

Open letter highlights concerns over minority rights in Bangladesh



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

An open letter, signed by nearly 500 individuals, including diplomats, public servants, and civil society members, has condemned the ongoing situation for minorities in Bangladesh, calling it “intolerable and unacceptable” to India. Coordinated by former Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Veena Sikri and former Ambassador Bhaswati Mukherjee, the letter urges all institutions in Bangladesh to restore democracy and secularism, particularly the rights of Hindus and other religious minorities.

The letter highlights the severe impact on Bangladesh’s 15 million-strong minority communities, including Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and other groups, who have been targeted by violent fundamentalist Islamist factions for over four months. These attacks have included vandalism of religious sites, abductions, forced conversions, lynchings, and other forms of brutality, with little to no response from authorities.

The letter also raises alarm over the recent arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das, a member of the ISKCON organization, who has been detained for demanding better protection for minorities. Additionally, it emphasizes India’s concern over the escalating violence in Bangladesh, which could potentially spill over the border, creating a law and order threat in India. The signatories call for free and fair elections in Bangladesh to resolve the ongoing crisis.

Trudeau faces fresh calls for resignation as Canada’s political crisis deepens

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is under increasing pressure to resign after Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland unexpectedly stepped down, citing disagreements over US President-elect Donald Trump’s tariff threats. A third of the ruling Liberal Party’s MPs have called for leadership change, with nearly 60 of 153 MPs in the House of Commons seeking Trudeau’s removal. Freeland’s resignation as Finance Minister marks the first major dissent from within the cabinet, weakening Trudeau’s hold on power.

Polling shows Trudeau trailing Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre by 20 points. Poilievre has pushed for a snap election since September in an effort to unseat Trudeau’s government. Freeland’s resignation letter pointed to deep differences with Trudeau over how to handle Trump’s planned tariffs, warning of a potential “tariff war” with the US. The political crisis is further compounded by a growing dissatisfaction within the Liberal Party, leaving Trudeau’s leadership in jeopardy as the country faces uncertainty on the international stage.

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House rejects Trump-backed plan to avert government shutdown

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The House of Representatives rejected President-elect Donald Trump’s plan to fund government operations and suspend the debt ceiling on Thursday, just one day before a potential shutdown. The proposal failed to meet the two-thirds majority needed, with the vote ending at 174-235. House Speaker Mike Johnson vowed to regroup and find another solution before the Friday midnight deadline.

The plan aimed to keep the government running for three more months, providing \$100.4 billion in disaster assistance and extending borrowing through January 30, 2027. However, Democrats dismissed it as “laughable,” and the proposal faced resistance from both parties.

Trump’s ally Elon Musk also voiced opposition, and the plan was revised to remove provisions like a pay raise for lawmakers. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries



called it “not serious,” while lawmakers chanted “Hell, no!” during their caucus meeting.

Despite the setback, Trump’s allies, including Vice President-elect JD Vance, blamed Democrats, but Republicans also

voiced concerns about the debt limit. The failure of the plan underscores the challenges ahead for Speaker Johnson, who faces increasing pressure from both Trump and his party as Congress heads toward a potential shutdown.

US and India exchange briefings over Khalistani murder-for-hire plot

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United States and India have been exchanging information regarding a murder-for-hire plot targeting Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a Khalistani leader in the US. Indian citizen Nikhil Gupta is accused of plotting the murder, along with Vikash Yadav, a former Indian police officer allegedly involved in the operation.

The US State Department confirmed that both countries have been regularly briefed on the investigation. State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller emphasized that the US is committed to ensuring accountability for the crime. Gupta, arrested in the Czech Republic and extradited to the US, denies the charges.

Yadav, a former officer in India’s RAW

intelligence agency, has also been charged as a co-conspirator. The case, which started last year, has drawn attention to alleged Indian government involvement, though India has not officially commented on the case.

Miller stated that the issue was raised during senior-level talks, including Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu’s visit to India. He reaffirmed the US’s commitment to holding those responsible accountable.

The case has further strained relations between India and Khalistani factions, with BJP Spokesperson Sambit Patra accusing the US of trying to destabilize India with anti-India narratives. Miller rejected these claims, calling them “completely false” and reiterating the US’s focus on justice and freedom of expression. The investigation is ongoing, with both nations closely monitoring developments.



Putin again praises India’s growing economy under PM Modi



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Russian President Vladimir Putin once again lauded India’s economic growth under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighting Russia’s own economic progress despite the ongoing conflict with Ukraine. In his annual press conference, Putin noted that Russia has surpassed Germany in economic size and is now ranked fourth globally, after China, the US, and India. He emphasized the importance of maintaining economic momentum.

Earlier in December, Putin praised India’s ‘Make in India’ initiative, calling it similar to Russia’s import substitution efforts. He highlighted India’s stable investment climate and its growing global influence under Modi’s leadership.

Sarkozy's final appeal rejected by France's highest court in corruption case



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

France's highest court has upheld the conviction of former President Nicolas Sarkozy for corruption and influence-peddling, marking the first time a former French president has been sentenced to prison for such charges.

Sarkozy, who served as president from 2007 to 2012, was found guilty of attempting to bribe a judge in 2014 after leaving office. He was sentenced to three years, one of which will be served under house arrest. Sarkozy has vowed to challenge the decision before the European Court of Human Rights. This ruling adds to his legal troubles, with additional trials set for 2025 regarding alleged campaign fund violations.

Vanuatu seeks international help after devastating earthquake

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Vanuatu has called for international assistance after a powerful 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck the country, resulting in significant damage and casualties. At least 14 people have died, and more than 200 others are injured. The government has declared a seven-day state of emergency. The earthquake caused extensive damage to infrastructure, including hospitals, roads, and water systems. The United Nations and other humanitarian organizations are mobilizing to provide emergency assistance, including medical supplies, search and rescue teams, and clean drinking water.

