensure safety of visiting foreign leaders. On Wednesday, a protester tried to tear the Indian flag metres in front of Jaishankar's car as he exited the venue, Chatham House. Outside the venue, protesters gathered holding Khalistan flags and used hand-held speakers to shout pro-Khalistan and anti-India slogans. MEA spokesperson

Randhir Jaiswal said, "We have seen the footage of the breach of security during the visit of EAM to the UK. We condemn the provocative activities of this small group of separatists and extremists. We deplore the misuse of democratic freedoms by such elements. We expect the host government in such cases to fully live up to their diplomatic obligations." Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson RP Singh condemned the protesters, saying, "There are about 100-150 people across London who do such things just to draw attention. They neither have a base there nor their supporters in India."

## Indian man breaks into neighbour's house in Singapore to molest her, urinates in fear as husband wakes up

(Sai Bureau)- An Indian national was sentenced to seven months' jail on Wednesday after pleading guilty to one count of molestation, with one count of housebreaking taken into consideration for his sentencing.

Erakkodan Abinraj, 26, climbed into his neighbour's condominium unit and molested a 36-year-old woman who cannot be named due to a gag order.

She was asleep in the master bedroom with her husband, and her daughter was in another room, when Abinraj, who entered the house through the balcony around 4.50 am on September 22 last year, entered her room and proceeded to touch the victim's

police, the court heard. The victim called the police and Abinraj stayed in the unit until the police arrived, before admitting to trespassing. However, he denied touching the victim and lied that his handphone had dropped on the victim, claiming that was when she had woken up. The prosecution sought a jail



underwear as he saw her asleep. The victim woke up as she felt someone touching her, a Channel News Asia report said, adding that she turned to the accused holding up his handphone with the torchlight on after she got puzzled seeing her husband sleeping next to her. The victim screamed, waking her husband who confronted Abinraj and asked him to leave the room. The accused then urinated in fear and pleaded with him not to call the

term of six to eight months as a punishment. The prosecution said it was aggravating that Abinraj had broken into the victim's home, which is a "private place" where the victim should expect to feel safe. She added that the victim was also vulnerable because she was asleep. She said Abinraj had caused further inconvenience by urinating in her unit. Abinraj's lawyer Ambalavanar Ravidass asked for seven months' jail, saying his client comes from a humble family in India.

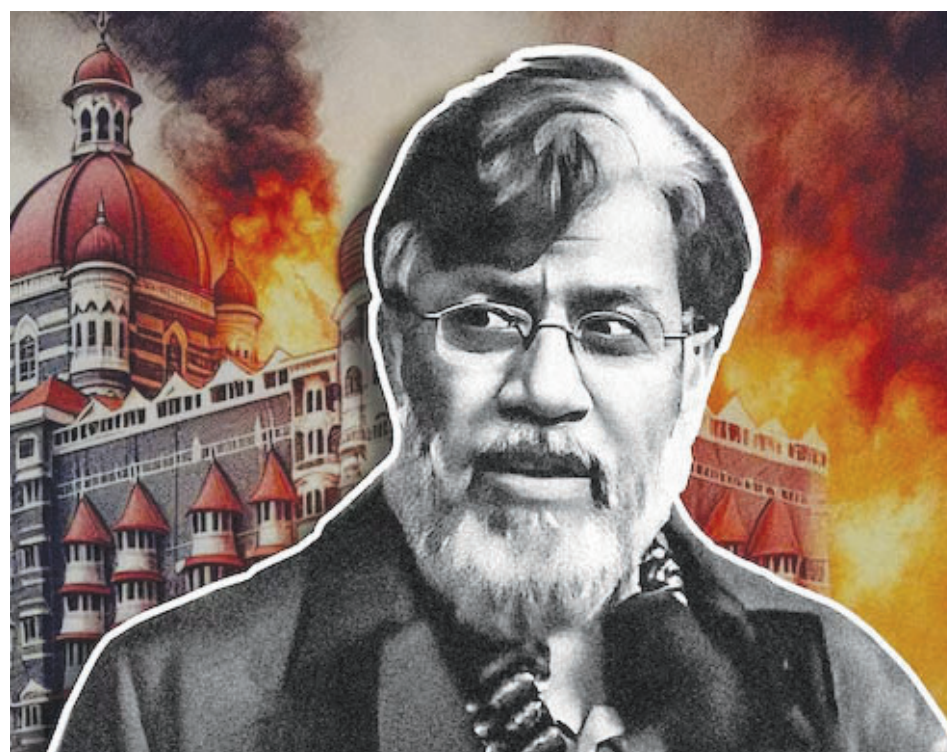
# Can't be sent to hornets' nest: 26/11 accused's move to halt India extradition

**26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana, in his application before the US Supreme Court, said there was a high likelihood of him being tortured in India as he was a Muslim of Pakistani origin.**

(Sai Bureau)- In a last-ditch attempt, Mumbai terror attacks accused Tahawwur Rana has approached the US Supreme Court seeking an emergency stay of his extradition to India. In his application, which has been exclusively accessed by India Today, Rana said that there was a high likelihood of him being tortured in India as he was a Muslim of Pakistani origin.

Tahawwur Rana, 63, is currently lodged in a jail in Los Angeles. He is known to be associated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist David Headley, one of the main conspirators of the Mumbai attacks in which 166 were killed.

In his petition, Rana submitted that he was suffering from multiple ailments, including an advanced cardiac aneurysm, Parkinson's with cognitive decline, and possible bladder cancer. Rana's lawyers argued that he may not survive long enough to face trial. Rana's legal team further said that he cannot be sent into a "hornets' nest" where he



would be pointed to as a "target of national, religious and cultural animosity".

The application cited the 2023 Human Rights Watch report that alleged systematic discrimination and

stigmatisation of religious minorities, particularly Muslims, by the BJP-led government in India. India has rejected the report, calling it baseless.

The application further stated that the Indian government was "increasingly autocratic", arguing that Rana's right to a fair trial would be jeopardised.

On January 21, the US Supreme Court rejected a review petition filed by Rana. Last month, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US, President Donald Trump announced that his administration had approved the extradition of Rana, whom he called "very evil".

Government sources told India Today that all legal documents have been shared with US authorities and a National Investigation Agency (NIA) team would travel to the US once clearance is received. The NIA filed a chargesheet in 2011 against nine persons, including Rana, for plotting and executing the terror attacks in Mumbai.

# Can PM use Trump's peace making zeal to solve Kashmir issue? Jaishankar replies

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday was asked if Prime Minister Narendra Modi could leverage US President Donald Trump's peace efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue with

(News Agency)-External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday was asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi could harness US President Donald Trump's zeal for striking peace to resolve the Kashmir issue with Pakistan. Speaking at the Chatham House think tank in London, Jaishankar rejected third-party intervention and defended India's approach, saying it had already taken decisive steps to address the situation independently. "In Kashmir, we have done a good job solving most of it. I think removing Article 370 was one step. Then, restoring growth, economic activity, and social justice in Kashmir was step number two. Holding elections, which were done with a very high turnout, was step number three," he said. However, he made it clear that the unresolved aspect of the issue lay outside India's control. "I think the part we are waiting for is the return of the stolen part of Kashmir, which is under an illegal Pakistani occupation. When that's done, I assure you, Kashmir solved," Jaishankar



stated. The discussion later turned to India's relationship with the US, particularly under Trump's leadership. Jaishankar said that Washington's shift towards a multipolar world aligned with India's interests. "We see a president and an administration which, in our parlance, is moving towards multipolarity, and that is something that suits India," he said.

He also pointed to the Quad alliance-comprising India, the US, Australia, and Japan-as a successful example of cooperation. "From President Trump's perspective, the one big shared enterprise that we have is the Quad, which is an understanding where everybody pays their fair share. There are no free riders involved. So that's a good model which works," he added.

On trade, Jaishankar confirmed that India and the US had agreed on the need for a bilateral trade pact, following discussions between PM Modi and Trump at the White House. He stated that Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal was currently in Washington to further these negotiations. "We had a very open conversation about it (tariffs), and the result of that conversation was that we agreed on the need for a bilateral trade agreement," he said. EAM Jaishankar also addressed a range of other issues, including India's relationship with China, the internationalization of the rupee, the role of the US dollar in the global economy, and the stance of BRICS countries on the matter. Clarifying India's position on the dollar's dominance, Jaishankar said, "I don't believe there is any policy on our part to replace the dollar. At the end of the day, the dollar as a reserve currency contributes to international economic stability, and what the world needs right now is more stability, not less."

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# High Court's notice to Punjab over bulldozer action against drug smugglers



(News Agency) The Punjab and Haryana High Court has issued a notice to the state government over the demolition of properties linked to alleged drug smugglers.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has issued a notice to the Punjab government regarding the demolition of properties belonging to alleged drug smugglers.

The notice was issued by a bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sumeet Goel in response to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by the People Welfare Society Punjab, challenging the police's bulldozer action.

The petition, filed through advocate Kanwar Paul Singh, argued that such demolitions violate constitutional rights and the rule of law by bypassing due legal process.

The Supreme Court has ruled that the executive cannot demolish properties solely based on accusations or convictions in criminal cases. Determining guilt is a judicial function, and any action bypassing due process undermines fundamental legal principles. The government cannot act as both judge and executioner by punishing individuals through property

demolition without a fair trial," stated the petitioner.

The next hearing has been scheduled for March 25.

The legal challenge comes amid the Punjab government's intensified crackdown on drug-related offences. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has given Police Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, and Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) a three-month deadline to eradicate drugs from the state.

As part of the government's broader anti-drug strategy, special courts will be set up to fast-track drug-related cases. Additionally, the state has announced measures to deny government subsidies, including free power and water, to convicted drug peddlers and their families.

## MK Stalin hits out at Hindi zealots, calls Hindi renaming of laws 'chauvinism'

**Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin slammed critics calling the DMK chauvinists, asserting that demanding linguistic equality is a right, not an offence. He criticised the renaming of criminal laws in Hindi and called NEP "poison" imposed on non-Hindi states.**

(News Agency) Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin hit back at critics branding the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) as chauvinists and anti-nationals, stating that demanding linguistic equality was not chauvinism but a rightful assertion. Taking to X, Stalin accused "Hindi zealots" of treating Tamil Nadu as second-class citizens and imposing their language on non-Hindi speakers.

"When you are accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression." I am reminded of this famous quote when some entitled bigots brand us chauvinists and anti-nationals for the 'crime' of demanding Tamil's rightful place in Tamil Nadu.

Referring to the renaming of India's three key criminal laws, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha



Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Act, Stalin questioned the exclusion of Tamil and other regional languages in naming laws that govern 140 crore citizens.

"Chauvinism is naming the three criminal laws in a language that Tamils cannot even pronounce or comprehend by reading," he said.

He also slammed those questioning DMK's patriotism, alleging that the ideological predecessors of his critics glorified Nathuram Godse, the assassin of Mahatma Gandhi. Stalin highlighted that Tamil Nadu had contributed the highest amount of funds during the Chinese Aggression, Bangladesh Liberation War, and Kargil War, challenging accusations against DMK's nationalistic commitment. Taking a strong stand against the National Education Policy (NEP), Stalin referred to it as "poison" that Tamil Nadu refuses to accept. "Imposition of anything breeds enmity. Enmity threatens unity. Hence, the true chauvinists and anti-nationals are the Hindi zealots who believe their entitlement is natural but our resistance is treason," he stated.

## Telangana tunnel collapse: Cadaver dogs from Kerala deployed, robotics explored

(News Agency) Two cadaver dogs from the Kerala Police, along with their handlers, have been deployed at the collapsed Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel site in Telangana.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) requested their assistance through the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority as rescue operations enter the 13th day. Additionally, an NDRF sniffer dog has been used to identify potential excavation points.

Authorities are also exploring the use of robotics and advanced seismic studies to

aid in the mission. A Hyderabad-based robotics company recently sent a team into the partially collapsed tunnel to assess whether robots could be deployed given the high humidity inside. Their findings are awaited. Scientists from the National Centre of Seismology, Delhi, have joined the operation, conducting seismic studies alongside rescue teams. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who visited the site on March 2, had suggested the use of robotic technology if required to prevent risks to rescue personnel. Excavation is ongoing at locations identified by scientists from

the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to detect signs of human presence. However, challenging conditions, including muck and water, have slowed progress.

Rescue teams have repaired and partially reactivated the tunnel's conveyor belt, which was damaged during the accident on February 22. An official release stated that debris near the tunnel boring machine (TBM) has been cleared, and water jets are being used to remove slush in the area.

State Special Chief Secretary (Disaster Management) Arvind Kumar and Nagarkurnool District Collector Badavath Santhosh recently reviewed the ongoing operations with multiple rescue agencies, including the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). Despite relentless efforts by the NDRF, Indian Army, Navy, and other teams, there have been no confirmed signs of the trapped workers so far. Authorities remain hopeful as technological interventions and scientific expertise continue to support the rescue mission.

# Tamil couples can't make babies fast enough to please Stalin or save Lok Sabha seats

**Saying that Tamil Nadu might lose parliamentary seats as it successfully controlled population growth, Chief Minister MK Stalin has urged couples to have babies without delay. Statistically speaking, can Tamil couples actually add babies to the population at the rate and in the duration that Stalin seeks?**

(News Agency) It's war emergency for Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, and he wants men and women of the state to make love. Make love and babies, on war footing. The political urgency is because India would be holding the delimitation exercise that would add parliamentary seats. However, even if all the men and women of Tamil Nadu put in their effort to help their Chief Minister, it would be biologically and statistically impossible to meet the target.

"The sword known as delimitation is hanging above the heads of the southern states. Tamil Nadu faces a big threat," Stalin said at an all-party meeting called on Wednesday to address the issue.

Stalin and other leaders from South Indian states have alleged that their states would lose out if the delimitation exercise was conducted solely on the basis of population growth. TVK chief and actor Vijay has also raised concerns over delimitation and has urged fairness and public consultation.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has tried to allay fears and assured that no state would lose any set because of the delimitation exercise.

## REASON BEHIND THE DELIMITATION EXERCISE

At the heart of the delimitation exercise is the principle - one citizen, one vote, one value. Article 81 of the Constitution provides for delimitation exercises to increase Lok Sabha and Assembly seats by factoring in the population growth of states. The idea is that the number of Indians represented by a lawmaker



should be roughly the same across the country.

Delimitation exercises are based on the decadal population enumeration exercise or the Census. The latest Census, delayed since 2021 due to Covid, is set to begin this year and will be conducted by next year. The delimitation exercise adding Lok Sabha seats, which last took place in 1973, will happen after that on the basis of that data. Unlike their northern counterparts, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and the two Telugu states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana successfully implemented the two-child policy to control India's population.

## WHAT ABOUT DELIMITATION HAS GOT STALIN WORRIED

However, Stalin and some other Chief Ministers of southern states are worried that their states might be punished for performing.

Tamil Nadu has 39 MPs representing its people in the 543-member Lok Sabha. "If the present 543 seats continue due to less population, there is a possibility of reducing our Parliament constituencies. Tamil Nadu could lose eight seats," Stalin said on Wednesday at the all-party meet.

He explained that even if parliamentary seats were increased, Tamil Nadu, a state that had effectively controlled its population, would remain a loser.

"If the total number of Parliament constituencies is increased to 848, Tamil Nadu would get 22 constituencies more. However, if the delimitation is done solely based on population, the state would only gain 10 more seats, leading to a loss of 12 seats overall," he said, explaining that in both cases Tamil Nadu's Lok Sabha representation would decrease.

To address this situation, Stalin had earlier asked couples to have babies at

the earliest.

"Earlier, we used to say, take your time and have a baby. But now the situation has changed... So, I won't say take your time, but immediately have your baby," he said at a wedding on March 3.

## HOW MANY PEOPLE DOES TAMIL NADU NEED TO ADD?

Behind Stalin exhorting young couples to have more children now is his belief that a larger population might lead to more MPs.

Here, we are discussing it as a pure numerical probability, keeping aside questions of personal choice and reproductive rights.

Right now, Tamil Nadu makes up about 5.42% of India's total population. But the state has 7.18% Lok Sabha MPs (more than its population share). This means that Tamil Nadu has more MPs than it should have based on its population size.

But how many babies would Tamil Nadu need for it to keep all 39 MPs in the 2026 delimitation if the exercise were to happen strictly on the basis of population growth?

Tamil Nadu needs to have 7.18% of India's total population in the 2026 Census to keep the proportion of seats intact in the Lok Sabha, if population is the sole criterion for the delimitation exercise.

This means the state should aim for about 101.92 million people.

Going by health ministry projections, Tamil Nadu will have 77 million people by 2026. This means Tamil Nadu will be short by 24.92 million people.

# KTR says Telangana Congress government unable to function without selling lands

(News Agency) Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) criticised Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, accusing the Congress government of running the state by selling off public lands.

He alleged that the government is planning to auction 400 acres of prime land in Hyderabad's Gachibowli at throwaway prices to raise Rs 30,000 crore, despite earlier promises to retain them.

KTR claimed that the Congress government's financial mismanagement has left Telangana in crisis, forcing it to mortgage and sell lands to sustain itself. He slammed the reversal of policies and accused Revanth Reddy of misleading the Assembly, demanding a public

apology. Highlighting achievements of the previous BRS government, KTR defended borrowing during KCR's tenure, stating that loans were used to fund welfare schemes, irrigation projects, and infrastructure development. He contrasted this with the Congress government's alleged reckless borrowing of Rs 1.65 lakh crore in just 15 months, questioning what the funds had been used for. KTR also blamed the Congress government for scrapping welfare schemes, neglecting irrigation projects, and mishandling governance, leading to power cuts and an agricultural crisis. He held the administration responsible for the Srisailem tunnel collapse that claimed eight lives.





# Nitish Kumar may switch sides after Bihar polls: Prashant Kishor

(News Agency) Election strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor on Wednesday claimed that JD(U) president Nitish Kumar will contest the upcoming Assembly polls in Bihar in alliance with the BJP but may switch sides later, with hopes of another term as chief minister.