India, US discuss expanding space partnership during NASA meeting

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Indian Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra met with US officials at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston to discuss further cooperation in space exploration between India and the US.

The meeting, which took place on Wednesday, included discussions on enhancing human spaceflight programs and the jointly developed NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar Earth Science (NISAR) satellite, set to launch in 2025. Ambassador Kwatra was accompanied by US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer, alongside officials from NASA and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Kwatra and US officials also met with Indian astronauts Shubhanshu Shukla and Prashanth Nair, who are scheduled to join the Axios-4 mission to the International



Space Station (ISS) next year. The NISAR satellite, designed to study Earth's surface and help with natural disaster management, will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, India, in March.

Both nations also discussed the

potential for strengthening commercial space partnerships, with representatives from the private sector in attendance. The meeting underscored the growing collaboration between the two countries in space exploration, with India and the US sharing a commitment to furthering innovation and technology in space.

PM Modi to make historic visit to Kuwait, first by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Kuwait for two days starting December 21, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Gulf nation in 43 years.

During the visit, he will meet with Kuwait's leadership, including Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Prime Minister is also scheduled to engage with the large Indian expatriate community in Kuwait.

India and Kuwait share close ties, with India being one of Kuwait's top trading partners and the Indian community being the largest expatriate group in the country. Modi's visit will further strengthen bilateral relations, especially in the areas of trade and people-to-people connections.



Earlier this month, Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya extended an invitation to Modi, which the Prime Minister accepted. Kuwait currently holds the presidency of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and this visit comes after a postponed trip due to the pandemic in 2022.

South Korea, Japan to hold high-level economic talks despite domestic challenges



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

South Korea and Japan will hold high-level economic talks this week to strengthen cooperation ahead of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties, the South Korean foreign ministry announced.

The 16th South Korea-Japan economic dialogue will be held in Tokyo on Friday, led by Kim Hee-sang, South Korea's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs, and Takeshi Akahori, a senior deputy minister from Japan's foreign ministry.

The talks will focus on expanding bilateral economic cooperation and addressing international economic issues. A South Korean official noted the dialogue as part of efforts to maintain international credibility despite recent political challenges at home, including the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol.

The impeachment motion passed on December 14, with the court set to decide whether to uphold or dismiss the decision within 180 days.

India and China discuss Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and border peace during NSA Doval's visit to Beijing

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India and China have taken significant steps to improve bilateral relations, particularly regarding border peace and cross-border cooperation. During the 23rd Special Representatives (SRs) meeting in Beijing, Indian National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi agreed to work towards resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and improving coordination on issues such as data sharing on trans-border rivers and border trade.

This meeting, the first since tensions along the India-China border escalated in 2020, focused on managing peace and stability along the shared border. Both countries emphasized



the importance of ensuring that border issues do not hinder the overall development of

bilateral ties. They also discussed various measures to strengthen border management and prevent conflicts.

The SRs affirmed the implementation of the disengagement agreement reached in October 2024, which facilitates patrolling and grazing in certain areas. The talks also reaffirmed the need for continued diplomatic engagement to find a fair and mutually acceptable solution to the border dispute.

NSA Doval's visit, which included a meeting with Vice President Han Zheng, underscores India and China's commitment to enhancing relations and maintaining regional peace. Both sides expressed the importance of stable, predictable, and amicable relations for broader global stability.

Om Prakash Chautala, five-time Haryana CM and INLD leader, passes away at 89

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Om Prakash Chautala, five-time Haryana CM and INLD leader, passed away on December 20 at 89 following a cardiac arrest at his Gurugram home. Chautala, the son of former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal, is survived by sons Abhay Singh and Ajay Singh Chautala. Born on January 1, 1935, in Chautala village, Sirsa, he became Haryana's CM on December 2, 1989.

Chautala, who had been receiving treatment for breathing issues at Medanta Hospital for several years, was brought to the emergency ward on Friday when his health worsened. Despite efforts, he could not be saved. Abhay Singh, a former MLA and Leader of Opposition in Haryana (2014-2019), and his great-grandson Dushyant Chautala, former Deputy CM in Haryana's BJP government, survive him. In 2021, Chautala was released early from prison after serving nine years and nine months of a 10-year sentence for his role in the 2000 teacher recruitment scam. He and his son Ajay were convicted in 2013 and sentenced to 10 years for illegal teacher appointments.

Britain intensifies military aid to Ukraine amid ongoing conflict with Russia

Britain is increasing its military support to Ukraine with a new aid package, including naval drones, air defense systems, and artillery, announced British Defense Secretary John Healey.

The £92 million package includes equipment for Ukraine's navy and £68 million for air defense, along with counter-drone systems worth £39 million. Healey confirmed that the UK would continue training Ukrainian soldiers under Operation Interflex, a British-led initiative that has trained 51,000 recruits since mid-2022. The UK's commitment to Ukraine's defense efforts remains strong, with the government promising continued support until at least 2030-2031.

The package also covers co-production of air defense systems and supports Ukraine's use of long-range Storm Shadow missiles, which were first deployed in November.

Pakistan criticizes US sanctions, calling them unfair and biased

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Pakistan has condemned the United States' recent sanctions on four Pakistani entities linked to the country's ballistic missile program, calling them "unfortunate and biased." The Pakistan foreign office stated that these sanctions, targeting the National Development Complex (NDC) and three commercial entities—Affiliates International, Akhtar and Sons Private Limited, and Rockside Enterprise—are based on "double standards" and "discriminatory practices." According to the foreign office, these entities are involved in supporting Pakistan's defense capabilities, which Islamabad insists are necessary to safeguard its sovereignty and maintain regional peace.

"The latest sanctions escalate military imbalances and undermine the strategic



stability of South Asia," said the foreign ministry. Pakistan also accused the US of imposing sanctions without evidence, particularly on private commercial entities. The US State Department claims that the four Pakistani entities contributed to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including long-range missiles

capable of carrying such weapons. Pakistan maintains that its strategic program is crucial for national security, and it has called on the US to reassess its approach. In September 2023, the US imposed sanctions on Chinese and Belarusian entities for similar reasons, further intensifying the diplomatic rift.

Iran warns Europe against misuse of nuclear deal snapback mechanism

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Iran's UN ambassador warned Europe against using the snapback mechanism in the 2015 nuclear deal, threatening a "decisive and proportionate" response if misused. The snapback allows other parties to re-impose sanctions if Iran violates the agreement.

Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani rejected threats from the E3 group (France, Germany, and the UK) to activate the snapback mechanism. He stressed that Iran remains committed to its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and to cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

He criticized a recent IAEA resolution against Iran as politically motivated, further complicating efforts to restore trust and resolve ongoing issues. Despite



the US withdrawal from the agreement in 2018, Iran continues to push for diplomatic solutions.

Canada announces new border security plan amid threats of US tariffs

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In response to US President-elect Donald Trump's threat to impose a 25% tariff on all Canadian imports, Canada's federal government has unveiled a new plan to enhance border security and address illegal immigration. The plan includes measures to detect and disrupt the fentanyl trade, improve law enforcement coordination, and streamline border operations.

Dominic LeBlanc, Canada's newly appointed Public Safety Minister, emphasized the importance of demonstrating shared concerns with the US about border security. The Canadian government has allocated CAD 1.3 billion (USD 907 million) over six years to strengthen border security and enhance collaboration with the US. The new plan comes as Trudeau's government faces internal political challenges, including calls for his resignation following the departure of Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland.



Sri Lankan president reflects on successful India visit and economic agreements



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake returned from his successful three-day visit to India, where he engaged in productive discussions with Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This was Dissanayake's first official foreign trip since assuming office in September.

The president's delegation also included key ministers such as Foreign Affairs Minister Vijitha Herath and Labour Minister Anil Jayantha Fernando. During the visit, the two sides discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation and reaffirmed India's continued support following Sri Lanka's 2022 economic crisis. Dissanayake expressed confidence that Sri Lanka would not face similar challenges in the future.

In his speech to the Sri Lankan Parliament, Dissanayake also announced the government's agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to raise the income tax threshold and set a target to increase Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves to \$15.1 billion by 2028. Dissanayake also emphasized Sri Lanka's commitment to not allowing its territory to be used against India's security interests.



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A nation in crisis – Government shutdown looms amid political Chaos



Dr. (H) Avi Verma

The U.S. government is once again teetering on the brink of a shutdown as the House of Representatives failed to pass a critical spending bill just one day before the federal funding deadline. This failure reflects deep divisions within Congress and underscores the escalating dysfunction threatening the country's stability.

Speaker Mike Johnson's (R-La.) efforts to strike a bipartisan deal initially seemed promising, with a proposed bill extending funding until March 14, 2024. It included essential provisions such as disaster relief, farm aid, and even a congressional pay raise. However, the far-right flank of the GOP, emboldened by former President Donald Trump and his newly minted ally, Elon Musk, undermined the process.

After Trump demanded the inclusion of a two-year debt ceiling extension and criticized the initial bipartisan framework, Speaker Johnson scrambled to rewrite the bill. The revised version stripped key provisions and alienated Democrats, who condemned the GOP's abrupt reversal as an "affront and insult." Meanwhile, the changes failed to satisfy deficit hawks within the Republican Party, leading to the bill's defeat.



Why the Debt Ceiling Matters
The debt ceiling, a legal limit on the amount the federal government can borrow, is critical for maintaining the country's financial credibility. Trump's call to eliminate the debt ceiling altogether has sparked debate about its necessity. While some argue that its removal would prevent recurrent crises, others warn it could lead to unchecked government spending and inflationary pressures.

If the debt ceiling were abolished, Congress would lose a critical mechanism for fiscal discipline, potentially resulting in increased borrowing costs and eroded investor confidence. Politically, it would further deepen partisan divides, as Republicans and Democrats wrestle over long-term budgetary priorities.

Economic and Political Fallout
A government shutdown would have immediate and far-reaching consequences for millions of Americans. Essential services could be disrupted, federal employees furloughed, and economic growth jeopardized. The political landscape would also face significant ramifications, as the failure to govern effectively diminishes public trust in elected officials.

Speaker Johnson's struggles to navigate this crisis expose the growing influence of Trump and Musk on GOP policy decisions. Their opposition not only derailed a bipartisan solution but also cast doubt on the Republican Party's ability to govern cohesively.

A Call for Accountability
As the nation braces for another potential shutdown, the American people deserve better from their leaders. Bipartisanship is not a weakness; it is a necessity in a democracy built on compromise. The chaos in Washington must end, and elected officials must prioritize the needs of the nation over political posturing.

This crisis should serve as a wake-up call to all Americans: the path forward requires accountability, cooperation, and a commitment to responsible governance. Failure to act now will only deepen the fractures in our democracy and erode the foundations of our nation.

Best Regards,
Dr. (H) Avi Verma,
Publisher, IndoUS Tribune

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PM Modi reaffirms commitment to strengthening India-UK ties in conversation with King Charles

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a conversation with King Charles III on Thursday, reaffirming India's commitment to deepening its ties with the United Kingdom. The two leaders discussed a wide range of topics, including the Commonwealth, climate action, and sustainability, and expressed their mutual desire to further enhance their countries' long-standing relationship.