The Jan Suraj Party founder, who was addressing a press conference in West Champaran district, however, also asserted that the 74-year-old leader had grown too unpopular to enjoy a fifth consecutive term in office "no matter which alliance he becomes a part of".

"Anybody can become the chief minister in November, after the Assembly elections are over, except Nitish Kumar. You can take it from me in writing. If I am proven wrong, then I will give up my political campaign," Kishor said. About speculation that Kumar may quit the NDA ahead of the Assembly polls, given the BJP's apparent reluctance to declare him as the



chief ministerial candidate, the former election strategist said, "He will contest in alliance with the BJP. He has always done so, barring the elections of 2015, when I had handled his campaign".

Kishor also claimed that the BJP was wary of declaring Kumar as the chief ministerial candidate of the NDA because of his declining popularity.

"I challenge Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to declare that Nitish Kumar will be the chief minister for a full five-year term after the elections (if the NDA comes to power). If they

do so, the BJP will find it hard to win seats," Kishor said.

The former JD(U) national vice president, who was expelled from the party in 2020 following a spat with Kumar, also claimed that the ruling party was "going to do very badly" (in the polls). "Nitish Kumar may try switching sides after it becomes clear to him that the BJP was not going to back him for another term in office. But, the number of seats won by JD(U) would be so dismal that he would not get the top job, no matter which formation he joins," Kishor predicted.

The 47-year-old politician also

alleged that the septuagenarian chief minister was "physically tired and mentally retired", claiming, "Not me, but the late BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi

had stated that Nitish Kumar suffers from a serious mental illness. I have been challenging him for a long time to spell out the names of ministers in his cabinet, without looking at a piece of paper. He cannot tell

the name of the district he is touring unless prompted by officials. It is unfortunate that, with such a state of mind, he is ruling Bihar".

He also maintained that Kumar had "brought disrepute to Bihar by touching the feet of Modi last year, in the presence of many other chief ministers, when the new Union government was being sworn in".

"If he has so much of reverence for the PM, he could have touched the latter's feet in private. But he is resorting to sycophancy merely to keep himself in the chair. Why does he not use his clout with the BJP, which is now dependent

on JD(U)'s support to survive in power at the Centre, to revive the moribund sugar industry in Bihar?" Kishor asked.

He said the Jan Suraj Party will enter the fray in a bid to pull Bihar "out of the political rut which has been held hostage for decades by Kumar and his arch-rival Lalu Prasad, the RJD president".

Of course, the BJP and the Congress, which had helped the RJD survive in power for many years, share the blame for Bihar's plight, he alleged.

Criticising the state's much-touted prohibition policy, Kishor said that the ban on liquor in Bihar is yet another example of the BJP's duplicity.

"Why does it (BJP) not ask Yogi Adityanath in adjoining Uttar Pradesh and chief ministers of other states ruled by it to declare the same? In other states, they are talking about growth and investments, and in Bihar, they think nothing more is needed than five kg of free ration and 'sharaab-bandhi'," he added.

## Man arrested for spitting on rotis at wedding in UP, video sparks outrage



(News Agency) Video of a man allegedly spitting on rotis while preparing them at a wedding in Uttar Pradesh has gone viral, prompting public outrage and police action. The accused, Farman, has been arrested.

A man in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad has been arrested after a purported video showing him spitting on rotis at a wedding went viral. According to the police, the incident took place during a recent wedding ceremony of one Vinod Kumar's daughter in Bhojpur. The accused, identified as Farman, was seen in the video making rotis while spitting on

them. "A viral video shows a roti maker, hired by the wedding caterers, spitting on rotis while preparing them. Our investigation confirmed that the incident occurred on February 23 at the wedding of Vinod Kumar's daughter in Bhojpur. The accused has been identified as Farman, a resident of Saidpur in Ghaziabad," said Senior Police Officer Modinagar Gyan Prakash Rai. Farman has been arrested, and a case is being registered under relevant sections. Further legal action is underway, the officer added. The video has sparked public outrage, with many demanding strict action against the accused.

## 'Paisa-publicity-private interest litigation', where's the real PIL?: Justice Nagarathna



(News Agency) Talking about the misuse of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) these days, Supreme Court judge Justice BV Nagarathna on Tuesday said that the PIL was a virtuous weapon in the hands of the weak, but is now losing its virtue. "If I may say so, now it's either paisa interest litigation, publicity interest litigation, or private interest litigation, but where is the real PIL these days?" Justice Nagarathna asked. Justice Nagarathna was speaking at a book launch event where she released renowned legal scholar Professor

Upendra Baxi's book "Law, Justice, Society". She said, "There's a need to have real public interest litigation and social impact legislation, and then the courts will respond like they did in the late 1980s." Justice Nagarathna said that Professor Baxi had rightly termed the PIL as 'social impact legislation', and that the time had come for him to write about the misuse of the PIL.

Justice Nagarathna added that, "We require not only great judgments to come, but also scholars and teachers to critique them."

# Did Shinde Sena ministers skip Chhava screening due to guardian minister post row?

Amid the unresolved issue of the Raigad Guardian Minister post, Shiv Sena ministers and MLAs skipped the screening of the Bollywood film Chhava, which was organised by an NCP (Ajit Pawar faction) minister.

(News Agency)-Ministers and MLAs from Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena faction skipped the screening of the Bollywood film Chhava amid the unresolved issue of the Raigad Guardian Minister post. The screening was organised by Aditi Tatkare, a minister from the Ajit Pawar faction of the NCP, during the ongoing Maharashtra Budget session.

The event was attended by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and other prominent leaders. Only Minister of State Ashish Jaiswal attended the Chhava screening from the Shiv Sena's side.

The Shiv Sena's absence from the screening gave rise to speculation it was a deliberate snub by the party over the unresolved issue of the



Raigad Guardian Minister post. The Raigad Guardian Minister post has been a point of contention between the Shiv Sena and the NCP. The Shiv Sena has been pushing for control of the post, but the NCP has been resis-

tant to relinquish its claim.

The guardian minister holds de facto charge of the district and is a major power centre in its politics. The minister also chairs the meeting of the district planning and development com-

mittee (DPDC), which allocates funds for developmental projects.

In Raigad, Shinde Sena's Bharat Gogavale has staked his claim, while Tatkare, who is also the state's incumbent Women and Child Development Minister, is also eyeing the post.

Tensions between the two parties were palpable last month when Shiv Sena ministers skipped a Raigad planning meeting led by Ajit Pawar. The meeting, which was attended by Tatkare, highlighted the deep-seated differences between the two parties.

Currently, Raigad has four MLAs - Thorve, Dalvi and Gogawale (Mahad) from the Shinde Sena and NCP's Tatkare (Shrivardhan).

Since the Shiv Sena's dominance is visible in Raigad, Eknath Shinde wanted the post of Guardian Minister to be given to a leader from his party.

## Air Force's C-17 Globemaster lands on Kargil airstrip for first time: Source

The C-17's ability to carry over 25 tonnes—up to 35 tonnes in winter—will enhance the IAF's transport capacity, making it easier to move troops and military supplies to posts near the Line of Actual Control.

(News Agency)- The Air Force's (IAF) C-17 Globemaster aircraft successfully landed on the Kargil airstrip on Wednesday for the first time, according to sources. The trial landing marks a significant achievement for the IAF as it will increase the load-carrying capacity of the Air Force by more than four times.

The C-17's ability to carry over 25 tonnes up to 35 tonnes in winter will enhance the IAF's transport capacity, making it easier to move troops and military supplies to posts near the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Previously, only AN-32 and C-130 aircraft operated on the Kargil

airstrip, with capacities of 4-5 tonnes and 6-7 tonnes, respectively.

The larger capacity of C-17 means fewer flights are needed to transport goods. According to sources, the C-17 will operate during the day initially, as the trial landing was conducted in daylight. In January last year, the IAF had landed its transport aircraft C-130J at night for the first time, followed by fixed-wing aircraft operations and Garuda commandos using terrain masking techniques to avoid enemy radar detection. Currently, C-17s operate from airbases in Srinagar and Leh, but if needed, they



can now be deployed from Kargil. The Kargil airstrip is located at an altitude of 9,700 feet. During the Kargil War, Pakistani forces shelled this area too.

Flanked by 14,000-15,000-foot-high hills, the airstrip presents operational challenges but remains vital for defence logistics.

## Gravity mentioned in Vedic texts before Newton spoke about it: Rajasthan Governor

(News Agency)- The theory of gravity was mentioned in the Vedic texts long before Isaac Newton gave it in 1687, Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde claimed on Wednesday.

Speaking at a convocation ceremony at Jaipur regional centre of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Bagde said India has been a hub of knowledge and science since ancient times with renowned institutions like the Nalanda University attracting students from across the world.



"Newton spoke about gravity much later. It was mentioned in the Vedic texts much earlier in India," he was quoted as saying in Hindi in an official statement. He said the decimal system came up in India. He, however, alleged that continuous efforts had been made to erase India's ancient knowledge and cited the burning of the Nalanda library in the 1190s as an example. He also said that when the British colonised India, they, too, attempted to suppress the ancient knowledge.

# Trump backs Melania's anti-revenge porn bill, jokes about using it himself



(News Agency) -In his first joint address to Congress after assuming office on January 20, US President Donald Trump praised First Lady Melania Trump for her role in advocating a bill that criminalises the online posting of intimate images — whether real or altered — at the federal level. Expressing gratitude to the Senate for passing the measure, Trump condemned the act as a "terrible, terrible thing", emphasising the need for stronger protections against online harassment. However, the moment took an unexpected turn when Trump appeared to make a joke about invoking the law for himself. "I'm going to use that bill for myself, too, if you don't mind. Nobody gets treated worse than I do online. Nobody," he said, drawing mixed reactions from the audience. Melania Trump made her first solo public appearance

on Capitol Hill on Monday since resuming her role as First Lady on January 20. Dressed in a three-piece tan suit, black tie, and matching heels, she advocated for an online safety bill aimed at expediting the removal of revenge porn — non-consensual intimate imagery posted online. The proposed legislation would criminalise the non-consensual publication or threats to publish intimate imagery, including realistic, computer-generated depictions of identifiable people in the US. Under the bill, social media platforms would be required to remove such content within 48 hours of a victim's request and take measures to prevent its replication. Melania held a roundtable with lawmakers and victims of revenge porn and AI-generated deepfakes as Congress intensifies efforts to crack down on online abuse involving non-consensual explicit imagery.

During the meeting on the 'Take It Down Act', she called it 'heartbreaking' to witness the struggles teenagers, especially girls, face after being victimised by those who spread such content.

"This toxic environment inflicts severe harm. We must prioritise their well-being by providing the support and tools needed to navigate this hostile digital landscape," the First Lady said. Furthermore, Melania also expressed disappointment over the limited Democratic support for the bill. "I expected more Democrat leaders to stand with us today on this critical issue," she stated, urging bipartisan cooperation. "Surely, as adults, we can put American children above partisan politics".

The roundtable discussion at the US Capitol was Melania's debut solo public appearance since her husband assumed the presidency.

## Trump says immigration bigger threat than Putin: Don't end up like Europe

**US President Donald Trump said that his primary concern is not Russian President Vladimir Putin but curbing illegal immigration to prevent the country from following Europe's path.**

(News Agency) -Amid the ongoing crackdown on illegal immigrants, US President Donald Trump on Wednesday said that his primary concern is not Russian President Vladimir Putin but curbing illegal immigration to prevent the country from following Europe's path.

Trump, in a post Truth Social, said: "We should spend less time worrying about Putin, and more time worrying about migrant rape gangs, drug lords, murderers, and people from mental institutions entering our Country - So that we don't end up like Europe." Earlier, Trump, in another post on Truth Social handle, claimed that he had managed to bring down the number of illegal immigrants



to a historic low within the first month of his office, saying that "the Invasion of our Country is OVER." The month of February, my first full month

Illegals by Border Patrol at the U.S. - Mexico Border, all of whom were quickly ejected from our Nation or, when necessary, prosecuted for crimes against the United States of America. This means that very few people came — The Invasion of our Country is OVER," Trump wrote.

Taking an apparent dig at his predecessor, Joe Biden, Trump drew a comparison in the US's immigration policy and further said: "In comparison, under Joe Biden, there were 300,000 Illegals crossing in one month, and virtually ALL of them were released into our Country. Thanks to the Trump Administration Policies, the Border is CLOSED to all Illegal Immigrants. Anyone who tries to illegally enter the

U.S.A. will face significant criminal penalties and immediate deportation," the US president added.

Trump's remarks come a week after his deputy, JD Vance, echoed his opinion and criticised Europe for failing to curb illegal immigration. Speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Maryland, Vice President Vance said that the "greatest threat" facing both the US and Europe is illegal immigration.

"The greatest threat in Europe, and I'd say the greatest threat in the US until about 30 days ago, is that you've had the leaders of the West decide that they should send millions and millions of unvetted foreign migrants into their countries," Vance added.

# After pausing military aid, US cuts off intel sharing with Ukraine: Report

**The US has halted intelligence-sharing with Ukraine, impacting its military strategy, as Zelenskyy expresses willingness to negotiate peace and sign a mineral deal with Trump.**

(News Agency) - The United States has reportedly snapped intelligence-sharing with Ukraine, a move that could severely impact Kyiv's ability to target Russian forces and larger military operations amid the ongoing war, reports said.

This comes a day after the Trump administration halted US assistance to Ukraine in an effort to pressure President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to negotiate an end to the war. The decision to cut off intelligence sharing is seen as part of the same strategy.

Talking to Fox News, CIA Director John Ratcliffe, confirmed the development and said, "I think on the military front and the intelligence front, the pause (that prompted Ukraine's president to respond) I think will go away, and I think we'll work shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine as we have to push back on the aggression that's



there". He added, "to put the world in a better place for these peace negotiations to move forward".

Ratcliffe also added Trump had a "real question" about whether President Donald Trump's "strong leadership" to achieve long-term peace. The Ukrainian leader also said that his country

is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible. "None of us wants an endless war. Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer. Nobody wants peace more than Ukrainians. My team and I stand ready to work

under President Trump's strong leadership to get a peace that lasts," Zelenskyy said.

Later, in a letter to Trump, he reiterated his commitment to peace and agreed to sign a mineral deal with the US, a move seen as crucial for gaining American support in peace talks with Russia.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday also acknowledged the letter from Zelenskyy, saying he received an "important letter" from Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressing his desire to come to the negotiating table to end the war with Russia.

"Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer. Nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians," Trump said while reading out the letter from Zelenskyy in his first address to Congress after coming back to power.

## Realtor's 'hope Trump deports you' note in restaurant receipt gets her the boot

**As the image of the receipt from a Mexican restaurant went viral, Stephanie Lovins faced backlash on social media and was subsequently fired by her company, Century 21.**

(News Agency) - A US real estate agent was fired from her job after she left a hateful note for a waiter at a Mexican restaurant in Columbus. Stephanie Lovins, who dined at Cazuelas Mexican Cantina in Ohio, wrote "I hope Trump deports you" in the receipt. In the tip section, she wrote "Zero, you s\*\*k". As the image of the receipt went viral, Lovins faced backlash on social media and was subsequently fired by her company, Century 21.

The incident happened on March 2 when Lovins went to dine at a Mexican restaurant, according to a report in The Latin Times. She was served food by a waiter named Ricardo, a US citizen with a Latino background. However, Lovins was upset after she was told by the waiter about the



restaurant's 'one coupon per table' rule. As she left the restaurant after paying her bill of \$87.84, another waiter found the receipt with the hate-filled message. Amid widespread outrage on social media, Lovins attempted to douse

the situation by claiming that her card had been stolen and was misused by someone else.

"Thank you for all the recent notifications of scammers and profile hackers! I recently discovered a lost/missing credit

card and an attempted use/purchase," she posted on LinkedIn.

However, the damage had been done and her presence at the restaurant was corroborated by CCTV footage. As calls for her to

be fired gained momentum, Century 21 stated that she was "no longer affiliated with the brand".

"Hate has no place within the Century 21 brand... After investigating the situation and connecting with the respective broker, we can confirm that this agent is no longer affiliated with the brand," the real estate firm said in a statement.

The development comes at a time when the Donald Trump administration has launched a crackdown on illegal immigrants, resorting to mass deportations and has also attempted to end birthright citizenship. Meanwhile, a GoFundMe campaign, titled 'Tip Ricardo: Because Hate Has No Place Here', has been started to raise funds in support of the waiter.

# China boosts defence budget by \$249 billion, what it means for India

While lower than the double-digit annual increases seen in previous decades, China's new defence budget, announced at the ongoing session of the National People's Congress, remains the second largest globally, following the US.

(News Agency) - In a significant announcement on Wednesday, China said it would boost its defence budget by USD 249 billion, a 7.2 per cent increase, as the Asian giant continues to enhance its high-tech military capabilities.

According to the draft budget report submitted to the National People's Congress (NPC) by Premier Li Qiang, the country's planned defence expenditure this year is 1.784665 trillion yuan (USD 249 billion).

In the previous year, China had increased its defence budget to about \$232 billion. The new defence budget, while lower than the double-digit annual increases seen in previous decades, remains the second largest globally, following the US.

Speaking at the NPC, Premier Li said, "We resolutely oppose separatist activities and their foreign supporters." With a defence budget almost over three times that of India, Beijing continues with the massive modernisation of all its



armed forces due to the tensions in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and its military preparedness with respect to regional players like Japan and the US. China has been building its aircraft carriers, advanced naval ships, and modern stealth aircraft for the past few years. The budget increase is expected to further boost the massive military modernisation.

India, which has been focused on improving its military infrastructure, especially along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh to counter China, has set its defence budget at Rs 6.81 trillion (approximately USD 81 billion) for the financial year beginning on April 1.

The defence budget increase by China will see an impact on its defence

spending along the LAC, where both countries have remained in a standoff since 2020.

India, which has been engaged in accelerating its military infrastructure along the LAC to match the Chinese side, is likely to focus on its preparedness along the border in accordance with Beijing.