In a post on X, Modi shared that he enjoyed speaking with King Charles, with both expressing their continued dedication to strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and the UK. They exchanged views on various global issues, including the Commonwealth of Nations and the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The Prime Minister also praised King Charles for his leadership in promoting sustainability and environmental efforts, particularly his advocacy for climate

action. Modi briefed the King on India's initiatives in these areas, underscoring India's growing commitment to global climate goals.

In their conversation, King Charles expressed appreciation for the significant role of the Indian diaspora in the UK,

particularly healthcare workers during the pandemic. Modi also highlighted India's efforts to promote Ayurveda, yoga, and holistic health practices, which have gained international attention during the global health crisis. Both leaders expressed hope for continued cooperation in these areas moving forward.



Trump vows to speak with Zelensky, Putin to end war's 'carnage'

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



Donald Trump announced plans to speak with both Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the ongoing war. He described the conflict as "carnage" and urged for peace talks to begin. Trump, who has been critical of US aid to Ukraine, reiterated that he could swiftly resolve the war but offered no details on how. His remarks came after calls for an immediate ceasefire and peace negotiations earlier this month.

Meanwhile, Russia continues its military advances in eastern Ukraine, with Putin claiming a strategic victory as Russian forces capture more territory. Russia's growing involvement in the conflict, including support from North Korean troops, has raised global concerns.

French president thanks PM Modi for India's support after Cyclone Chido

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

French President Emmanuel Macron thanked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for India's support following the devastation caused by Cyclone Chido, which hit Mayotte over the weekend. This cyclone, one of the strongest to strike the region in over 90 years, caused significant damage, including the destruction of homes, hospitals, and infrastructure.

In response to Modi's condolences,

Macron expressed his gratitude on social media. Cyclone Chido, a Category 4 storm, initially affected northern Madagascar before making landfall in Mayotte with wind speeds over 220 km per hour. The storm caused widespread destruction, and initial reports confirm at least 11 fatalities, with the death toll expected to rise as rescue efforts continue.

The French Red Cross expressed concern over the fate of more than 200 volunteers who are feared to be missing. Macron and his government are working to assess the damage and begin recovery efforts in the region.

UN chief urges Israel to stop violations of Syria's sovereignty

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for Israel to cease violations of Syria's sovereignty, condemning Israel's airstrikes on Syria and its troops entering a demilitarized zone between Syria and the Golan Heights.

Guterres emphasized that only UN peacekeepers should be present in the zone, and both Israel and Syria must respect the 1974 Disengagement of

Forces Agreement.

He urged the international community to support the suffering Syrian people amid ongoing conflict.

The situation follows a recent rebel offensive that ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

In response, Israel has conducted numerous airstrikes, while Israeli troops have entered the demilitarized zone, describing their actions as temporary measures to secure Israel's borders.

Netanyahu denies agreeing to Palestinian statehood in Saudi talks

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has denied reports claiming that Israel agreed to a "path toward Palestinian statehood" as part of negotiations to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia. Netanyahu's office called the reports "completely false," emphasizing that the creation of a Palestinian state would jeopardize Israel's security.

The denial comes amid rising international pressure regarding Israel's military actions in Gaza. While Israeli media suggested that Palestinian statehood was discussed, Saudi officials also rejected these claims, reaffirming their commitment to an independent Palestinian state. Netanyahu has long opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state, instead proposing the involvement of Arab nations like Saudi Arabia in Gaza's post-war administration,



contingent on the Palestinian Authority's participation.

Netanyahu's comments come as he faces criticism over Israel's actions in Gaza, which have drawn global condemnation and sparked calls for accountability.

Trump calls for FBI investigation of Liz Cheney over January 6 panel

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President-elect Donald Trump called for the FBI to investigate former Republican Congresswoman Liz Cheney for her leadership in the House's January 6, 2021, Capitol riot probe. Trump, set to return to the White House on January 20, has vowed retribution against his political opponents and suggested he may grant clemency to some of the over 1,250 people charged in connection with the attack. The riot, aimed at overturning his 2020 loss, resulted in over 140 police injuries, five deaths, and \$2.8 million in Capitol damages.

Trump's comments followed a report from the Republican-led House Administration Oversight Committee, which accused Cheney of breaking federal laws and called for an FBI investigation. Cheney dismissed the report, claiming it was an effort to downplay Trump's role in the January 6 events.



Appeals court removes prosecutor in Trump's election interference case



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In a legal victory for former President Donald Trump, a Georgia appeals court has removed the prosecutor handling his election interference case due to a conflict of interest. The court cited Fani Willis' romantic relationship with Nathan Wade, a lawyer she hired for the case.

The case will proceed with a new prosecutor, but this ruling delays the prosecution, which could extend throughout Trump's presidency. The two federal cases against Trump, including one for election interference, have been dismissed.

Willis, the prosecutor, paid Wade's office \$653,000 despite his lack of experience with such cases. The court's decision emphasized that the relationship undermined public confidence in the proceedings. Trump and his allies are accused of attempting to change the 2020 election results in Georgia. Willis may appeal the ruling to a full bench of the Georgia appeals court.

Japanese auto giants Honda and Nissan in talks for landmark merger to rival Chinese EV dominance

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In a pivotal move that could reshape the global automotive landscape, Japanese automakers Honda and Nissan are reportedly in discussions for a potential merger. The alliance, if finalized, would create the world's third-largest car manufacturer, combining strengths to counter the growing influence of Chinese electric vehicle (EV) giants and other industry leaders like Tesla.

According to reports from Japanese media, the two companies are exploring ways to pool resources and enhance competitiveness in the rapidly evolving EV market. The proposed merger could leverage shared platforms, battery technology, and software development, enabling both automakers to better compete against Chinese companies like BYD and international rivals such as Toyota and Volkswagen.

Experts believe this collaboration could offer a strategic advantage. "Combining resources allows these companies to better navigate the challenges posed by Chinese automakers and Tesla," said Flavio Volpe, President of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association.

Driving Forces Behind the Merger

The Chinese auto sector has seen a meteoric rise, with EVs and hybrids now accounting for over half of all cars sold



in the world's largest automotive market. Generous subsidies and government support have made Chinese EVs more affordable, creating intense competition globally.

Honda and Nissan face mounting challenges, including high development costs for new EV technologies and the need for economies of scale. Industry analysts highlight that the collaboration would allow the companies to address gaps in R&D manpower and profitability.

Nissan, grappling with financial pressures, could benefit significantly from the partnership. Last year, the company reported a \$62 million loss in the second quarter and ended its alliance with

Renault to regain autonomy. Meanwhile, Honda, with its strong market reputation for quality and durability, is expected to lead the collaboration.

Future Implications

While the merger is still under discussion, analysts believe it signals a broader trend of consolidation in the automotive industry. "This could be the first major merger of the EV era but likely not the last," noted Peter Frise, an engineering professor.

Should the merger proceed, it may pave the way for similar collaborations among global automakers, setting a new benchmark for the industry.

US stock market reacts to Fed's rate cut: Analysts see overreaction, eye opportunities

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

U.S. stock markets experienced a sharp decline following the Federal Reserve's latest policy move, with the S&P 500 and Dow Jones dropping nearly 3%, and the Nasdaq 100 falling by almost 4%. The sell-off was triggered by the Fed's announcement of a smaller-than-expected rate-cutting path for 2025, which raised concerns among investors about future economic conditions.

On Wednesday, the Fed reduced its benchmark interest rate to a range of 4.25% to 4.5%, marking a 100 basis point cut since mid-September. Historically, rate cuts are seen as a positive for stocks, as they lower borrowing costs, stimulate economic activity, and signal that inflation is under control. However, this time the market's reaction was not as expected.

The central bank's updated projections for two rate cuts in 2025, down from the previously anticipated four, sent a wave of uncertainty through the markets. The news fueled a 74% surge in the VIX, the "fear gauge" of the stock market, and marked the second-largest one-day increase in its history.

Despite the negative market reaction, many analysts believe the sell-off was an overreaction and see it as a potential "buy the dip" opportunity.

Carol Schleif, Chief Market Strategist



at BMO Private Wealth, commented that investors were "overreacting" to the Fed's announcement. She noted that the economy remains strong, which is crucial for stock market performance. "The slower pace of rate cuts is for a good reason: the economy is strong, and a strong economy is ultimately what matters most for stocks and earnings," she explained.

Andrew Hollenhorst, Chief US Economist at Citi, agreed, stating that the Fed's hawkish tone would likely turn dovish once the labor market shows signs of weakness. "We expect a sharp dovish pivot from Powell and the committee as the labor market softens," he said, emphasizing that the Fed's rate-cutting pace would accelerate more quickly than markets are currently pricing.

Matt Britzman, Senior Equity Analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown, likened the market's response to that of a "Scrooge" in December. He urged investors to view the decline as "a healthy spot of profit-taking" rather than an

end to the rally. Britzman highlighted that U.S. markets had performed well since the election, making the recent drop a natural correction.

David Rosenberg, Founder of Rosenberg Research, was more critical of the Fed's approach, describing it as "willingly reactive" rather than proactive. He pointed out that the Fed's uncertainty and frequent shifts in its policy stance were creating confusion among investors.

Stefan Koopman, Senior Macro Strategist at Rabobank, was also critical of Jerome Powell's performance at the press conference, describing it as his "finest hour." He noted Powell's admission of "higher uncertainty" about inflation's trajectory, which reflects a central bank unsure of its future direction.

Despite the sharp declines in stock prices, Jamie Cox, Managing Partner at Harris Financial Group, believes the market overreacted. "The Fed didn't do or say anything that deviated from what the market expected. This seems more like a 'leave for Christmas' sell-off," he said. Cox predicted that this brief downturn would lay the foundation for a "Santa Rally" in the coming weeks.

Chris Zaccarelli, Chief Investment Officer at Northlight Asset Management, acknowledged the market's disappointment but emphasized the positive aspects of the rate cut. "Santa came early and dropped

a 25-basis-point rate cut in the market's stocking but accompanied it with a note saying that there would be coal next year," he quipped, referring to the Fed's outlook for 2025.

Adam Turnquist, Chief Technical Strategist at LPL Financial, noted that the sell-off was likely overdue due to "overbought conditions" and a slowing market breadth. "At a minimum, market expectations have shifted toward a shallower- and slower-than-anticipated rate-cutting cycle," he said, forecasting a headwind for stocks in the near term.

In contrast, Jean Boivin, Head of the BlackRock Investment Institute, remained optimistic about U.S. equities despite the Fed's cautious stance. "US stocks can still benefit from AI, robust economic growth, and broad earnings growth. We see them outperforming international peers in 2025," he said.

As analysts digest the Fed's latest moves, it's clear that market volatility is likely to persist. While some caution that the rate-cutting cycle could stall in 2025, others see this as an opportunity for long-term investors to buy into a still-strong U.S. economy.

While it's too soon to predict whether the recent market plunge will extend into the new year, investors and analysts alike are preparing for a more subdued but potentially profitable 2025.

Trump pressures EU to boost US energy imports, threatens tariffs

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Former U.S. President Donald Trump has urged the European Union to significantly increase its purchases of American oil and natural gas, warning that failure to address the trade imbalance could result in steep tariffs on European goods.

In a statement on his Truth Social platform, Trump declared, "I've told the European Union that they must address their massive trade deficit with the United States by making large-scale purchases of our oil and gas. Otherwise, it's TARIFFS all the way!"