Meanwhile, China has also set an economic growth target of 5 per cent for 2025.

Shen Danyang, head of the government work report drafting team, told reporters today, "This decision has come after sufficient study and reasoning, including field study in localities and soliciting views from experts, scholars, and businesses. Whether this growth target can be achieved depends on the development trajectory, the capability conditions, and the supporting policies." "Considering these factors comprehensively, we are fully confident for achieving such a target this year," he added.

## Kerala Chief Minister slams Congress for dividing secular votes, MP responds



(News Agency)- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched a sharp attack on the Congress, questioning how secular parties and religious minorities could trust the party. In an article written to the media, Vijayan accused the Congress of preventing the consolidation of secular votes, which he claimed led to the BJP's victories in several states. Citing the Delhi Assembly elections, he said that instead of working with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to defeat the BJP, the Congress focused on defeating AAP despite having no

seats in Delhi since 2015. "The Congress has adopted an arrogant approach towards other opposition parties that oppose the BJP," Vijayan wrote, adding that leaders like Omar Abdullah and Akhilesh Yadav have already criticised this strategy. He also accused the Congress of aligning with communal forces to defeat the Left, pointing to the recent SDPI victory in a Congress-held local body seat in Thiruvananthapuram. Confident about the upcoming 2026 Kerala Assembly elections, Vijayan said the Left Democratic Front (LDF)

would secure a third term.

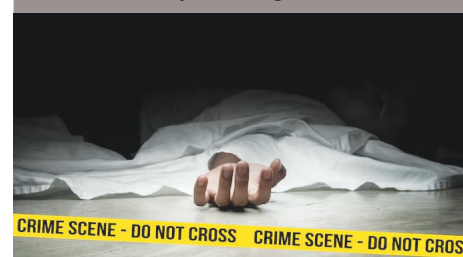
Reacting to Vijayan's remarks, Congress MP Shafi Parambil accused the Kerala CM of siding with the BJP by targeting Congress alone. "He finds no mistakes in the BJP but blames Congress for everything. A BJP faction is working within the CPI(M), and Pinarayi Vijayan is taking a stand for the BJP. Is this the stand of their national leadership?" he asked.

Parambil also pointed out that while the Congress has made sacrifices to form the INDIA bloc for the Lok Sabha elections, state-level politics operates differently. Even the AAP announced candidates before us. Congress is ready for adjustments at the national level, but in state elections, every regional party has its own interests. In Kerala, we are fighting against CPI(M)," he said, asserting that the Left will not return to power in 2026. "Last time, COVID helped them," he added.

## Man kills girlfriend, dies by suicide in Karnataka over family's rejection

(News Agency)A 29-year-old man allegedly slit his girlfriend's throat and later died by committing suicide, after her mother dissuaded him from continuing the relationship. According to the police, Prashant Kundekar had been in a relationship with Aishwarya Mahesh, an 18-year-old girl, for the

resisted, he pulled out a knife and slit her throat. After she died due to excessive bleeding, he used the same knife to take his own life. According to the police, Prashant was upset because Aishwarya and her family did not agree to marriage. Police officers are investigating the case for further details. Such crimes of passion



past year. Kundekar wanted to marry her and approached her mother for the same. However, her mother advised him to become financially stable first. Belagavi Police Commissioner Yada Martin Marbaniang stated that Prashant had been pressuring Aishwarya to marry him, but her family wanted him to improve his financial condition first. On the day of the incident, Prashant met Aishwarya at her aunt's house. He first tried to poison her, but when she

have occurred in the past in Karnataka. Nearly three months ago, a 21-year-old man in Mandya's Kalenahalli village died after detonating a gelatin stick outside the house of a minor girl he was in a relationship with. He was reportedly upset after her family rejected him and had previously been booked under the POCSO Act for eloping with her. Similarly, on August 8, 2024, a man allegedly killed his wife with a sickle just hours after their wedding and then took his own life in Kolar. The couple had an argument in their room, which escalated to violence. Relatives found them lying in a pool of blood.

# Digital Anarchy Is Exposing Youth To Dangerous Content

In the digital age, the proliferation of content on digital platforms has reshaped societal norms, communication, and public discourse. The rapid advancement of technology, coupled with increasing internet penetration, has enabled access to a vast amount of information. However, this unregulated influx of digital content, particularly on social media, Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, and messaging applications, presents a looming challenge for governance, ethics, and social harmony.

## Unregulated Expansion

According to recent statistics, 4.80 billion people worldwide are active on social media, with an average daily usage of 2 hours and 27 minutes. India alone is expected to reach 900 million internet users by 2025. While this connectivity has led to unprecedented levels of engagement, it has also exposed users to unregulated and sometimes harmful content, which can range from misinformation to exploitative materials. Social media platforms operate on an advertisement-driven model where algorithms prioritize high-engagement content, often without filtering the ethical consequences. The lack of regulation allows tech giants to maximise profits at the cost of public well-being, as observed in Facebook's reluctance to moderate harmful content effectively. Leaked internal reports reveal that Facebook's AI fails to detect a significant portion of disturbing content, allowing violent, extremist, and sexually explicit material to circulate freely. OTT platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Ullu have further contributed to unregulated content consumption by bypassing traditional media censorship laws. Unlike television and cinema, which are governed by strict guidelines, OTT platforms remain largely self-regulated. This has led to an increase in content that often promotes violence, explicit sexual themes, and even pornography, impacting young viewers and shaping dangerous narratives about relationships and societal norms.

## Dark Side of Unregulated Content

The lack of accountability among social media platforms has led to the unchecked proliferation of content related to violence, pornography, misinformation, and cybercrime. The document highlights multiple studies that show how algorithms expose vulnerable communities to disturbing content disproportionately. This is particularly alarming given that children and teenagers form a large segment of digital consumers. Social media anonymity has emboldened cyberbullies, predators, and traffickers, making digital platforms a fertile ground for exploitation. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have been implicated in failing to remove abusive content, often allowing harassment to persist for extended

periods before intervention occurs. A recent case study from India documented how WhatsApp chat groups were being used for the distribution of child pornography, exposing a critical flaw in the end-to-end encryption policies of messaging applications.

Another study analysing best-selling pornography videos found that 90% contained physical aggression, and nearly 50% included verbal aggression, with women being the primary targets. The normalisation of such content desensitises audiences, leading to rising cases of gender-based violence and sexual objectification. Moreover, the Bois Locker Room scandal in India demonstrated how exposure to explicit content among teenagers fosters a rape culture mentality, with young boys casually discussing sexual violence. This indicates a deep-rooted crisis fuelled by unregulated content, which social media companies have failed to address adequately.

Legal And Regulatory Challenges in India India currently lacks a comprehensive regulatory framework for online content. While Section 67A of the IT Act (2000) prohibits sexually explicit content, enforcement remains weak due to the absence of stringent monitoring mechanisms. Similarly, the POSCO Act (2012) criminalises child pornography but fails to regulate suggestive content that may lead to exploitation. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, introduced a three-tier regulation system for digital content. However, critics argue that the self-regulatory mechanism is insufficient, as platforms often evade accountability. Additionally, the absence of an independent oversight body allows digital corporations to operate with minimal consequences.

To counteract the dangers of unregulated content, experts have suggested stronger regulatory measures, including:

**Mandatory Aadhaar-based verification for access to sensitive content.**

A dedicated independent regulatory body similar to Australia's Classification Board. Heavy penalties for social media companies failing to moderate harmful content.

Parental control mandates on OTT and social media platforms.

**Cultural And Moral Erosion**

Platforms such as Ullu, Kooku, and Primeflix have emerged as key players in the soft pornography industry, depicting taboo relationships and exploitative storylines. The result is a steady erosion of social values, leading to desensitisation toward moral and ethical boundaries. With an average first exposure to pornography occurring at age 12, young minds are increasingly influenced by unrealistic and harmful depictions of relationships.

# Tariff tangle

## Litmus test for India's play-it-safe diplomacy

India is racing against time to stop or at least slow down Donald Trump's tariff juggernaut. In line with his 'America First' policy, the US President has announced tit-for-tat action from April 2 against India and other nations that have been imposing higher levies on imports from the US. New Delhi is looking to find an amicable solution to the vexing problem under the framework of a



mega trade deal with Washington. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is already in the US, holding negotiations regarding the deal, which is expected to be finalised by the year-end. The million-dollar question is: Can India delay the inevitable, and for how long?

After their meeting last month, Trump had lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "better, tougher negotiator", but he also made it clear that India would not be exempted from reciprocal tariffs. His clinching argument was that "nobody can argue with me" on this issue. However, Delhi continues to hope that Team Modi will pull a rabbit out of the

hat in the form of a mutually beneficial outcome. India's diplomatic approach is to play it safe and not infuriate Trump, unlike the belligerent stand adopted by countries like Canada and

China. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has called American tariffs "very dumb" and accused the US President of appeasing Russia, while Beijing has warned that it is ready to "fight till the end" if the US is hell-bent on waging a tariff or trade war. Ukrainian President Zelenskyy's nightmarish experience at the Oval Office has taught India that things can easily go from bad to worse if you are in Trump's bad books. The US was India's largest trading partner in 2022-23, with the bilateral trade amounting to \$190 billion; the two sides are keen to raise it to \$500 billion by 2030. The long-term picture might prompt Delhi to bite the tariff bullet.


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# Trump's love for American oil and the fuel of disruption

By Ranjan Tandon

He who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality.

--Anwar Sadat, Former President of Egypt and Noble Peace Prize winner

Energy is back on centre stage as Republicans trump the race to the White House. To re-assert America's dominance on the oil frontier, the President has tacitly challenged OPEC's prerogative as he seeks to ramp up production. Oil has orchestrated political symphonies for a very long time and still does.

The oil embargo of 1973 made the United States privy to their energy vulnerability due to reliance on imported oil. The need to break up OPEC or neutralise its clout over oil markets was an 'option' way back in January 1974 when James Schlesinger, US Secretary of Defence, conveyed hints of 'military intervention as a last resort'. A year later, in January 1975, in a press interview, Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State under President Gerald Ford, repeated the hint at 'using force' to disrupt 'order' in the Persian Gulf. Arab leaders threatened to blow up the oil fields in such an



eventuality. Fortunately, neither of the delinquencies occurred. The UK in the 1970s was steadily losing economic power and had earned the epithet 'sick man of Europe'. In the aftermath of the 'oil shock', the advent of North Sea oil proved a game changer for Margaret Thatcher-led Conservatives as it diminished OPEC's dominance in the early '80s. It heralded Brent's ascent as the global benchmark, currently setting the price of three-quarters of the world's traded oil at the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE). The British privatisation then ushered in a nouveau hydrocarbon era, with almost fifty percent of its revenue generated by this sector and a dramatic resurgence of a weakening economy.

In 1991, in a bid to control its oilfields, Iraq invaded Kuwait. The 42-country coalition led by the US intervened as it foresaw a 'dangerous tilt of oil power' in the Middle East, leading to the Gulf War. Drawing from history, Washington bets on oil to assert its relevance as it attempts to 'rein in the powers' that hold the key to oil taps. Trump invokes the oil industry to increase production in a fervour to push down prices and tame inflation. However, for OPEC, it is a lesson learnt from the crash of 1986. Surplus oil led to slippery economics for the leaders within the fraternity. Saudi Arabia reduced production by more than 50 percent to 'regulate' the market yet lost its share to Russia, the US and Mexico at that time. Ironically, some OPEC

members cheated on their quota, and the market was awash with oil, despite the cuts, as prices eroded by 60 percent and failed to cover lost ground.

I am reminded of Mohammed Barkindo--he helped form the OPEC+ alliance and was Acting Secretary General at the 10th International Energy Forum of OPEC at Doha in April 2006--who said, "It is important that we clarify what the term 'global energy security' actually means. First and foremost, security of supply and security of demand are two sides of the same coin.... For all consumers and producers in this increasingly interdependent world, security resides in the stability of the entire market...." The ideology and percept are the same today. Since 2022, the US and EU have pursued incremental sanctions on Russian oil in a bid to prevent Russia from monetising its oil wealth to realise its military ambitions. As the White House goes stricter on Iran's oil facilitation to China, aiming to thwart the Islamic Republic's efforts to further its "nuclear programme" (euphemism for nuclear armament), the oil market reacts with apprehension.

"Teapots" (small private refineries around Shandong province of China) have gradually scaled down production. If sanctions on Iran's oil exports and a stranglehold on Russian supplies via secondary sanctions are meaningfully implemented, a sizeable portion of supply would cease to quench international thirst. Any semblance of sombre prices is difficult to fathom in such a scenario. However, the narrative could change if the US goes soft on Moscow. Russia's dominance in the oil market would refrain OPEC from unilaterally tinkering with production quotas to avoid antagonising Moscow while negotiating the politics of the White House amid the present unpredictability. The threats of tariff impositions and deeper sanctions collude with current geopolitical events to cast a shadow of uncertainty on the supply side of the coin. While the imminent revocation of the Venezuela sanctions waiver could tighten the market, diplomatic efforts on the Ukraine-Russia war indicate prospects of rising supply to compensate for any shortfall in the eventuality of tariff imposition on Canada and Mexico.

## Modi must know Trump is nobody's 'friend'

By Ravi Shankar

There is a madness to Donald Trump's methods. His baffling bruiting of 'friend' Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging India got \$21 million funding for "voter turnout" in 2024 smells like a grudge. He said it not once, but four times. If sources are to be believed, Modi made numerous US visits, was dined and watered by Biden, but didn't drop in on Trump even once--from "Howdy Trump" it was "Trump Who?" If our MEA brainboxes had not believed their own press about India's vishwaguru trope, they would have advised the PM to drop in on his 'friend' in Mar-a-Lago. Data shows USAID money going to the Indian government had dropped to \$1.5 million from about \$204 million when UPA was in the driving seat. Did Biden pay millions to oust an elected government is the \$21-million question.

Why would the BJP, the richest party in the world with a cool \$7,113 crore in the bank, take



\$21 million from Biden to influence the elections? The party's national vote share fell in 2024 from 37.3 per cent in 2019 to 36.6 per cent. It lost 63 seats, not a particularly a sterling show by a party which Trump says was blessed with greenback largesse. In the ideological cross border firing between Congress caterwaulers and saffron sappers, there was comic relief,

too: Trump fuddled both parties and the rubber-band godi media by saying \$29 million went to a mysterious Bangladeshi firm. When Sheikh Hasina was overthrown, the capital's grape wineries wafted with theories that the CIA overthrew her by aligning with the radical Islamists to spite India. A possible postulation because the Central Agency of Ineptitude's hobbyhorse is cutting its own

nose, having forgotten what happened to the US after it helped the mujahideen in Afghanistan and attacked Iraq to get hold of mythical WMDs. 9/11 happened. The CIA is not a particularly intelligent outfit Trump isn't the smartest geogenius on the block. Maybe he confused Indian with Indiana. Perhaps mixed up Modi with Michigan from where he won. Trump once informed Modi that

India and China don't share a border despite the fact that the Indo-China border is 2,520 miles. Trump has called Belgium a city and believes there are "countries on this planet called 'Nipple' and 'Button'". While meeting with leaders from the Baltic, Trump mistook them for people from the Balkans. He declared he would build a "beautiful border wall" (beautiful is his favourite word) between "Colorado and Mexico" though they don't share a border; much like Imran Khan saying Japan and Germany are neighbours. He thought England was not part of the UK.

However, it would be best for South Block not to be fooled by these inanities. Trump is a dangerous man. He is also the world's most powerful man. His tariff rhetoric and deporting Indian illegals in chains show Trump is no friend of Modi. Perhaps Modi knows by now there are no permanent friends or enemies, only temporary allies. To stay ahead of the curve

# Modi, Maha Kumbh, And The Magic Of 'Mobilisation'



By Sanjay Singh

When nearly 50 crore people had already taken a dip at Triveni in Prayagraj, reports of traffic jams stretching over a hundred kilometres in all directions on highways leading to the Maha Kumbh surfaced. The city was overwhelmed by a sea of humanity. Some blamed media hype and official publicity, others criticised the Modi government for building a network of smooth highways and improved connectivity, while some simply warned people to stay away. By the time it ended, 66.3 crore people—according to official figures—had taken the holy dip. That's more than the entire population of Europe, double that of the US, and almost 20 times the combined population of Australia and New Zealand. Those returning from the Maha Kumbh overwhelmingly praised the Modi government at the Centre and the Yogi government in Uttar Pradesh, with only a handful offering complaints.

What does this suggest? The Kumbh is a civilisational event deeply ingrained in Hindu faith. For centuries, people have travelled long distances, often with meagre means and poor connectivity, to experience its spiritual bliss. But in 2025, things were different. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister

Yogi Adityanath sought to organise the event with a level of efficiency and scale never seen before.

In one sentence, this is Modi's art of public mobilisation. After the Maha Kumbh's conclusion, Modi recalled his January 22, 2024 remarks on the Pran Pratishtha of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya: "I spoke about Devbhakti and Deshbhakti—devotion to the divine and to the nation." The impact of linking nationalism with India's civilisational spirituality is evident for all to see.

Yes, the government worked for months to fine-tune every detail and ensure the Kumbh's success, but the larger question remains—was it really that simple? Those who have followed Modi's political rise would recall that by the early 2000s, a common belief among senior political leaders was that the advent of television and 24x7 news channels had made it difficult to mobilise crowds for public rallies. People could simply watch events on TV, which was often cited as the reason for dwindling attendance.

Yet, Modi's rallies in Gujarat began drawing massive crowds in the run-up to the 2002 and 2007 assembly polls. After being named the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate in 2013, he introduced a new model for organising public events. Gone were outdated loudspeakers; in their place came high-quality sound systems, ensuring clear

audio even in sweltering heat. Chairs were provided for attendees, demonstrating respect for their comfort. This resonated with people—and the rest is history.