Trump, known for his hardline stance on trade, has consistently emphasized the need for foreign partners to reduce trade surpluses with the U.S. His latest remarks underline his push to use American energy exports as a tool to achieve this goal.

Experts, however, point out that European energy markets are largely driven by private companies and market conditions. Refining companies and trading houses typically make procurement decisions based on factors like price competitiveness and supply efficiency, leaving European governments with limited influence over sourcing.

Currently, the U.S. exports significant



quantities of oil and natural gas to Europe, especially when global market conditions favor American supplies. For instance, U.S. crude oil shipments to northwest Europe hit record highs in late 2023. However, analysts predict a dip in early 2024 due to narrowing arbitrage opportunities and rising freight costs.

Trump's threats of tariffs are consistent with his broader approach to recalibrating

trade relations. During his presidency, he pledged to impose hefty tariffs on imports from major trading partners, including Canada, Mexico, and China, as part of his "America First" policy.

While Trump's stance may resonate with his political base, analysts warn that imposing tariffs on the EU could lead to retaliatory measures and strain diplomatic relations. Additionally, the European energy

market's reliance on price-driven decisions makes it unclear how effective such a strategy would be in achieving Trump's goals.

As the global energy landscape continues to shift, Trump's emphasis on leveraging American energy exports reflects the increasing role of energy in trade negotiations. However, whether these tactics will reshape global trade dynamics remains to be seen.

India raises serious concerns with US over Pannun's threat to ambassador

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday confirmed that India has raised concerns with the United States regarding the latest threat issued by US-based Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun against India's Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra.

The threat has been taken seriously by the Indian government, which has addressed the matter with US authorities.

In a recent video, Pannun stated that Kwatra was a target of pro-Khalistani Sikhs in America, accusing him of allegedly collaborating with Russian authorities, who supposedly provided intelligence to India regarding the Khalistani network in the US.

"Whenever such threats are made, we take them very seriously and raise them with the US government. This time as well, we have raised the issue with them, and we expect the United States government to prioritize our security concerns and take appropriate action," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal during a media briefing in New Delhi on Friday.

Kwatra, a former Foreign Secretary, assumed the role of India's Ambassador to the United States in August, succeeding Taranjit Singh Sandhu. His appointment coincides with rising tensions as Khalistani separatists have increasingly targeted Hindu communities and Indian missions



in the US.

There have been multiple incidents involving Khalistani groups, including defacement of temples in California and New York, and acts of vandalism at the Indian embassy in San Francisco.

US lawmakers, including Shri Thanedar, a Democrat from Michigan, have voiced concerns over a significant rise in attacks on Hindus and their places of worship in the US.

Thanedar expressed frustration with local authorities' inability to identify

perpetrators behind temple and consulate incidents, calling for better coordination between local law enforcement, the FBI, and the Department of Justice. He emphasized the need for a higher priority to be given to addressing hate crimes targeting the peaceful community.

FAA imposes drone flight ban over critical New Jersey sites



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The FAA has temporarily banned drone flights over 22 utility sites in New Jersey for 30 days, following a rise in laser incidents involving aircraft. The ban applies to critical infrastructure like electrical substations and generating stations. The increased reports of drone sightings have raised concerns about aviation safety, although authorities have stated there is no national security threat. The FAA also plans to impose similar restrictions in New York. These actions are precautionary, with no direct threats identified. The FAA has emphasized that manned aviation remains unaffected, and the restrictions aim to discourage illegal drone activity. The decision comes after a surge in laser attacks on aircraft, which have become a growing concern in the region.

Biden confirms he will attend Trump's inauguration



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Joe Biden confirmed that he will attend Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20, reinforcing the importance of a peaceful transfer of power.

In an interview on the Meidas Touch network, Biden called it "childish" for Trump to skip his inauguration in 2021, making him the first president in 150 years to do so. Biden emphasized that the tradition of attending inaugurations helps reaffirm the strength of U.S. democracy.

Although the White House had previously stated Biden would be attending, this was the first time Biden personally addressed the matter. Biden said his focus remains on ensuring a smooth transition of power, contrasting his approach with Trump's refusal to concede the 2020 election, which delayed Biden's transition and led to a chaotic handover.

Biden expressed frustration with Trump's unwillingness to cooperate, which he described as a "childish game" that undermines the democratic process.

Suspect in UnitedHealth executive's death faces federal and state charges

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Luigi Mangione, the suspect in the killing of UnitedHealth Group executive Brian Thompson, now faces federal charges, including murder, stalking, and using an illegal gun silencer. Mangione, 26, was charged alongside state-level murder and terrorism charges in connection with the premeditated assassination of Thompson.

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan allege that Mangione spent months planning the attack, driven by his disdain for the health insurance industry and wealthy executives. A notebook found by police contained entries detailing his hostility toward the industry and his desire to kill a CEO at an investor conference. One entry described the event as a "true windfall" for his planned attack.

Mangione, who had been on the run for five days, was arrested in Altoona, Pennsylvania, after waiving extradition proceedings. He was transferred to New York City on Thursday, where he appeared in court to face federal charges. Mangione is accused of using a homemade silencer in the shooting and traveling interstate to carry out the attack.



The killing, which occurred outside a Manhattan hotel before a company conference, has sparked outrage but also gained some support from individuals critical of the healthcare system and insurance companies. Mangione's actions were condemned, but some see him as a symbol of frustration with the high costs of healthcare.

Federal prosecutors could pursue the

death penalty for the murder charge, though New York state has abolished capital punishment. If convicted of using the silencer, Mangione faces a minimum of 30 years in prison.

Mangione has not entered a plea and is in custody as he faces charges in both state and federal courts. His lawyer has argued that he has been "overcharged" and plans to fight the charges in court.