As Prime Minister, Modi revolutionised public engagement, reshaping how leaders interacted with citizens and executed government processes. While the secular-liberal establishment launched the "Award Wapsi" movement, Modi redefined the Padma awards—shifting recognition from elites to unsung heroes who had spent their lives serving society but had long been overlooked. Over time, this shift cemented itself in the public's consciousness.

What were once mundane government events became participatory spectacles. Modi travelled extensively to lay foundation stones and inaugurate projects, making it easier for local people to join in. His government created a vast new base of beneficiaries across various schemes, directly engaging with tribals, marginalised communities, farmers, women, youth, and the elderly.

India's diversity was put on display for the world. The idea was to show that India was more than just New Delhi and the Taj Mahal. Holding bilateral and multilateral meetings outside the national capital meant these regions were cleaned, beautified, and given a sense of pride. The way the Modi government hosted the G20 stands as a shining

example of this approach.

Ultimately, what proved most effective in mass mobilisation was the efficient delivery of goods and services, coupled with efforts to restore the glory of India's cultural symbols and traditions.

Over three decades ago, BJP veteran L.K. Advani launched the Ram Rath Yatra, coining the term "cultural nationalism" as a unifying force for a diverse nation. In the last decade, Modi elevated this concept with his slogan: "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi" (progress with pride). The redevelopment of religious sites—Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Varanasi, Mahakal Dham in Ujjain, Kedarnath and Char Dham, and Babadham in Deoghar—has transformed these landmarks. Infrastructure, aesthetics, and hygiene have been vastly improved, boosting local economies and raising service standards beyond imagination.

On the day the Mahakumbh concluded, Modi wrote: "This Mahakumbh in Prayagraj is a subject of study for modern management professionals, planning, and policy experts. Nowhere in the world is there any parallel or example of this scale." What he didn't say, however, is that the BJP's mastery of public mobilisation deserves study as well.



# Ukraine Summits In US & London: Putting Paste Back Into Tube

By Mahesh Sachdev

Now that the dust has settled somewhat on last Friday's Oval Office public spat between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and his host the United States President Donald Trump, the time is opportune to pick up the broken crockery and figure the damage done. As enough has already been written and commented on the event itself, this article will instead focus on the short-to-medium-term consequences of the event on various stakeholders.

## A Greek Tragedy

Like a Greek tragedy, there are no winners in the last act at the White House. While President Zelensky may have had the satisfaction of proving himself as an underdog standing up to a bullying superpower and burnished his nationalist image at home, Ukraine has lost significantly at least in two ways: denial of any US security guarantees – the ostensible purpose of the White House visit, as well as a likely discontinuation of support from the US, hitherto Kyiv's biggest backer. The beleaguered Ukrainians are already outgunned and outmanned on the battlefield. They are now even more vulnerable as the two superpowers connive their fate behind their back. In short, while the White House spat might have helped Zelensky secure his position, it upturned his desperate attempt to obtain security guarantees for Ukraine.

## This Costs America

Without dwelling on various conspiracy theories, such as this being a setup or a political ambush to cow down President Zelensky, the public episode has considerable moral and material costs for the United States' status as a superpower as well as personally for the White House occupant.

Firstly, the US has failed to get access to the coveted strategic rare earth elements in Ukraine and recoup nearly \$200 billion worth of assistance. Further, by reneging upon the strategic military and civil assistance aid provided by the previous President and converting the past grants into loans to be paid back through usurped natural resources, Trump created a situation where henceforth all gifts from Washington would be suspected of being later accompanied by an IOU.

Secondly, by hosting bilateral talks with Russia in Riyadh on Ukraine, without either Kyiv or Brussels being present, Washington had reawakened the unpleasant memories of a Munich-type betrayal of Ukraine, a friend and ally. The



conduct would raise serious doubts about the reliability of the United States' commitments to its allies across the world and cause considerable reputational damage to Washington's soft and hard powers.

Thirdly, by publicly bullying an invited Head of State in a petulant and subjective manner, the US has cast itself as an unpredictable patron and volatile negotiator.

Lastly, it does little to dignify the image of a presumed hyperpower if its Head of State is seen in a slanging match with a disproportionately smaller interlocutor.

## Trump's Freudian Slips

At a personal level, Trump stood damaged by his several Freudian Slips on display at the White House by the unwitting rekindling of the controversies that dogged Trump 1.0. His public upbraiding of Zelensky on February 28 at the White House can be seen as a payback for an impeachment trial by the US Congress. In 2019, Trump was accused of phoning Zelensky to ask for launching an investigation against the son of Joe Biden his presumed Democratic opponent at the approaching elections, then working with a Ukrainian company, as a pre-condition to get \$400 million in American military assistance.

Further, his emotive and stout defence of Russian President Vladimir Putin ("he went together a lot with me") also harks back to an FBI investigation into the swirling allegations of Russian interference in his favour in the 2016 elections. While both these allegations were eventually dropped, Trump's reference to his past karmas during the White House spat – from settling scores with Zelensky, a visceral animus for his predecessor and defending Putin against domestic investigations, were self-goals likely to tainted him as a tempestuous maverick prone to mix his personal

domestic agenda with national interest abroad. From now onwards, any steps he takes on the Ukraine-Russia conflict, including significant relaxation of the 21,000-plus economic sanctions on Russia, may invite scrutiny about bias in favour of Russia and President Putin complicating his self-proclaimed neutrality.

## Putin Is Not The Winner Here

Most observers have loudly proclaimed Putin as the solitary winner of the Oval Office imbroglio. However, on a closer look, this conclusion appears questionable. Putin and Russian nationalists may gloat over a fall-out between Ukraine and United States, the hitherto chief mentor and sustainer of their opponent on the battlefield. But the episode pushes down the timeline for the end of the conflict, a priority for the Kremlin. It also makes easing of crippling economic sanctions less likely. In case the West Europeans take up the slack and reinvigorate the defence supplies to Kyiv, and create an autonomous anti-Russian defence alliance, this would disserve Moscow's interests. A united European defence bloc will be a formidable opponent with a combined GDP 11 times bigger than Russia's. It would have two nuclear powers each with permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Lastly, this continental repolarisation would also have opportunity costs for Moscow as prospects for an early post-war resumption of energy symbiosis would recede even further.

## What Next?

The February 28 White House clash has pushed the Europeans towards their moment of truth as they face a Hobson's choice on two issues: the need to reverse their centrifugal tendencies, and collective militarisation against Putin's

Russia perceived as an expansionist threat seeking to re-merge the former Soviet components. The EU economies have recorded an anaemic growth of 1.1% in 2024 and are likely to grow only by 1.6% this year. They are, thus, in poor shape to rev up their defence expenditure in a sustainable manner and fill the gap voided by the US. While the London Summit on March 2 showed an impressive NATO lineup, it still preferred to bring the US back into the alliance backing Ukraine – a prospect that may need time and selective amnesia, both in short supply amidst an unrelenting war.

At a different level, other go-between peacemakers, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, may strive to step into the void and offer to host multilateral talks to end the Russia-Ukraine war. However, the issue of the Washington-Moscow reset may then need to be dissociated from the Ukraine conflict.

China has considerable stakes in the Russia-Ukraine war. On one hand, Beijing has leveraged the hostilities and resultant Russia's isolation to forge a "no-limit" strategic partnership with Moscow. On the other hand, the Western preoccupation with Moscow has allowed China time and space to continue with its drive to dominate its neighbourhood. Thus, a jerky US-Ukraine and US-NATO partings may be a mixed blessing for Beijing. It may invite the unwelcomed resumption of Washington's 'pivot Asia' policy to contain China. Further, any eventual normalisation of Russia's ties with the West may correspondingly reduce Moscow's ardour for Beijing. In case West Europe morphs into a defence bloc, the resultant multipolarity may, however, suit Beijing.

## What This Means For India

India – and much of the Global South – have been collateral victims of the three-year Ukraine crisis, facing supply chain disruption of global trade of vital commodities from foodstuff to hydrocarbons. They would have been dismayed at the White House spat, fearing it to prolong the crisis. The US fixation with "such good friends" as Ukraine, Israel, etc has often overridden its engagements with less pressing horizontal global issues, such as poverty, hunger, disease, climate change, energy and other regional tensions. The incident may, optimistically, allow the Trump Presidency, currently downsizing its foreign engagements, to correct its course both qualitatively and quantitatively.

# Youth should not be afraid of failure, move forward with high thinking: Vice-President Dhankhar



By Jag Mohan Thaken

Chandigarh (India), March 5 - Vice President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday said that education is the driving force behind the most significant transformations in the society. Youth should be free from fear and should not be afraid of failure. Failure is not the end; it is the key to success. Most people do not succeed in their first attempt, and that should not define them as failures. Keep your thinking high and showcase your true potential.

Dhankhar was speaking as the chief guest at the convocation ceremony of Mata Harki Devi Educational Institute in Village Odha, Sirsa, and Jannayak Chaudhary Devi Lal Vidyapeeth in Sirsa, Haryana. On his arrival, the Vice President, along with his wife Dr. Sudesh Dhankhar, was warmly welcomed by Cabinet Minister Ranbir Gangwa, Trust Chairman and former MLA Abhay Singh Chautala, and other dignitaries.

“Never be under stress, never be under tension. Fear of failure is the worst fear in life because it is a myth. There is nothing like failure, it is an attempt that has not succeeded”, the Vice-President said.

Mr. Dhankhar advised the students, “If you have, boys and girls, a brilliant idea in your mind, don't allow that idea to be parked in your mind. That will be the greatest injustice to you and to humanity. Experiment, think out of the box. Look at what has happened in this

country, particularly last decade. Startups, unicorns, and of huge dimensions.”

The Vice-President added, “Therefore, never fear, never have tension, never have stress. Go for experimentation; go as per your attitude. You will have enough to contribute to the Nation. If the International Monetary Fund called India as a favourite global destination of investment and opportunity, boys and girls, it was not for government jobs. It was on account of the opportunities and those opportunities today are available at sea surface, deep sea, ground, deep ground, sky and space. You only have to think big. Take a leap.”

Sharing his experience, Mr. Dhankhar said, “I was governor of the state of West Bengal. I was in Science City, boys and girls of your age were with me, it was around 2 a.m. I remember September 2019. Chandrayaan-2 came very close to the lunar surface but could not touch it. Some people were so pessimistic that Chandrayaan-2 was called a failure by them. But it was, according to me, more than 90% successful. And that is why Chandrayaan-3 became a success and therefore, failure is a myth. Failure gives you an opportunity to further improve. Many greatest accomplishments in history have never succeeded in the first attempt.”

During the ceremony, the Vice

President felicitated the gold medallist students, acknowledging their hard work and dedication. In a symbolic gesture of promoting environmental consciousness, he also planted a sapling as part of the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam Abhiyan. He paid tribute to the legacy of Late Chaudhary Devi Lal, former Deputy Prime Minister, by offering flowers at his statue. Further, Vice- President Dhankhar laid the foundation stone for the Smriti Sangrahalaya, which will be built in the memory of the late former Chief Minister Ch Om Prakash Chautala.

The Vice-President spoke passionately about India's growth and the immense opportunities available for the youth. “India's leap is visible in every field, and today there are boundless possibilities for our young generation. It is essential for them to be aware of their rights and responsibilities towards society,” he added.

“Boys and girls, no Nation in the world has grown as fast with such a big leap as Bharat in the last decade. This has given one situation, people have tasted development, they have seen development. They are there, for aspirational mode and if people are in aspirational mode, there can be a restive situation, there can be restlessness, a problem but that problem has to be addressed by each and every individual,” said the Vice-President.

“If you look around, boys and girls,

your basket of opportunities is ever-enlarging. It is there in the blue economy, it is there in the space economy. You are in Bharat at a time when no Nation in the last decade has grown as fast and as large as Bharat. Big economic upsurge, phenomenal infrastructure growth, deep digitisation, technological penetration. If I share some figures with you, you will be surprised. Per capita internet consumption of Bharat is more than that of China and USA taken together. If we go about our digital transactions, the digital transactions are four times the combined transactions of the USA, UK, France, and Germany”, added the Vice-president.

Advising the pass outs to carry on the learning process, Mr. Dhankhar said that the convocation is not an end of education because education is always about learning. Let me quote a pre-Socrates era, I am quoting Heraclitus. Heraclitus, a great philosopher, gave us one aspect in life which is often quoted. ‘The only constant in life is change,’ and he buttressed it by an illustration. ‘The same person cannot be in the same river twice, because neither the river is the same, nor the person is the same.’

Always take pride in the person, in whose name, in whose memory the institutions are there. People have glorified human beings very rarely, you can get Padma Bhushan, you can get Bharat Ratna, you can get all awards but where do you get the title of Rashtrapita? Where do you get the title of Sardar? Where do you get the title of ‘Tau? Tau is here; Tau oversees us.

The Vice President also emphasized the importance of transforming the rural economy, a vision that he believes will be realized by the youth. He paid tribute to Chaudhary Devi Lal's philosophy, which was dedicated to uplifting villages, the poor, and farmers. I firmly believe that a developed India is not just a dream but a tangible goal.

Showing reverence to former Deputy Prime Minister of India, late Chaudhary Devi Lal, whom the public always addressed as ‘Tau’ to show respect towards him, Vice-President Dhankhar said, “I have been mentored in politics by ‘Tau’. What I learned from him is to keep on working for the development of society and never ignore the rural landscape and the farmers.”

# Is The World Growing Tired Of Zelensky?

By Tara Kartha

There has probably never been such a public trimming in the history of diplomacy. The joint presser between the President of the United States and Ukraine President Zelensky has set the internet on fire, with condemnation of both parties, and speculation about the outcome. Zelensky was not unnaturally on edge, given that he had to explain a 'deal' to his people. Trump was on the offensive, as was his Vice-President who felt, again, not unnaturally, that Zelensky had shown no gratitude to a President who, in fact, is the only world leader trying to end a terrible war. True, he also wants a payback in minerals, but the US and its European partners have always fought wars for resources. It's just that they don't say it upfront. Only, Trump did.

## That Joint Presser

The meeting had Zelensky in his trademark camouflages, a sartorial statement rather than a necessity, since he's far from fighting on the front. A question from the audience on why he wouldn't wear a suit at a White House meeting was unbecoming, to say the least, but it does demonstrate exasperation with a comedian who brought his once-prosperous country to devastation and the world dangerously close to World War III. That's what Trump said, and he's right.



As Secretary of State Marco Rubio clearly stated, the Ukrainians had insisted on a Washington visit, with the deal not yet on the table. Far from being left out, there had been at least 10 days of negotiations and repeated conversations. Zelensky, however, chose to take on the US president and his team in a diatribe that was unnecessary as it was counter-productive. Clearly, and unsurprisingly, he was playing to the gallery. Wartime leaders rarely survive, and that includes Winston Churchill. For Zelensky, it could be far worse than just being booted out of office, given a rising far-Right presence and allegations of corruption back home.

## Trump Is Also Right on Russia

The sympathy factor for Ukraine may be losing currency. True, the central

argument remains that Russia invaded Ukraine. But there is considerable documentation to reinforce what President Trump said and repeated in the presser, that this was a war that should never have been fought, and that Russia never agreed to NATO expansion. There is considerable evidence that Russia was offered 'iron-clad guarantees' that NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) would never move 'eastward', and that this was made amply clear in a 1990 memo between Secretary James Baker and his Russian counterpart Shevardnadze. These assurances continued in later years in a spate of memos and telephone calls, which, as former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

Director Robert Gates noted, reinforced the Soviet leaders' belief that NATO meant what it said. The whole German reunification was based on the unwritten promise that while joining NATO, the membership was designed to stabilise the continent, only.

Eventually, NATO added 14 members in the next decade. Fast forward to 1997, when there was even a NATO-Russia Founding Act intended to deliver a 'robust partnership' between the two sides. Boris Yeltsin, in effect, agreed to the inclusion of Czechia, Poland and Hungary in the bloc, on the condition that no nuclear weapons were deployed there. But it did not explicitly say anything about more expansion. Was it a betrayal? Yes, because throughout this period, Russia was also led to believe that it could one day join NATO, a dream it had held since 1954 when it made a specific proposal.

## NATO Promises and Backs Off

Throughout the 1990s, NATO-Ukraine relations steadily grew stronger, with the 'crowning glory' coming in 2008, when it was declared that it welcomed Ukraine's (and Georgia's) "Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership". Russia was livid, but to no avail. Then there were leaked conversations about the alleged role of America in getting a 'friendly' government into Ukraine.

# The Constitutional Case For Freebies

By Reena Gupta

The foundation of India's constitutional democracy rests on the principles of social and economic justice, as envisioned by the framers of the Constitution. Dr BR Ambedkar, in his speech to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, warned that political democracy without social democracy would lead to instability, emphasising that "we must remove the contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has laboriously built up".

Similarly, K.T. Shah argued during the debates that "it is the primary duty of the state to provide every citizen with the bare necessities of life". These statements underscore the necessity of welfare measures—including so-called "freebies"—as mechanisms to bridge economic disparities and uphold democratic ideals. When governments



provide free education, healthcare, and food security, they are not indulging in populism but fulfilling their constitutional obligation to ensure dignity and equal opportunity for all. Nehru also asserted in the First Lok Sabha, "The service of India means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity." Freebies, when designed as instruments of economic justice, are not mere handouts but a means of securing the fundamental rights of the most

vulnerable.

## A Short-Sighted Argument

In the contemporary context, the Modi government's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) has not translated into sufficient job creation, leaving millions dependent on government aid. The reality is simple: if stable and dignified employment were available, people would work. However, the persistent lack of economic opportunities and widening inequality make welfare

programmes essential lifelines, bridging gaps in education, healthcare, and basic resources. Despite poverty alleviation efforts over decades, unemployment, wage stagnation, and inadequate services remain widespread. Structural limitations, such as short-term government tenures, hinder long-term economic strategies. While reforms aim for sustainable change, the sheer scale of poverty demands immediate intervention.

The debate over government "freebies" has intensified as an election strategy with the recent Delhi and Maharashtra elections, yet, when structured as targeted welfare, they serve as vital tools of social justice and economic redistribution. By ensuring marginalised communities have equitable access to necessities, these measures align with India's constitutional vision of a just society and help correct systemic disparities in an increasingly unequal economy.

The Supreme Court's recent criticism of political parties announcing freebies—arguing that they

discourage people from working and contributing to national development—fails to recognise India's ground reality. "Are we not creating a class of parasites?" the Bench asked, claiming that people are "not willing to work" because of welfare schemes. Justices B.R. Gavai and Augustine George Masih emphasised integrating people into the mainstream economy. However, this perspective overlooks the structural barriers preventing millions from securing stable jobs. In a country where economic inequality is stark, dismissing welfare programmes as handouts ignores their role in addressing systemic deprivation. While concerns over fiscal responsibility are valid, branding welfare recipients as 'unmotivated' disregards the persistent lack of opportunities that necessitate such support in the first place.

# The joke's on us

## Misinformation, hate speech are the new normal



A joke is just a joke, right? Not so in India, where even a casual wisecrack is taken far more seriously than lethal weapons such as misinformation and hate speech. Podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia has learnt it the tough way — he has been told by the Supreme Court to mind his errant tongue after all the self-styled moral inspectors came down on him like a ton of bricks for his controversial remarks. The court has allowed him to resume his online show, provided he maintains “morality and decency” and makes it suitable for viewers of all ages. Despite getting interim protection from arrest, he won't be having the last laugh, for sure. That's a privilege enjoyed by those who spew hatred and spread fake news — and get away with it. The country's collective inability to take a joke — good, bad or ugly — is set to hit a new low as the SC has directed the Centre to formulate a mechanism to regulate social media content. Punishment for mocking the high and mighty would, of course, be an integral part of such a regulatory framework, which might come dangerously close to censorship. The inescapable fact is that we are not living in the US, where Saturday Night Live can afford to lampoon the US President and his deputy. Fact-checker Mohammed Zubair was bang on target when he stated that had this happened in India, the “police from Mumbai, Assam, Delhi, UP, MP, etc would have filed an FIR against them by now”. The formula here is simple: if you want to make comedians fall in line, drag them to court and bay for their blood. It's a not-so-funny case of misplaced priorities. Not many are bothered or embarrassed by the World Economic Forum's finding that India is a global leader in misinformation and disinformation. We are lapping up fake news as if it were prime-time entertainment, but are unwilling to laugh at ourselves. No wonder we are becoming too serious for our own good.

## Nitish And BJP: Will Bihar See A Maharashtra 'Rerun'?

By Amitabh Tiwari

Ahead of the Bihar assembly elections due in October or November this year, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the state has expanded its cabinet to fill vacant positions. The appointments, it seems, are aimed at balancing caste and regional aspirations in a bid to boost the alliance's prospects. While all the seven ministers belong to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), highlighting its heft in the alliance, a big question mark hangs over whether the party will contest the polls with Nitish Kumar as its chief ministerial face, or whether it pull an Eknath Shinde post-poll.

Age And Health

Despite Nitish's waning health and popularity, the Janata Dal (United) insists on naming him the chief ministerial candidate. Given the contentious issue of ticket distribution and Nitish's tendency to jump ships, the next few months could set off a political potboiler in Bihar.



The cabinet expansion has also led to rumours that the state elections could be pre-poned. The new BJP ministers sworn in are Sanjay Saraogi (Darbhanga), Sunil Kumar (Biharsharif), Jibesh Kumar (Jale), Raju Kumar Singh (Sahebganj), Moti Lal Prasad (Riga), Krishna Kumar Mantu (Amnour) and Vijay Kumar Mandal (Sikti). Out of these seven leaders, four belong to the OBC community, one to the EBC, and two are from upper castes, the core voting segments of the saffron party.

The strength of the Cabinet goes up to 37 with this expansion; this includes the Chief Minister, 22

leaders from the BJP, 13 from the JD(U), one from the Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM), and one Independent. This is in proportion to the total strength of alliance parties in the House: 84 members from the BJP and 48 from the JD(U).

Caste Calculations

Post-expansion, Nitish's Cabinet now has 28% representation from the OBC community and 19% from the SCs. This is broadly in line with the population share of the two groups. However, the representation of Economically Backward Classes (EBC) and

Most Backward Classes (MBC)

is still low: just 19%, when they make up 36% of the state's population. This is mostly because around 11% of Muslims in the state are classified as EBC/MBC, while there is just one Muslim minister from the community in the entire Cabinet. Meanwhile, General category leaders make up 31% of the Cabinet, which is twice their population. Four ministers are from the 15-seat Greater Mithilanchal region. The NDA had won 97 of these in 2020, and the latest appointment is aimed at consolidating its base further in this zone.

In 2020, both alliances had fetched around 37% of votes. However, the NDA received 11,150 votes more than the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)-led Mahagathbandhan. It bagged 125 of the 243 seats, three more than the simple majority, and ended up forming the government.

Central Considerations

This year as well, Bihar is expected to see a tight election. The key question before the BJP

is whether it will declare Nitish Kumar as the chief ministerial face of the alliance. If it pulls a Maharashtra in Bihar and decides on a name after the results, the post could then go to the largest party in the alliance, depending upon their performance in the election. This is crucial because before going to the polls in 2020, the BJP had declared that Nitish would be the Chief Minister, irrespective of the parties' seat tally in the election. The BJP honoured its promise despite getting almost twice the number of seats than the JD(U). A section of the parties' cadre and supporters didn't appreciate this. When Nitish made a gharwapsi just days ahead of the 2024 general election, he was still retained as Chief Minister as the BJP, falling short of a majority, needed the support of the JDU's 12 MLAs in Parliament. Nitish may use this as a bargaining chip in the upcoming state elections.

# Trump says will get Panama Canal, Greenland 'one way or the other'



US President Donald Trump, during his first address to the Congress in Capitol Hill, revealed his plans to take back the Panama Canal. He also extended the offer of joining the US to the citizens of Greenland and said "one way or the other we're gonna get it." Trump had mentioned several times that he intends to "take back" the canal from Panama, which took over control of the crucial international waterway in 1999 under a treaty negotiated with the United States 20 years earlier. He also

cited Chinese ownership of some of the port operations but reiterated that he plans to take it back.

Notably, US asset manager BlackRock announced Tuesday morning that it has agreed to buy two ports at either end of the canal from a Hong Kong-based firm whose ownership had angered President Donald Trump. "To further enhance our national security, my administration will be reclaiming the Panama Canal, and we've already started doing it."

"It was given away by the Carter administration for \$1, but that agreement has been violated very severely. We didn't give it to China. We gave it to Panama, and we're taking it back."

**TRUMP'S OFFER TO GREENLAND**  
While speaking about Greenland, Trump said, "I think we're gonna get it—one way or the other we're gonna get it." "We strongly support your right to determine your own future, and if you choose, we welcome you into the

United States of America. We need Greenland for national security and even international security, and we're working with everybody involved to try and get it, but we need it really for international world security, and I think we're going to get it," Trump said.

"One way or the other, we're going to get it. We will keep you safe. We will make you rich," Trump added. "And together, we will take Greenland to heights like you have never thought possible before."

## Who is Ranya Rao, Kannada actor arrested in Bengaluru for smuggling gold

Kannada actor Ranya Rao was arrested for allegedly attempting to smuggle 14.8 kg of gold worth over Rs 12 crore. She was held at the Bengaluru International airport on March 3. Ranya is a Kannada and Tamil actor, who has three films to her credit. She is the stepdaughter of IPS officer Ramachandra Rao, who currently serves as the Director General of Police (DGP) at the Karnataka State Police Housing Corporation.

### WHO IS RANYA RAO?

Ranya Rao is from the Chikmagalur district of Karnataka. She did her schooling in Bengaluru before pursuing a career in acting.

In 2014, she made her Kannada debut opposite popular actor Kichcha Sudeepa in Maanikyaa. The film is an official remake of the Telugu film, Mirchi, which featured Prabhas. Two years later, she made her Tamil debut with Wagah opposite Vikram Prabhu. While Maanikyaa was a blockbuster, her Tamil debut Wagah received negative reviews from critics and audiences alike.

In 2017, she returned to Kannada cinema with Pataki, an action-comedy. A remake of the Telugu film Pataas, Ranya played the role of Sangeetha. She shared the screen with popular Kannada actor Ganesh in the film.

Pataki was her last on-screen appearance, and she has stayed away from films since then.

### WHY WAS RANYA RAO ARRESTED?

Ranya Rao, who has three films to her credit, had been under the surveillance of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) after four trips to Dubai within 15 days, according to reports.

Acting on a tip-off, the DRI officers arrested the actor who had arrived from Dubai to Bengaluru on an Emirates flight on March 3. Aged 33, Rao allegedly smuggled the gold by concealing the gold bars in her jacket. Investigators reveal that

she may have used her connections to clear the customs checks. After being held by the DRI officers, she is believed to have reached out to the local police requesting an escort from the airport.

Upon examination, gold bars weighing 14.2 kg worth Rs 12.56 crore were found ingeniously concealed. The gold bars were seized under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962.

Following the arrest, DRI officers conducted a search at her residential premises located at Lavelle Road, Bengaluru, where she resides with her husband. The search resulted in the seizure of gold jewellery

worth Rs. 2.06 crore and Indian currency amounting to Rs. 2.67 crore. She has been placed under arrest under the relevant provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 and remanded to judicial custody.

Officials are now conducting a thorough investigation into whether Ranya was operating alone or if she was a part of a gold smuggling syndicate in Dubai and India.

The total seizure in the case stands at Rs. 17.29 crore, marking a significant blow to organised gold smuggling networks. The haul of 14.2 kg is one of the biggest seizures of gold at Bengaluru International airport in recent times.

# Rs 30 crore in 45 days: Yogi Adityanath shares success story of Kumbh boatman

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday rebuffed opposition criticism of the Maha Kumbh, citing a family's massive earnings as proof of the event's economic impact. He claimed that a single family operating 130 boats made Rs 30 crore in profit during the 45-day religious gathering in Prayagraj between January 13 and February 26.

Breaking down the figures in Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister highlighted that a single boat generated daily earnings ranging between Rs 50,000 and

Rs 52,000. The remarkable financial success, he said, underscores the economic opportunities created during the Kumbh Mela for local communities. Reacting to the Samajwadi Party's allegation that the boatmen of Prayagraj were 'exploited', the Chief Minister said, "I am telling the success story of a boatman's family. They have 130 boats. In 45 days (of Maha Kumbh), they have profited Rs 30 crore... This means each boat has earned Rs 23 lakh. On a daily basis, they earned Rs 50,000 to 52,000 from each boat." Furthermore, the Chief

Minister said that the recently-concluded 45-day mega-event, calling it a testament to India's rich heritage and development. "We talk about Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. This event has left an indelible mark not just in India but across the world. Its success will resonate globally for a long time," he said. Yogi Adityanath also slammed the opposition parties for questioning the religious congregation and said that only those who actively participated in the Maha Kumbh can truly understand its significance.

"During the Maha Kumbh, several members, parties and organisations made baseless statements. Instead of getting distracted by such remarks, we remained committed to our responsibilities and were witness to the grand event," he said.

Adityanath emphasised that an investment of Rs 7,500 crore in the Maha Kumbh yielded a record Rs 3 lakh crore in business, boosting multiple sectors. The Chief Minister also informed the Assembly that Maha Kumbh contributed significantly to the economy,

## US Suspends Military Flights For Deportation Weeks After Sending 'Chained' Migrants To India: Report

Amid President Donald Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration, his administration in America has reportedly stopped using the military aircraft to deport migrants who entered the United States illegally due to high costs. The last military deportation flight was sent from the US on March 1, and a pause on such measures could be extended or made permanent, The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) has reported.

America started using military aircraft to transport some migrants to their home countries or a military base at Guantanamo Bay soon after Trump took office in January. But, the measure was proving to be expensive and inefficient, the WSJ report said.

The Trump administration reportedly used the military planes for deportation because it wanted to send a message about their intent to get tough on immigrants in the country illegally.

"The message is clear: If you break the law, if you are a criminal, you can find your way at Guantanamo Bay," Defense

Secretary Pete Hegseth said last week after watching migrants arrive on a C-130 aircraft during a visit to Guantanamo Bay.

"You don't want to be at Guantanamo Bay," he added.

Indians Deported In Military Aircraft Under Trump, America has conducted around 30 migrant flights using C-17 aircraft and about a dozen on C-130, according to flight-tracking data. Destinations included India, Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Ecuador and Guantanamo Bay.

In February, hundreds of Indian deportees, in several batches, arrived in India aboard a US Air Force cargo plane. Upon landing, the deportees narrated their ordeals and told that they were shackled and restrained throughout the flight, only to be freed upon arrival in India.

"Costly Measure"

The deportation of illegal migrants is traditionally overseen by the Department of Homeland Security, which uses commercial flights for the

operations. Since the Trump administration wanted to send a message to migrants about their stringent policies, they used military flights.

However, these planes took longer routes and transported fewer migrants at higher cost to taxpayers than the government's typical deportation flights on civilian aircraft, the WSJ report said. It found that three deportation flights to India alone cost \$3 million each. Flights to Guantanamo, which carried just a dozen people, had a cost of at least \$20,000 per migrant, the report showed. In comparison, the government data shows that a standard US Immigration and Customs Enforcement flight costs \$8,500 per flight hour. According to the WSJ report, the figure is closer to \$17,000 per flight hour for international trips.

But, the cost of flying a C-17, which is designed to carry heavy cargo and troops, is \$28,500 per hour, according to US Transportation Command, which provided the aircraft.

Adding to higher flying costs, the C-17s needed to take a longer route as they haven't been using Mexico's airspace, which can add several hours to flights destined for Central and South America, the report said.

Notably, Mexico and some other countries in Latin America, including Colombia and Venezuela, haven't allowed the US military flights to land in their territories and have instead sent their own aircraft or arranged for deportees to travel on commercial flights. In January, Colombian President Gustavo Petro denied entry to two C-17 flights, prompting Trump to threaten tariffs. Later, the White House said Colombia had agreed to the "unrestricted acceptance of all illegal aliens." But no C-17s reportedly landed in the country. Instead, it sent its own aircraft to transport the deportees.

Venezuela in February also sent two commercial flights to pick up 190 people, after years of refusals to accept deported citizens who had entered the US illegally.

## Fentanyl And A 50-Minute Call: Trump, Trudeau Showdown Amid Tariff Tensions

Amid the tariff war between Washington and Ottawa, US President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau held a nearly 50-minute phone call on Wednesday, where they discussed fentanyl smuggling and trade. US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Vice President JD Vance were also on the call, news agency Reuters reported quoting sources.

CTV News later cited a source who claimed that the Trump and Trudeau phone call got "heated" at times. Though specific details of the

conversation weren't shared, they mostly revolved around fentanyl smuggling and elections in Canada, reports suggested.

Teams from both nations will continue to hold discussions on Wednesday, Reuters reported quoting a source, who did not give details.

Following the lengthy conversation, the American President shared the details on his Social truth Platform, where he accused the Canadian leader of using the trade issue to stay in power.

"He (Trudeau) was unable to tell me when the Canadian Election is taking

place, which made me curious, like, what's going on here? I then realized he is trying to use this issue to stay in power," Trump wrote.

Trudeau, who has been Canada's Prime Minister since 2015, decided in early January to step down. However, He would resign after a new leader of his Liberal Party is chosen. Raising concerns over fentanyl smuggling, Trump claimed that the synthetic opioid continues to enter the United States via Canada and Mexico. He said their discussion ended on a "somewhat" cordial note. "Justin Trudeau, of

Canada, called me to ask what could be done about Tariffs. I told him that many people have died from Fentanyl that came through the Borders of Canada and Mexico, and nothing has convinced me that it has stopped. He said that it's gotten better, but I said, 'That's not good enough.' The call ended in a 'somewhat' friendly manner! He was unable to tell me when the Canadian Election is taking place, which made me curious, like, what's going on here? I then realized he is trying to use this issue to stay in power. Good luck Justin!" Trump posted.

# US bodybuilder, 20, dies of heart attack due to 'severe dehydration': What happened?

Jodi Vance, 20, who was a bodybuilder and a fitness enthusiast, succumbed to a heart attack due to "severe dehydration," her family revealed.

(By Staff Reporter) Bodybuilder Jodi Vance died after she suffered a fatal heart attack, a post on her Instagram account written by her family said.

Jodi, who was 20 years old, succumbed to a heart attack due to "severe dehydration" and her death was "sudden and unexpected", her family revealed.

"Jodi passed away yesterday afternoon. Her heart stopped due to complications of severe dehydration. Despite all efforts by the hospital, they were unable to revive her. She was a beautiful person inside and out and she will be missed every single day. This was sudden and unexpected. Please give her family time to process this loss in peace," the note read. They concluded by writing, "If anyone takes anything from this, please put your health first."

Although Jodi's trainer Justin Mihaly later revealed that the bodybuilder took "two extremely hazardous substances to improve her physique," he suggested the importance of avoiding harmful substances that could compromise one's health.

He also highlighted that the substances Jodi was taking



led to a condition called hyperkalemia, where the body's potassium levels go up. "They start impairing electrical signals which is what control muscle contractions including the heart, which is something what is supposed to happen autonomously without us thinking about it. This causes sudden cardiac arrest," he said.

**HOW SEVERE DEHYDRATION AFFECTS YOUR HEART**

Most experts agree that keeping yourself hydrated is

one of the best ways to stay healthy. The body largely relies on water to function properly.

Since water helps carry nutrients and oxygen to the body's cells, flushes out bacteria, aids in digestion, prevents constipation, stabilises the heartbeat, and protects the organs, dehydration can lead to headaches, increased risk of kidney disease and heart failure.

According to a study conducted by researchers from Midwestern University and

Mery Fitzgerald Hospital, in a dehydrated state, blood volume decreases, causing the heart to work harder to pump blood to vital organs and muscles. This heightened strain on the cardiovascular system can lead to an increased risk of heart attacks, particularly in individuals with pre-existing cardiovascular conditions. Besides this, electrolytes are crucial for the heart. Dehydration disrupts the balance of electrolytes, leading to irregular heartbeats or arrhythmias, and an increased risk of a heart attack.