Texas launches anti-immigration billboard campaign in Mexico

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Texas Governor Greg Abbott has launched a controversial billboard campaign in Mexico and Central America aimed at deterring illegal immigration. The billboards highlight the dangers of crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, with one sign reading, "How much did you pay to have your daughter raped?"

The campaign, which is costing Texas around \$100,000, is part of Abbott's strategy to discourage migrants from attempting to cross illegally into Texas. Abbott emphasized the goal of making potential migrants aware of the consequences of illegal entry into the state, which has seen a record number of border

crossings in recent years.

The number of migrants attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border surged after President Joe Biden took office, prompting criticism from Abbott and other Republicans. While President-elect Donald Trump has pledged aggressive immigration measures, including mass deportations, Abbott's billboard campaign serves as a preemptive deterrent ahead of Trump's January 20 inauguration.

The billboards are designed to discourage migration and provide a stark message to would-be border crossers. Abbott has also offered 1,400 acres of land near the Texas-Mexico border to the incoming Trump administration for its deportation initiative.



Supreme Court to review TikTok's challenge to sale requirement



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review TikTok's challenge to a law mandating the app's sale by January 19 to avoid a national security-related ban. TikTok and its parent company, ByteDance, are appealing a lower court ruling that upheld the law.

The court will consider the First Amendment claims, with TikTok arguing that the law violates free speech protections. The Biden administration has expressed concerns that TikTok's data collection practices could pose security risks, given its ties to China.

TikTok has denied these allegations, asserting that the law would have a far-reaching impact on its 170 million U.S. users. The case comes amid growing tensions between the U.S. and China, with both countries imposing new trade restrictions.

Should the law be enforced, TikTok could lose significant market share in the U.S., affecting its ability to retain advertisers and content creators. The court's decision could have broader implications for the regulation of foreign-owned tech companies in the U.S.

Friday, 20 December 2024

Louisiana reports first presumptive human case of H5N1 bird flu



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Louisiana Department of Health has confirmed the first presumptive positive human case of H5N1 bird flu in the state. The individual, from southwestern Louisiana, is currently hospitalized, and the department is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to investigate the case. The patient had come into contact with sick and dead birds believed to be infected with H5N1, a strain of avian influenza known for causing severe respiratory illness in birds. Outbreaks of H5N1 have been ongoing in wild birds and poultry in the U.S. since 2022. As of December 13, 60 confirmed human cases of H5N1 have been reported nationwide, most linked to exposure to infected poultry or dairy cows. However, there has been no evidence of person-to-person transmission associated with these cases so far.

Trump's request to overturn hush money conviction denied



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Donald Trump's effort to have his criminal conviction over hush money payments dismissed has been denied by a New York judge. Justice Juan Merchan ruled that Trump's actions in paying \$130,000 to adult film actress Stormy Daniels were personal, not official acts of his presidency. Trump's legal team had argued that the Supreme Court's ruling on presidential immunity should protect him from prosecution for actions taken while in office. However, Merchan sided with prosecutors, stating that the case involved Trump's personal conduct and did not interfere with his presidential duties. The conviction, related to falsifying business records to cover up the payment, was a historic first for a U.S. president. Trump's lawyers are still pursuing other avenues to have the verdict overturned. Meanwhile, Trump faces additional criminal charges in other cases, including his attempts to overturn the 2020 election results.

Biden and Harris urge Democrats to keep fighting in rare joint appearance

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In a rare post-election appearance, U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris spoke at a holiday party hosted by the Democratic National Committee, thanking donors for raising over \$2 billion during the unsuccessful 2024 election cycle. They also urged Democrats to continue their fight for the party's values, despite the disappointing results.

"We are strong, we are clear about why we are in this," Harris told the crowd. "We cannot let any circumstance or individual take away our power... we know what we stand for, and that's why we know what to fight for."

Biden emphasized the importance of



resilience, quoting his father: "When you get knocked down, you've just got to get up, get up. The measure of a person or a party is how fast they get up."

The joint appearance came after a challenging election, where Harris lost all seven battleground states and both the popular and electoral votes to Trump. The event marked a rare public showing of unity between Biden and Harris after a contentious period within the party.

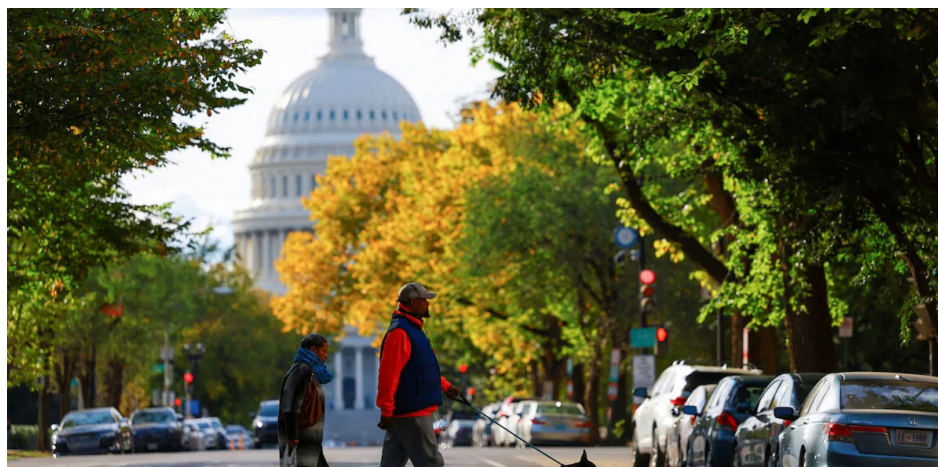
Harris' political future remains uncertain, with some urging her to consider running for governor of California. Biden, who will leave office on January 20, plans to stay engaged in politics and work on healing national divisions. He joked, "The bad news for you all is I ain't going nowhere. We're going to stay engaged."