When the body becomes dehydrated, it struggles to regulate temperature through sweating.

When there's not enough sweat production, this hampers the body's ability to cool down, leading to an increase in core body temperature.

High temperatures can strain the cardiovascular system, impairing blood flow and increasing the risk of clot formation, a precursor to heart attacks.

**PREVENT DEHYDRATION**

Avoid any substances that can lead to dehydration in the body. Avoid tea or coffee on an empty stomach in the morning. Having it only after you've had breakfast.

Adding fruits and vegetables to your meals can help keep electrolyte balance in the body, avoiding any possible complications of a heart failure. Limit the intake of ultra-processed foods like salty snacks and sugary drinks or sweetened soda drinks, and even alcohol. In case, your having these foods and beverages, compensate it with enough water afterwards. Drink at least 8 glasses of water every day to have a regular flow of water and hydration.

## Rajasthan minister calls Akbar 'rapist', says Aurangzeb killed 'countless Hindus'

(By Staff Reporter) Rajasthan Education Minister Madan Dilawar has stirred a row after claiming that Mughal emperor Akbar was a "rapist, invader and a looter". The development comes at a time when another Mughal ruler, Aurangzeb, has been at the centre of a storm in Maharashtra after Samajwadi Party MLA Abu Azmi lavished praise on him. Speaking in the Rajasthan Assembly on Tuesday, Dilawar said labelling Akbar as "great" was an insult to the

country as he was a rapist and a looter amid sloganeering from the opposition benches.

@madan\_dilawar bjp Rajasthan pic.twitter.com/mKlndwDlxv MUKESH DADHICH (@m\_dadheech) March 4, 2025

Blaming previous Congress regimes for giving Mughals disproportionate space in history textbooks compared to regional heroes, Dilawar said, "They tried to belittle Maharana Pratap. And Akbar,

who used to set up 'meena bazaar', was a rapist, an invader and a looter, was called great. This was an insult to the country of our great men. This cannot be tolerated." As Congress MLAs continued to disrupt his speech and objected to his remark, the BJP leader continued his tirade and referred to how textbooks omitted the negative aspects of "cruel rulers" like Aurangzeb and Taimur. "Aurangzeb killed countless Hindus, razed hundreds of

temples and imposed jizya tax. But the reality was hidden from the country's students and taught for many years... In textbooks, the invader and cruel ruler Taimur was described as great, which was completely inappropriate," the Education Minister said.

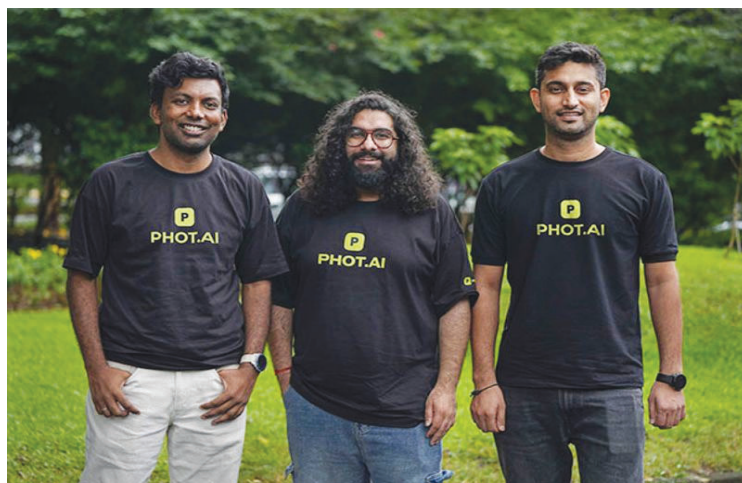
Jizya was a tax that was historically imposed on non-Muslims by Islamic rulers for protection. Hitting back at the opposition MLAs, Rajasthan BJP vice president Mukesh Dadhich

said, "There are a few Congressmen who have so much love for Akbar that they are interrupting a minister." Around 1,000 km away, in Maharashtra, controversy brewed over Samajwadi Party MLA Abu Azmi calling Mughal emperor Aurangzeb a "good administrator". The remark by the four-time MLA was viewed by the ruling BJP as an insult to Maratha icon Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Amid an outrage in the state, Abu Azmi was suspended from the Assembly for the whole session.

# Phot.AI raises \$2.7M to automate ecommerce creative design using AI agents

(By Staff Reporter) Gurugram (Haryana) [India], March 6: Phot.AI, an AI-driven creative automation platform, has secured \$2.7 million in a seed funding round led by Info Edge Ventures, with participation from Together Fund, AC Ventures, and over 50 angel investors, including Sahil Goel & Akshay Gulati (Shiprocket), Aakash Anand (Bella Vita), Arjun Vaidya (V3 Ventures), Prabhkiran Singh (Bewakoof), Puneet Gupta & Anmol Jain (Astrotalk), Sandeep Agarwal (Droom), Vishesh Khurana & Raj Snehil (Tribe Capital), Pawan Gupta (Fashinza). The funds will be used to expand the team, invest in R&D, and to launch the much awaited copilot.

E-commerce brands today face growing visual demands, requiring frequent updates for product listings, ads, and social media. Each platform—Amazon, Shopify, and Meta Ads—requires unique formats, sizes, and localized content, making manual design costly and time-consuming. Furthermore, traditional design platforms require technical skills or rely on static templates, limiting flexibility and



scalability. Additionally, visual inconsistency, slow production, and limited A/B testing hinder brand performance, leading to higher customer acquisition costs (CAC) and lower conversions.

With shoppers prioritizing high-quality images over product descriptions, brands need AI-powered automation to create, optimize, and personalize visuals at scale. Phot.AI automates creative design and marketplace listings for ecommerce, brands, retail. Its AI agents continuously learn which designs perform best for different product categories and marketplaces.

This automation reduces manual effort and costs by up

to 80%, accelerating brands' go-to-market strategies. It also enables A/B testing of creatives, boosting conversions by 40%,

while ensuring visuals comply with the formatting and guidelines of marketplaces like Amazon and ad platforms like Google.

Phot.AI was co-founded in 2023 by Venus Dhuria, Aneesh Rayancha, and Akshit Raja, who previously built AppyHigh, an app publishing studio with over 700 million downloads and 100+ seed investments in promising startups. The team brings deep expertise in technology and business scaling, positioning them to disrupt the e-commerce creative automation industry

with AI Agents.

"Phot.AI makes it easy for brands to create high-quality visuals quickly and efficiently," said Venus Dhuria, Co-founder of Phot.AI. "Our AI-powered platform removes the need for design skills or rigid templates, allowing businesses to generate customized content for different platforms and audiences effortlessly. We help brands create A/B testing creatives so they can test and optimize visuals on their respective platforms for better engagement and performance. By automating the entire creative

## Jack Daniel's maker says Canada pulling US alcohol off shelves worse than tariff

(By Staff Reporter) Jack Daniel's maker Brown-Forman's CEO Lawson Whiting said on Wednesday Canadian provinces taking American liquor off store shelves was "worse than a tariff" and a "disproportionate response" to levies imposed by the Trump administration.

Several Canadian provinces have taken US liquor off store shelves as part of retaliatory measures against President Donald Trump's tariffs. Canadians are steering away from US goods, sports events and trips following the recent

imposition of tariffs, which have left them stirred, despite the deep ties between the two countries. "I mean, that's worse than a tariff, because it's literally taking your sales away, (and) completely removing our products from the shelves," Whiting said on a post-earnings call.

Canada accounted for only 1% of the company's total sales, Whiting said, so the company can withstand the hit.

Canada on Tuesday also imposed 25% tariffs on goods imported from the US, including wine, spirits, and beer.



# SEBI under scrutiny

## Market regulator must get its act together

(By Staff Reporter) Two contrasting developments concerning the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the nation's capital market regulator, took place on Saturday. Former Finance and Revenue Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey assumed charge as the board's chairperson, even as a special court in Mumbai directed the Anti-Corruption Bureau to register an FIR against his predecessor Madhabi Puri Buch and other officials in a case involving alleged stock market fraud and regulatory violations. The allegations pertain to the fraudulent listing



of a company on the stock exchange in 1994 in connivance with the authorities concerned. Though Buch served as the SEBI chief three decades after the

purported fraud, the court said inaction by law enforcement agencies and the market regulator had necessitated judicial intervention under criminal laws. A thorough

probe is a must to find out whether she looked into — or overlooked — any complaint about the old case.

Buch found herself in trouble last year as well when US short-seller Hindenburg Research (now disbanded) accused her and her husband of having stakes in obscure offshore entities that were allegedly linked to the Adani 'money siphoning scandal'. The claim caused an uproar as SEBI, then headed by Buch, was itself probing allegations of "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud" by the Adani Group. There was a clamour for her resignation

over presumed conflict of interest, but Buch held her ground. Eventually, the dust settled, as it often does in India, and it was back to business as usual. However, SEBI's credibility took a hit, and so did the confidence of investors. Buch's successor has promised to focus on four Ts — trust, transparency, teamwork and technology. The first two are extremely vital for SEBI to regain its standing as a robust market institution. It will become harder for India to project itself as an investor-friendly nation if the regulator remains mired in one controversy or the other.



# Boroline, a cult favourite, is finding its place in Gen Z skincare

What is your earliest memory of skincare? For me, growing up in a household in the Northeast, my fondest memory is of seeing my mother using skincare - not the hoity-toity kind that came in a glass bottle with an ingredient name that not everyone can pronounce. Rather, she would use natural ingredients, anything at her disposal. But coming from a household in Bengal, if there's one thing that remained in her pouch every day, it was, of course, Boroline, an antiseptic cream that she still uses for everything.

From dry skin to cuts, wounds, and infections, it was a staple.



She would heat the cream and use it to heal wounds, and on normal days, Boroline was used for slugging - way before it became cool. For many households (like ours), Boroline is not just a cream; it is a

household legend. No matter the problem, Boroline was the answer. It had this thick, balmy texture that took its sweet time to sink in, but when it did, it worked like magic. Even today, in an age where skincare is all

about elaborate routines and high-end serums, Boroline has held its ground. There's a certain nostalgia attached to it, the trademark green tube, the comforting medicinal scent, and the way our grandmothers, mothers, and now we, still reach for it instinctively.

It doesn't promise glass skin or overnight transformations, but what it does, it does well.

How the green tube made history

Inspired by the Swadeshi movement, Boroline was introduced in 1929 by Gour Mohun Dutta as more than just a skincare product - it was a quiet act of defiance against

British economic exploitation. Gour Mohun Dutta, a wealthy businessman from Kolkata, who decided to join the Swadeshi Movement by producing an indigenous alternative to foreign skincare products.

He believed that the best way to help the country was to contribute to its economic self-sufficiency. Instead of relying on expensive imported creams, he chose to manufacture Indian products. Despite the challenges, he successfully created Boroline in Calcutta in 1929, making it the first indigenous skincare product of the movement.

## Alia Bhatt on ADHD diagnosis: My body starts heating up in social gatherings

(By Staff Reporter) Ever since actor Alia Bhatt was diagnosed with ADHD (Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) and anxiety, she has been vocal about her mental health. In a recent conversation with author Jay Shetty, Bhatt opened up about her diagnosis, clarifying that she is not on medication. She also shared that her sister's journey inspired her to speak about her mental health more openly. Alia Bhatt, describing her experience with ADHD, shared that her body reacts unusually in social situations. She said hearing the stories of others facing similar challenges gave her the courage to speak about her own

struggles.

She said, "It often happens to me when I see an A-list celebrity, whether from Hollywood or even here, speak about something I relate to. And I think, 'Oh, they're feeling it too.' It happens to all of us. That's when I became more open to talking about my specific anxiety. I was recently clinically diagnosed, so I had proper backing, not just saying, 'Oh, I'm having an anxious day.' It's not just that." Alia continued to explain, "I was struggling, which is why I sought help. In social gatherings, my body would physically react. I'd start heating up. I also found it hard to focus; my attention

kept drifting in and out."

She added that she used to give herself credit for being an amazing multitasker, but then "realised that while I can multitask, it takes a toll on me. I needed to understand why. I started forgetting the most random things, even things I had scheduled."

Alia Bhatt, who first opened up about her ADHD in an interview with The Lallantop, further shared that she felt a sense of relief upon receiving her diagnosis. She explained that a lack of information or access to knowledge about something tends to make her anxious. "So, I took a professional test over three days, not

just a random personality quiz, and I was diagnosed with ADHD and anxiety. Strangely, I felt happy because my ADHD diagnosis gave me information. Lack of information is what throws me off the most, and I'm always seeking clarity and comfort. I'm very averse to change. But once I became aware of these things, dealing with them became much simpler." Crediting this to her sister Shaheen Bhatt, she said, "Something about my sister's honesty inspired me to talk about it, not in a way that seems like I'm complaining about my life, because I know I'm not in a position to complain. I have it all."

## Sleeping single, staying married: The rise of sleep divorce in India

(By Staff Reporter) As awareness about the importance of quality sleep grows, a global sleep study has highlighted a silent sleep crisis, revealing that over 70% of Indian couples are opting for sleep divorce - choosing to sleep separately to improve rest quality. According to ResMed's 2025 Global Sleep Survey, India leads in sleep divorce, with 78% of couples adopting the practice, followed by China (67%) and South Korea (65%). The study, which surveyed over 30,000 individuals across 13 markets, found a widespread global sleep crisis, with couples in the United Kingdom and the United States evenly split - 50% always sleeping together and 50% occasionally sleeping apart.



While sleeping apart may seem unconventional, for many, it has become a necessary step to enhance sleep quality and overall relationship health. Key reasons cited for sleep disturbances include a partner's snoring, loud breathing, or gasping for air (32%), restlessness (12%), mismatched sleep schedules

(10%), and screen use in bed (8%). Older generations were more likely to report sleeping separately due to these disruptions. Those who have opted for separate sleeping arrangements report improved sleep quality and stable or even enhanced relationships, including better sex life.

However, experts suggest that co-sleeping has its own benefits. Sharing a bed with a partner triggers the release of oxytocin - the 'love hormone' - which can lead to lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, as well as increased life and relationship satisfaction. A study published in Sleep found that couples who share a bed experience these emotional benefits, while another study in Frontiers in Psychiatry noted that co-sleeping is linked to about 10% more Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep.

When asked about their feelings associated with sleeping next to a partner, respondents listed love (53%), comfort (47%), relaxation (41%), happiness (27%), and calmness (21%) as their top

emotions.

**THE STRUGGLE FOR QUALITY SLEEP**

In today's fast-paced world, balancing work, family, and social expectations while prioritizing self-care can make sleep a casualty. The study identified stress, anxiety, financial pressures, mental health conditions, and relationship issues as the top contributors to poor sleep.

Stress, in particular, was reported as a significant factor for 69% of Indians, followed by high levels in South Korea (67%), Thailand (65%), Singapore (65%), and Germany (61%). Among Gen Z respondents, 53% cited anxiety as a primary cause of sleep deprivation.



# The fact that humans can only survive on Earth doesn't bother Trump – and I know why

By George Monbiot

In thinking about the war being waged against life on Earth by Donald Trump, Elon Musk and their minions, I keep bumping into a horrible suspicion. Could it be that this is not just about delivering the world to oligarchs and corporations – not just about wringing as much profit from living systems as they can? Could it be that they want to see the destruction of the habitable planet?

We know that Trump's overriding purpose is power. We have seen that no amount of power appears to satisfy his craving. So let's consider power's ultimate destination. It is to become not only an emperor, but the last of the emperors: to close the chapter on civilisation. It is to scratch your name indelibly upon a geological epoch. Look on my works, ye vermin, and despair.

It's true, of course, that many of his actions amount to standard capitalist looting, released from the feeble regulatory restraints of previous administrations. This week Trump ordered the mass destruction of national forests and other protected lands by the timber industry, to be overseen by the US Forest Service, whose new boss was previously vice-president of a timber company. The results will include heartbreaking losses of wildlife and rare ecosystems, and a heightened risk of wildfires. Trump justified his order with that classic dictator's gambit: a purported "emergency".

He has used the same excuse to trigger a new wave of fossil-fuel projects, granting them "emergency" permits to override environmental protections. This is likely to cause the poisoning of wetlands and water supplies. Overseeing the assault is the new energy secretary, Chris Wright, previously CEO of a fracking company.

If the US were really suffering an "energy emergency", you would expect the government also to accelerate the deployment of renewable power. Instead, Trump has frozen it. You might also expect it to insist that energy is used more sparingly; instead, his team is deleting fuel economy standards. This looks like payback to the fossil-fuel industry that helped elect him.

But other policies look more like gleeful vandalism. The devastating staffing cuts at national parks and forests won't help any of his corporate backers. But they will degrade the experience of visitors, while jeopardising wildlife and habitats.

The same goes for the mass destruction of jobs at the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the freezing of all the international conservation grants it offered, many of which are crucial to the protection of wildlife overseas. There's not much to be gained here by any corporate lobby, and a great deal to be lost by the rest of us. Trump's stated aim of "getting rid" of the Federal Emergency Management Agency would put corporate profits at severe risk, especially among insurers and investment

funds, while intensifying the suffering of people hit by environmental crisis. He has also eliminated the help offered to communities suffering from heavy pollution. Again, there's no obvious gain for capital, just plenty more human misery. Vengeful nihilism, the destruction of what they do not love, know or understand, is a major theme in Maga politics. It is applied as viciously to culture and science as it is to the natural world. It is hard to avoid the thought that environmental destruction is not just a means by which Trump serves his corporate backers, but an end in itself. At the same time, Trump enthusiastically (albeit vaguely) boosts Musk's plans to send people to Mars, a planet incapable of supporting human life. These men, who claim without evidence that unless they cut \$1tn from the federal budget, causing innumerable harms, "America will go bankrupt", are pressing for a programme likely to cost hundreds of billions while delivering no benefit to humanity. For all its grandiosity, the plan amounts to nothing more than an elaborate means of sending people to their deaths.

One of the most persuasive explanations of our times I've read is an essay by the author Jay Griffiths, published in 2017. She connects today's planetary vandals with the Italian futurists of the early 20th century. The futurists, who created much of the iconography and ideology of fascism, fetishised the machine, fantasising about "the technological triumph of humanity

over nature". They were obsessed by flight. "Hurrah! No more contact with the vile earth!", the author of their manifesto, Filippo Marinetti, exulted. "Life on earth is a creeping, crawling business," the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio claimed. "It is in the air that one feels the glory of being a man and of conquering the elements." Through flight, Griffiths notes, they believed they could achieve their ideal, purified state, characterised by the notion of Deus Invictus: the unbound, totalitarian god, no longer restrained by such earthy, humdrum matters as honesty, kindness, sympathy, respect or even gravity.

I believe, like her, that the revival of this belief system might offer a key to understanding Elon Musk and his remarkable hold over the Trump administration. What Musk presents is the definitive fantasy of escape: from decency, care, love and the living planet itself. They can leave it all behind, leap off the vile Earth, and ascend into heaven.

On Mars, Musk dreams of building private cities under the exclusive control of his company SpaceX. Never mind the technical impossibilities; it's the fantasy that counts: the definitive release from social and biological constraint. His subterranean prison cities, in which survival would depend on extreme technological intervention – the slightest interruption of which would mean instant death – would make the worst terrestrial dictatorship in history look like a yoga retreat.

# Once a mediator, why is Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann now acting tough on farmers?

**Bhagwant Mann has toughened his stance on farmers, who are protesting him and the Aam Aadmi Party government in the state. Mann time and again slammed the Centre for not allowing farmers to enter New Delhi. He now faces the same criticism.**



**By Aseem Bassi**

From a breakdown in talks to the detention of hundreds of farmer leaders to then not allowing farmers to reach Chandigarh for a dharna outside the residence of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Wednesday, Punjab in the past three days saw a sudden escalation between farmers and the state government. Not long ago, Mann would act as a mediator between farmer leaders and the Centre and sit in the meetings for hours. But things have since changed and the CM has toughened his stance on farmers, who are protesting him and the Aam Aadmi Party government in the state. Mann time and again slammed the Centre for not allowing farmers to enter New Delhi. He now faces the same criticism.

Things escalated between farmer leaders and the state government when on March 3, the former accused the CM of

inappropriate behaviour and walking out of a meeting with Sanyukt Kisan Morcha leaders at the Punjab Bhawan in Chandigarh. Mann allegedly left saying that if the farmers wanted to go ahead with the March 5 dharna in Chandigarh then they could do that. Mann, however, told reporters on March 4, "Yes I left the meeting and we will detain them as well, won't allow farmers to sit on tracks and roads, I am custodian to the three crore people of Punjab. I spent two hours in a meeting yesterday but the farmers straight up said they would protest on March 5. So, I left."

On Wednesday, farmers who were scheduled to reach Chandigarh and protest outside the CM's house were stopped by the Punjab Police in villages. Many were detained, including big leaders like Balbir Singh Rajewal, Ruldu Singh Mansa, and Joginder Ugrahan.

**WHY THE CHANGE OF HEART?**

According to Professor Kuldeep Singh of the Guru Nanak Dev University, this is not sudden. Singh said, "I feel that the popularity graph of the farmer organisations is not as strong as it was a few years ago and this entire happening is a result of that."

"Moreover, the government might be feeling that there is a population other than farmers too and that population is perturbed by the daily dharnas and blockades by farmers. The government might be thinking that they cannot make farmers happy all the time so at least they can please the other population," he added.

Professor RS Bawa, an economist, called the situation unfortunate and said: "I think state government must have understood there are many demands of the farmers that are in the hands of the Centre and state doesn't have much to

do." The Mann government must also have gauged that regular blockades and dharnas are causing a lot of trouble to the state as well as the non-farmer population, he said further, adding that the state government must restart talks and do whatever it can do for the farmers.

**WHAT NOW?**

This tiff would impact the state's political scenario as it has brought the state government under attack from farmer organisations and opposition parties. Already, farmers are holding protests against the Mann regime and burning effigies.

Farmer leader Sarwan Pandher said, "This is a dictatorial act of the state government. Farmers will not tolerate this and protests will continue. This government in Punjab is not allowing farmers to go to their state capital Chandigarh, which is unfortunate."

According to Punjab AAP chief Aman Arora, there is no shift in the government's stance and farmers can resume talk whenever they want. He said, however, that they cannot "come in the shape of big numbers."

Arora said, "Their demands are mostly with the Centre but we will not allow them to pressure us. We have seen farmers settling matrimonial disputes. We will not allow them to run a parallel system and won't allow their intervention in every matter. We will not allow the farmers to dictate to us. We will open the Shambhu and Khanauri borders too."

Punjab Congress MLA Pargat Singh said, "I think the CM must have listened to the demands of the farmers and not taken such a decision to detain them or leave the meeting. This could have been handled in a better manner," adding, "I feel government is unclear about what it is doing."

# Kannada actor Ranya Rao's gold smuggling

## MO: Same jacket and belt, cop as escort

By Sagay Raj

Actor Ranya Rao, stepdaughter of Karnataka DGP Ramachandra Rao, returned with heavy gold ornaments every time she returned from Dubai but managed to avoid scrutiny.

Kannada actor Ranya Rao, who was arrested in Bengaluru for allegedly smuggling gold from Dubai, travelled to the Saudi city 30 times over the past year, allegedly bringing back kilos of gold on each trip, sources told India Today.

Ranya, stepdaughter of Director General of Police (Karnataka State Police Housing Corporation) Ramachandra Rao, evaded security by taping the gold to her body, including her thighs and waist, and concealing it inside her clothing and a modified jacket, authorities claimed.

She was caught at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport with 14.8 kg of foreign-origin gold bars worth Rs 12.56 crore late Monday night. Ranya



reportedly travelled to Dubai 30 times over the past year, allegedly bringing back kilos of gold each trip. Sources said that she was paid Rs 1 lakh per kg of smuggled gold, earning around Rs 12-13 lakh per trip. Investigations also revealed that she used modified jackets and waist belts repeatedly for her smuggling operations. She

used the same jackets and belts during her travels. This time, she was hiding the gold bars in her modified jacket.

Rao, who arrived from Dubai on an Emirates flight on Monday night, had been under DRI surveillance due to her frequent international travel. As per DRI protocols, passengers with repeated trips to the region are

subject to frisking.

HIGH-PROFILE POLICE LINKS

Ranya allegedly used her influence to bypass security and, upon arrival, summoned local police personnel to escort her home. Authorities are also investigating her possible connections with a larger smuggling network, including

political figures, businessmen, and police officers' families.

Investigations revealed that a police constable at the airport, identified as Basavaraj, allegedly helped Ranya bypass security checks. This time, when DRI officials confronted Ranya, Basavaraj reportedly intervened, saying, "Do you know who she is? She's DGP Ramachandra Rao's daughter." However, acting on prior intelligence, the DRI intercepted her and caught her red-handed with the gold consignment.

LAVISH LIFESTYLE, SUSPICIOUS TRAVEL PATTERNS

Ranya, who recently moved to a Lavelle Road apartment, tied the knot with renowned architect Jitin Hukkeri in a grand wedding at Taj West End just three months ago. Despite having no known business ties in Dubai, she visited the country four times in the last 15 days, further raising suspicions amongst investigators.

## Woman can't claim rape after being in live-in for 16 years: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has cancelled criminal proceedings against a man, who was accused of sexually assaulting a woman with whom he had a 16-year-long relationship, on the false pretext of marriage. During the ruling, the bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said that the mere breach of marriage promise doesn't mean rape unless it is proven that the accused never intended to marry the woman from the very beginning of the relationship, Live Law reported.

"The prolonged period of 16 years during which the sexual relations continued unabatedly between the parties, is sufficient to conclude that there was never an element of force or deceit in the relationship," the bench noted.

The top court further expressed surprise that the complainant, a highly-qualified individual,



endured such decades-long sexual assault without raising any doubt, and only registered the FIR against the accused after he married another woman. "It is hard to believe that the complainant, being a highly qualified and well-placed major woman, kept on bending to the demands of the appellant for a period of nearly 16 years without raising any protest to any quarter that the appellant was exploiting her sexually under the pretext

of a false promise of marriage," the bench said.

The Supreme Court made the judgment while hearing a petition to cancel the criminal proceedings against him filed by the accused, following the High Court's decision to dismiss the same. The FIR was lodged in 2022 for rape and a charge sheet was also filed by the police in the same year, Live Law reported. The complainant claimed that the accused, in 2006, sneaked

into her house one night and forcibly engaged in sexual intercourse with her. The High Court had noted that in the intervening night, the intimacy between the accused and the complainant continued to become strong.

In his petition, the man argued that the woman willingly and consensually engaged in a long-term relationship with him, and that her allegations of rape were fabricated as their relationship soured, and he married another woman.

Setting aside the High Court's decision, the top court noted that the man cannot be held responsible for rape on false pretext of marriage since he was in a consensual relationship with the complainant for 16 years, during which they not only lived together but also performed multiple informal marriage rituals. The Supreme Court found

no evidence that the man had mala fide intentions or made a false promise of marriage at the onset of their relationship.

"It is almost impossible to swallow the version of the complainant that for the entire period of 16 years, she unreservedly allowed the appellant to subject her to repeated acts of sexual intercourse under the impression that the accused would on someday act upon his promise of marriage," the top court added.

"The allegations of the complainant are full of material contradictions and are ex facie unbelievable. Throughout the prolonged period of 16 years, the complainant kept completely quiet about the alleged sexual abuse, meted out to her by the appellant until she learnt that the appellant had married another woman.

# Ghosts of 2022 talks might return to haunt Zelenskyy as Russia digs in

**Just weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, officials from both sides met in Belarus and Turkey for peace talks. The negotiations fell through. Three years later, after losing territory and thousands of people, Ukraine might find terms of peace much more difficult to settle. This comes as Russia digs in amid US President Donald Trump withdrawing war support for Kyiv.**

By Sushim Mukul

Peace was on the table in 2022, but Russia did not budge and Ukraine walked away. Now, three years and countless lives later, the price of negotiation might be steeper than ever for Kyiv, which has fallen prey to its biggest backer, the US, doing a complete 180. This, even as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy proposed a new framework for a partial ceasefire with Russia.

Weeks after Russia launched its "special military operation" on Ukraine in February 2022, the two sides sat down for talks. The aim was to broker a ceasefire.

The peace talks could have halted the war, which has now raged on for three years.

By May 2022, the talks between Russia and Ukraine were derailed. Zelenskyy held that the Russians issuing "ultimatums" could not be called "negotiations".

Tens of thousands of people on both sides, including military personnel, civilians and mercenaries, have been killed since.

Years later, world powers, including the United States, European nations, and Russia, are pushing Ukraine for a peace deal that it failed to reach in 2022. However, a deal might now cost Kyiv and its President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, more, feel experts. The Kremlin feels the same.

**AMID US PULLOUT, EUROPE RALLIES BEHIND UKRAINE**

Fast-forward to 2025, and the equations have shifted dramatically.

The renewed push for peace negotiations between the two warring parties is driven by US President Donald Trump's announcement of suspension of military aid to Ukraine after last weekend's heated White House spat with Zelenskyy. Stopping the Ukraine-Russia war was a campaign promise of Trump, who calls himself the "peacemaker", and went with his plan to cut American government expenses.

Even before the Trump-Zelenskyy meeting last week, the Trump-led US, desperate to "bring peace", had started talks with Russia in Saudi Arabia. Ukraine, which was kept out, fumed,



saying the country would not accept the outcome if Kyiv was not part of it. It was as if Trump had already handed the winner's cup of the war to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Ukrainian President has taken a reconciliatory tone after the public spat with Trump and Vance in Washington DC. He turned to Europe for support to fill up the gaps.

European leaders, barring those of Italy and Hungary, were quick to support Ukraine after the Friday fallout. They rushed to London for a hastily convened meeting on March 2 on the Ukraine issue.

However, Europe, it turns out, didn't have much to offer to Zelenskyy.

Though the EU came up with an 800-billion-Euro defence initiative, 'ReArm Europe', it wouldn't really translate into Ukraine gaining military or negotiating muscle as it approaches the talks table.

That is why Zelenskyy immediately got into a conciliatory tone.

Thus, Ukraine, while trying to balance the daily loss of lives, shrinking territories, and the threat of a diminishing military might, proposed a new framework for a partial ceasefire with Russia.

"Then we want to move very fast through all the next stages and to work with the US to agree a strong final deal... Simultaneously, we've had serious discussions with Russia and have received strong signals that they are ready for peace," Zelenskyy wrote on X on March 4.

He stated that Ukraine was open to freeing Russian prisoners and to a

ceasefire that would prohibit long-range strikes on civilian and energy facilities. **RUSSIA MIGHT BARGAIN HARD WITH UKRAINE NOW**

Russia, emboldened by territorial gains in eastern Ukraine, definitely sees the perceived weakening of Western resolve. It has also seen the US under Trump abruptly withdrawing support for Ukraine and has gloated over it.

"The Kremlin sees every crack in US-Ukraine unity as an opening. Putin's strategy thrives on Kyiv's isolation -- less American support means a weaker hand at any future negotiating table," wrote Ukrainian-American journalist and historian Anne Applebaum on X.

Recent statements from Russian officials, including Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Preskov show Moscow's unwavering stance. Praising Trump for his "common sense", Lavrov slammed Europe for perpetuating the war in Ukraine.

However, Peskov stated that talks to end the war in Ukraine are "unlikely" to happen soon, hinting that Russia may now demand tougher terms than it did during the unsuccessful 2022 peace negotiations. The 2022 peace talks that ended in Istanbul collapsed due to Russia's extreme demands, including Ukraine's disarmament, neutrality, and recognition of Crimea as Russian territory. Moscow also sought a pro-Kremlin leadership change, making negotiations with Ukraine impossible.

Ukraine, emboldened by battlefield successes in Kharkiv and Kherson, believed military victory was achievable with Western support. Ukraine's allies,

including the US, preferred arming Ukraine over negotiating security guarantees.

With distrust in Russia's intentions and no viable compromise, the war raged on.

**WHERE WILL UKRAINE HAVE TO SETTLE FOR PEACE**

Russia, according to Reuters, now holds around 20% of Ukrainian territory. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has recorded over 41,000 civilian casualties in Ukraine since February 2022.

Russia, apart from gaining territory, has also prevented Ukraine from becoming a NATO member, the very reason why the two went to war.

Experts argue that Putin's lack of genuine intent for peace, combined with the US' strategic and economic interests in Ukraine, shows a position driven more by necessity than outright strength.

"European officials say a key factor left out of the conversation currently is that there is no indication Putin has any serious intention to negotiate a realistic peace settlement," said London-based journalist Alex Wickham.

"Isn't it obvious that the US position on European security and Ukraine's mineral resources ultimately comes from a position of vulnerability, rather than strength?" political commentator Nina Schick asked a rhetorical question.

Meanwhile, Moscow's likely perception that a fractured US-Ukraine relationship weakens Kyiv's leverage, has been flagged by experts.

"Moscow's watching the Trump-Zelenskyy spat with glee. A US-Ukraine rift is a gift to Putin. Kyiv's leverage shrinks as Washington wavers. Russia's betting on time and division to tilt the scales," British author Mark Galeotti wrote on X.

So, in the position Russia is now, it sees a weakening US-Ukraine alliance as an opportunity to outlast Western support and pressure Zelenskyy into unfavourable concessions, which to some extent the Ukrainian President might give. What remains to be seen is just how much he's willing to concede in comparison to the talks of 2022.

# Anurag Kashyap Confirms He Has Left "Toxic" Bollywood: "Everyone Is Trying To Make Rs 800 Crore Film"

Anurag Kashyap has officially confirmed that he has left Bollywood, which is solely driven by box office numbers and keeps little room for creative freedom in his recent interaction with The Hindu. The actor-director had talked about his frustration with the "toxic" industry last year, in a conversation with The Hollywood Reporter India.

Speaking to The Hindu, Anurag Kashyap said, "I want to stay away from film people. The industry has become too toxic. Everyone is chasing unrealistic targets, trying to make the next Rs 500 or Rs 800 crore film. The creative atmosphere is gone."

Anurag Kashyap has likely relocated to Bengaluru ( a source told The Hindu) and he's keen on working in South films for a more fulfilling



creative experience. Earlier, Anurag Kashyap complained that he was "disgusted" and "disappointed" by his own industry.

"I envy them (South filmmakers). Because now, it's difficult for me to go out and experiment. Because now,

before the film starts, it becomes about 'how do we sell it?' So the joy of filmmaking is sucked out. That's why I want to move out. Literally, next year, I'm moving out of Mumbai," he had told The Hollywood Reporter India.

Anurag Kashyap will be seen in *Dacoit*, where he plays a cop. The bilingual film, shot in Hindi and Telugu, stars Adivi Sesh and Mrunal Thakur in lead roles. The film's release date is yet to be announced. He's presently promoting *Footage*, a Malayalam thriller directed by Saiju Sreedharan. The film, featuring Manju Warrier, Vishak Nair, and Gayathri Ashok, was released in August last year. Its Hindi version is set to premiere on March 7, 2025. Anurag Kashyap is also a presenter of the film.

## RULE BREAKERS



Releasing in cinemas all across North America this Friday, March 7, is the uplifting new film *RULE BREAKERS* based on the inspirational true story. Ali Fazal and Nikohl Boosheri head up a talented young cast and the brand new music video for "We Believe in Hope" featuring Aryana Sayeed has just made its world premiere.

In a nation where educating girls is seen as rebellion, a visionary woman dares to teach young minds to dream. When their innovation draws global attention, their success sparks hope—and opposition. As threats loom and sacrifices are made, their courage and unity ignite a movement that could forever transform the world.

## 14-year-old painter on mission to help St. Jude kids fighting cancer

Arsh Pal has two passions in his life: his painting and helping people.

On his eighth birthday, Arsh's family gave him acrylic painting supplies and he became obsessed with the medium, producing painting after painting. He found endless inspiration in nature and the world at large, including the downtown murals near his then-home in Dubuque, Iowa. The family has since moved to Chicago.

"One day, I had the idea of selling my paintings," said Arsh.

At around this time, his mother Divya started bringing Arsh with her to her job as an occupational therapist at a nursing home so he could help with the activities.

As Arsh was leading the residents in a painting tutorial, he noticed the attention he showed them as they created their paintings of a simple landscape scene, brought them joy.

"We can all be learning the same simple thing, like a mountain or a cloud, and the activity makes us happy," said Arsh.

The moment affected Arsh deeply, and something clicked: He realized the residents, though decades older, had the same desire for connection and fun that he did. But he also saw that sometimes they were hurting and lonely.

Heavy thoughts for an 8-year-old.

"That made me want to help someone," said Arsh. Someone else who was

hurting. Remembering how he'd wanted to sell his paintings, he thought, "You're too young to earn money, but this is the way you can support someone, using your talents." For the past seven years, Arsh has been selling his artwork to raise funds for the kids at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. "I decided to donate the money to St. Jude because St. Jude is run with donations, and it helps kids with cancer, so that



really stood out to me," he said.

His first donation to St. Jude, when he was 8, was for \$1,000. He's donated \$1,000 to St. Jude every year since then, until this year when he decided to take part in something even bigger. St. Jude was founded in Memphis in 1962 by Danny Thomas, the son of immigrant parents, to treat children with cancer and other life-threatening diseases regardless of their race, ethnicity, beliefs or ability to pay.

# Alia Bhatt says Jigra's failure gave her a new vigour

Alia Bhatt broke her silence on the box office failure of her 2024 film *Jigra*, co-starring Vedang Raina. Directed by Vasana Bala, the film underperformed commercially, though Alia's performance was widely praised. In an interview, she credited the setback for helping pave the way toward her professional dreams. During a candid conversation with author Jay Shetty, Alia Bhatt said, "I'm a very passionate actor, professional, producer. I'm passionate about that. I have dreams with regard to my work, which I don't think ever end. I don't think I'm ever comfortable, and I really like that about my mind." She continued, "I had a film released last year that didn't do really well, and that's given me a new vigor for a new dream to try and do over. It's something I feel very charged by. So that's the professional dream." Earlier,

in an interview with Fever FM, *Jigra*'s director Vasana Bala addressed the film's failure. "It is my responsibility to deliver box office because we are in the business of filmmaking also. This is why I need to analyse. Something has happened, right? Something has happened where people have stayed away, something that they have not bought, something that they didn't feel the need to come to the theatre. If at all any other actor decides to give their time, his or her, then you know, make it worth it", he said.

*Jigra* was an action-thriller revolving around the relationship between a brother and sister. Alia will be next seen in *Love and War* and *Alpha*. In *Love and War*, she will feature alongside Ranbir Kapoor and Vicky Kaushal, while the latter has Sharvari and Bobby Deol in pivotal roles.

## Kabir Khan reacts to rumours about reuniting with Salman Khan for Babbar Sher



Filmmaker Kabir Khan has finally addressed the swirling rumours about his potential reunion with Salman Khan for a film reportedly titled *Babbar Sher*. In an exclusive conversation with India Today Digital, Kabir clarified that while he frequently meets and chats with Salman, there is no truth to the speculation surrounding this project. Kabir, who has collaborated with Salman on blockbuster films like *Ek Tha Tiger* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, acknowledged that their strong professional relationship often leads to speculation. However, he firmly denied any concrete discussions about *Babbar Sher*. "That's unfounded. As a director, I meet actors, and we chat, and, of

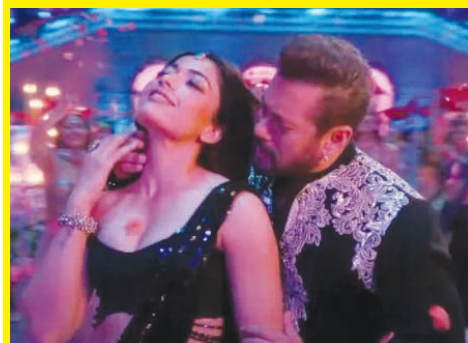
course, Salman is someone who has played such a strong role in my career, so I keep chatting with him. I think when I went to meet him once, that conversation happened, and that name *Babbar Sher* came up. I think it was an exciting name, so people picked it up. But no, there's actually nothing right now," Kabir said. While the director didn't reveal details about his upcoming projects, he hinted at surprises ahead. "I myself don't know what I'm going to be announcing in three months," he added.

Meanwhile, Salman will next be seen in *Sikandar* alongside Rashmika Mandanna. The film releases on Eid 2025.



## Sikandar song Zohra Jabeen: Salman-Rashmika impress fans with their chemistry

The first song from *Sikandar*, *Zohra Jabeen*, is here. The peppy and celebratory number sees superstar Salman Khan and actor Rashmika

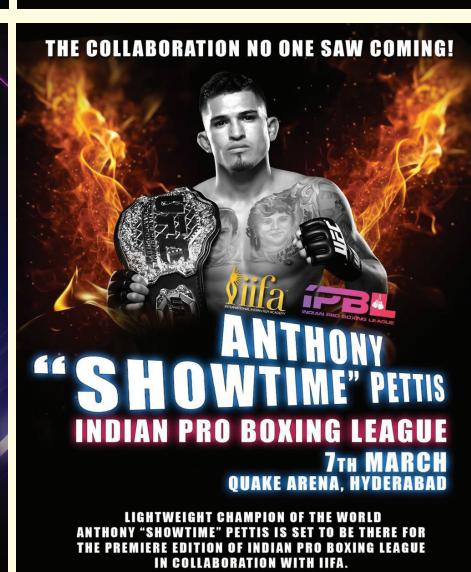
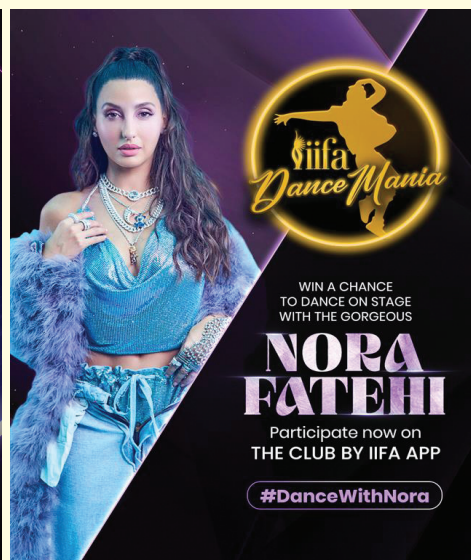


Mandanna grooving to the beats of composer Pritam. Sung by Nakash Aziz and Dev Negi, *Zohra Jabeen* has been written by Sameer and Danish Sabri. As soon as the video released, excited fans

flooded the comment box with positive reactions. One user commented, "Fantastic Song. Bhaijaan & Rashmika are looking too good. Chemistry (sic)." Another person mentioned, "His acting. His look. His personality. His expression (sic)." While many others posted fire and heart emojis in the comment box.

A few days ago, the makers had released an explosive teaser of the movie. *Sikandar* promises to showcase Salman in a rugged yet charismatic avatar and is touted to be one of the biggest films of the year. The film has been shot extensively in Hyderabad and Mumbai. *Sikandar* also reunites Salman with producer Sajid Nadiadwala, known for delivering blockbusters like *Kick* and *Mujhse Shaadi Karogi*.

# Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards - 'Where The Digital Realm Takes Centre Stage.' On 8th March 2025, Jaipur Rajasthan



(By Our Staff Reporter) Marking a remarkable 25-year journey of celebrating and showcasing Indian cinema on the global stage, the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Weekend & Awards is set to unveil its Silver Jubilee milestone edition in 2025. This edition introduces an innovative and ground-breaking addition to the IIFA Weekend & Awards line-up with Sobha Realty Presents IIFA Digital Awards, Co-Presented by NEXA. Set in Jaipur, the cultural heart of Rajasthan, renowned for its rich heritage and timeless charm, IIFA promises an unforgettable celebration. Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards - 'Where The Digital Realm Takes Centre Stage.' will celebrate the immense talent, creativity, and

innovation flourishing in the OTT and digital entertainment space, honouring excellence and dynamic storytellers shaping the future of cinema. On March 8, 2025, in Jaipur, Rajasthan: Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards - 'Where The Digital Realm Takes Centre Stage' celebrates excellence in digital entertainment across diverse categories. It honours Best Film and Best Series, recognizing outstanding original content on digital streaming platforms. Additional categories include Best Reality or Non-Scripted Series, Best Docuseries/DocuFilm, and Best Music/Soundtrack, spotlighting innovation and creativity in various aspects of digital

storytelling. These awards highlight the transformative impact of digital platforms on the entertainment industry, showcasing the talent and creativity that define the future of storytelling. A Spectacular Night Awaits as Vijay Varma, Abhishek Banerjee & Aparshakti Khurana Host Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards, Honoring the Best in OTT! Which performance are you most excited for? <https://www.iifa.com/iifa-2025> Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards Worldwide- The International Indian Film Academy And Awards (IIFA) Announces its Cinematic Kaleidoscope Of OTT & Digital Entertainment Awards

Nominations. The nominations for Sobha Realty Presents IIFA Digital Awards, Co-Presented by NEXA 2025, have been unveiled, sparking the competition for cinematic excellence in categories including Best Film, Best Performance in a Leading Role (Male), Best Performance in a Leading Role (Female), Best Performance in a Supporting Role (Male), Best Performance in a Supporting Role (Female), Best Director, Best Original Story, Best Series, Best Reality or Non-Scripted Series, Best Docuseries/DocuFilm, and Best Title Track. <https://www.iifa.com/news/news-details/nominations-unveiled-sobha-realty-iifa-digital-awards-nominations-unveiled>





# Get Ready for an Electrifying Performance by Mika Singh at the Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards!

- ☛ Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards - 'Where The Digital Realm Takes Centre Stage.'
- ☛ IIFA 2025 - 'Silver Is The New Gold' -Celebrating 25 Glorious Years

(Our Staff Reporter) Get ready for an electrifying performance by the one and only Mika Singh at the Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards in Jaipur, Rajasthan! Known for his high-energy stage presence and chart-topping hits, Mika is all set to bring the house down with his unique blend of Sufi rock and Bollywood beats. Fans can expect an unforgettable performance as he takes the stage to celebrate

Indian cinema's Silver Jubilee. Don't miss the chance to witness this musical powerhouse in action at one of the most anticipated events of the year! Mika Singh who is all set to perform at Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards in Jaipur, expressed saying, "Thrilled to be a part of IIFA's monumental Silver Jubilee - a historic celebration of Indian Cinema on the global stage in the stunning

city of Jaipur, Rajasthan this March! Over the past decade, my journey with the IIFA Awards has been nothing short of vibrant and dynamic. As always, I'm eager to bring my high-energy performances of chart-topping hits, engaging and electrifying the crowd, especially as we mark IIFA's incredible milestone - the Silver Jubilee of Indian Cinema on the world stage in Jaipur!"

## Kriti Sanon Gears Up for a Show-Stopping Performance at IIFA's 25th Edition in Jaipur, Rajasthan

(Our Staff Reporter) Kriti Sanon expressed her excitement about performing at the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Weekend & Awards historic Silver Jubilee edition in Jaipur, Rajasthan, saying, "IIFA has always been close to my heart-it's where I won my first big honour and over the years, it has given me countless cherished memories. Performing at the historic Silver Jubilee edition in Jaipur, Rajasthan makes this

journey even more special. The energy and grandeur of IIFA are truly unmatched, and I'm excited to bring something unforgettable to the stage! From receiving my debut award to now celebrating 25 years of IIFA, it has been an incredible ride. I'm deeply grateful for all the love and can't wait to celebrate the magic of Indian cinema with my fans in the majestic city of Jaipur!" The International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Weekend & Awards

proudly unveils its historic Silver Jubilee edition, a landmark celebration honouring 25 years of Indian cinema's global legacy. Set to take place from March 8th to 9th, 2025, in the enchanting Pink City of Jaipur, Rajasthan, this milestone event promises an extraordinary fusion of cinematic artistry and cultural heritage. Mark your calendars for this iconic celebration of Indian cinema and global artistry in the heart of Jaipur, Rajasthan.



## NEXA IIFA Awards 2025

A Spectacular Night Honouring Cinematic Excellence & Indian Cinema's Global Influence on March 9th!

IIFA 2025 - 'Silver Is The New Gold' -Celebrating 25 Glorious Years in Jaipur, Rajasthan 2025

(Our Staff Reporter) IIFA 2025: 25 Years of Cinematic Brilliance - Silver is the New Gold. As IIFA marks its 25th year, it celebrates a legacy of cinematic excellence while embracing a bold new future. This milestone edition, themed "Silver is the New Gold," symbolizes tradition, achievement, and the brilliance of what lies ahead.

Set in Rajasthan's cultural capital, the grand finale on March 9th will feature the NEXA Presents IIFA Awards Co-Presented by Sobha

Realty, honouring Indian cinema's global impact. A historic spectacle in the Pink City, this Silver Jubilee Celebration will bring together the biggest stars, visionary filmmakers, and industry leaders for an unforgettable tribute to 25 years of cinematic magic.

On 9th March, the NEXA Presents IIFA Awards Co-Presented by Sobha Realty 2025 will celebrate cinematic excellence by recognizing outstanding achievements across multiple categories, including Best

Picture, Best Director, Best Performance in a Leading Role (Male & Female), Best Performance in a Supporting Role (Male & Female), Best Performance in a Negative Role, Music Direction, and Playback Singer (Male & Female).

Here's The Complete List Of IIFA 2025 Nominations In The Popular Category:<https://www.iifa.com/news/news-details/iifas-silver-jubilee-edition-full-list-of-2025-popular-category-nominations-unveiled>

# Bobby Deol says he asked for work during low phase: Nothing to be ashamed about

Actor Bobby Deol's career trajectory should be taught in schools. From getting a dream break and ruling hearts to hitting rock bottom after a few years, the actor has seen it all. However, what makes him worth celebrating is his quest to get up again, and pack the much-needed punches. In his second stint, Deol has portrayed strong characters in Aashram, Class of 83, Love Hostel and Animal. In an exclusive chat with India Today Digital, Bobby recently spoke about the low phase and how he did not let negativity get the better of him.

Given that it's said hard times lead to desperate measures, we asked the actor if he too had to make some difficult decisions. Deol replied, "I mean desperate definitely, but I think it's part of an actor's journey and it hasn't been just mine. I think every actor goes through that journey, and that's part and parcel of this profession, as nothing stays forever. But one must never give up hope and keep trying. I



always encourage everyone that they also need to stay disciplined and respect their work; be focused and manifest." The actor added that he really believes in manifestation and working towards achieving one's goals. "It's not like baithe baithe sab mil jayega, one must work hard (You won't get things by not trying). And with hard work, even if it seems far, you would be getting

closer to your goal. Desperation does bring negativity, but you go through that and come out. There is no one to help you swim through it. When you realise that, the journey becomes easier." While many actors have often spoken about reaching out to filmmakers for work, given the Deol surname that he carries, we asked Bobby if that did become a hurdle for him.

"Pehle zamana alag tha, jab shuruat ki thi toh aisa nahi tha, pehle log khud aate the (It was different when I started out, as people would offer me work by themselves). Then the population of actors increased, it's sad that we forget that there are so many people coming in, and will continue to," stated Bobby Deol. Deol said he has never be

hesitant to reach out to people for work, "However, I did that too (ask for work). When I was going through a bad phase, maine logo ke darwaze khatkhataye hain and bola hai ki main Bobby Deol hoon aur mujhe kaam dijiye (I have knocked on doors and told them I am Bobby Deol, and please give me work). I don't think there is anything wrong in that, as you need work. At least they will remember that Bobby Deol had come to meet me. This also gets translated to work sometimes. So, there is nothing to be ashamed of."

Bobby Deol further added that there were times when he was offered films that he did not really like, but he went on to do it, to continue working. He said that it was important to be seen to keep getting work, and that's how the industry works.

On a final note, we asked if, in retrospect, he thought about the mistakes he made back in the time, and how he makes sure he doesn't make them again.

## Kiara Advani exits Don 3 after announcing pregnancy



Actor Kiara Advani has decided to prioritise motherhood over 'Don 3'. The actor was announced as the female lead of the Farhan Akhtar film last year. However, after announcing her pregnancy earlier this year, she has mutually decided to part ways with the team. As per industry sources, she wants to take a break from work and enjoy this beautiful phase of her life.

"She is currently wrapping up shooting for 'Toxic' and 'War 2', post which Advani will take a break to spend time with family and her child. Her decision was respected by the makers, who are now on the lookout to find a new heroine," the source told India Today Digital.

In a recent chat with India Today Digital, filmmaker Farhan Akhtar confirmed that they will begin the 'Don 3' shoot this year. The film features Ranveer Singh in the titular role, while Vikrant Massey will play the antagonist. Advani is now expected to

resume her next project with Maddock Films following the maternity break. The actor has reportedly been signed to headline Dinesh Vijan's 'Shakti Shalini', which is a part of Maddock's coveted horror-comedy universe. The 33-year-old has also reportedly signed 'Dhoom 4' as the lead. Both these films are slated to go on floors only in 2026.

Earlier in February, Advani and her husband, Sidharth Malhotra, shared their pregnancy announcement on social media and posted a picture of a cute pair of socks. The couple got married on February 7, 2023, at a lavish wedding in Jaisalmer. The actor is known for her performances in films like 'Shershaah' (2021), 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' (2022), 'Jug Jugg Jeeyo' (2022), 'Satyaprem Ki Katha' (2023), and 'Game Changer' (2025). Neither Farhan Akhtar nor anyone else associated with the film has released an official statement on Advani's exit from 'Don 3' yet.