Defense bill passes Congress despite controversy over transgender care provision

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The U.S. Senate passed the \$895 billion National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) with bipartisan support, despite controversy over a provision that restricts gender-affirming care for transgender minors in the military. The bill, which authorizes military spending and policy, was approved by an 85-14 vote and will now be sent to President Biden for his signature. It includes significant funding for military equipment, pay raises for service members, and initiatives to counter geopolitical rivals such as China and Russia. However, the inclusion of the transgender provision led some

Democrats to oppose the bill, illustrating the increasing political focus on transgender rights in the U.S. The NDAA also contains provisions for military housing, childcare, and medical care, as well as a substantial increase in assistance to Israel. This year's bill also expands military resources to manage migration at the southern U.S. border. Despite the contentious transgender provision, Senate Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer expressed optimism about the overall advances made in the bill, calling it a necessary compromise. With its passage, the NDAA will become law once signed by President Biden, and the focus now shifts to separate funding bills for the Pentagon's programs.



NASA astronauts' return to Earth delayed until late March

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

NASA has announced that the return of astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore from the International Space Station (ISS) will be delayed until at least late March. Originally scheduled for an eight-day stay, the astronauts have now spent over nine months in space.

They arrived at the ISS in June for a test mission, but their return was delayed after the Boeing Starliner capsule they used was deemed unfit for re-entry.

NASA stated that Williams and Wilmore will return after the Crew-10 mission, which is now expected to launch in late March. Crew-10's arrival will allow for a handover period, where lessons learned from Crew-9 will be shared to aid in a smooth transition for science and maintenance operations on the station.

The delay in Crew-10's launch, which was originally planned for February, was due to the time needed to prepare a new Dragon spacecraft.

U.S. reports first severe human case of bird flu as California declares emergency

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The U.S. has reported its first severe human case of bird flu, with a Louisiana resident hospitalized in critical condition after suspected contact with an infected backyard flock. In response, California declared a state of emergency as the H5N1 virus spreads more widely in dairy herds and has already infected farm workers in several states.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says bird flu remains a low risk to the general public but has caused widespread concern due to its increasing impact on animal populations.



This case, linked to wild bird strains, marks a worrying escalation in the virus's potential to affect humans.

The Louisiana patient, who has underlying health conditions, is reportedly over the age of 65, placing them at higher risk. Health officials continue to monitor the situation closely, with the CDC confirming 61 human cases since April. California's emergency declaration is aimed at enhancing containment and response efforts as the virus spreads through the state's dairy industry, with more than 640 herds affected. The situation reflects the challenge of managing outbreaks that impact both human and animal health.

Indian student killed, four others injured in UK road accident



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A 32-year-old Indian student, Chiranjeevi Panguluri, was killed in a road accident in Leicestershire, England. Panguluri, a passenger in a car that crashed into a ditch, died at the scene, while four other people, including one woman and two men, were hospitalized with serious injuries.

The driver, a 27-year-old man, was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving but was released on bail. Police are continuing their investigation and have appealed to anyone who may have witnessed the incident to come forward with any dashcam footage.

Panguluri and the others involved in the crash are all reportedly from Andhra Pradesh. The tragedy has left the local community and Panguluri's family devastated.

Indian student killed, two others injured in crash in the US



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In a tragic road accident in Memphis, Tennessee, 26-year-old Indian student Naga Sri Vandana Parimala was killed, and two others were seriously injured. Parimala, a Master of Science student at the University of Memphis, died when the car she was in collided with another vehicle just after midnight on Friday.

Two other students, Pavan and Nikith, were taken to the hospital, with Pavan reportedly in critical condition. Parimala, from Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh, had moved to the United States in 2022 for her higher studies.

Police are investigating the crash and are in contact with the victims' families. The community is mourning the loss of a bright student, and officials are offering support to the bereaved family members.

Indians abroad drumming up support for farmers' protest

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Support from the Indian diaspora around the world is growing in favor of the farmers' protest in India. Following a rally in California on Wednesday, another car rally is set to take place in Surrey, Canada, on December 13, marking 10 months of the ongoing agitation.

Farm leader Sharwan Singh Pandher confirmed that these rallies are being organized by immigrants to raise awareness among people in the West about the situation in India. "Car rallies are being held to highlight the plight of unarmed farmers, who were injured when tear gas shells were fired at them while they were marching toward Delhi from the Shambhu border. They were denied entry into Haryana by police and paramilitary personnel," said Pandher. The Indian-origin community in California has also planned a day-long fast to express solidarity with farm leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, whose fast unto death entered its 17th day on Thursday.

Farmers in India are actively seeking support from singers and spiritual leaders ahead of their planned protest march on foot to Delhi on December 14. Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu has urged farm leaders to engage in dialogue and not send the Merjeevda Jatha to Delhi. While



in Patiala, Bittu expressed his willingness to discuss farmers' issues with the government, urging them to end the protest. He emphasized that Dallewal's health was being monitored by medical professionals.

Farm leaders responded by stating that since their protests began at the border on February 13, Bittu was free to meet with them directly. Pandher suggested that if Bittu was serious, he should visit Delhi, bring a formal letter from the government, and initiate talks to resolve the issue.

The upcoming 'Marjeevda Jatha,' consisting of 101 farmers, is scheduled to begin its march towards Delhi on December 14. The previous

attempts on December 6 and 8 were halted by the Haryana Police and paramilitary personnel, with nearly 30 farmers injured due to tear gas shelling.

The SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have called on people across India to skip dinner in solidarity with the protest, especially for Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been fasting at the Khanauri border since November 26. The farmers' demands include a legal guarantee for the minimum support price (MSP), debt waivers, pensions for farmers and farm laborers, no increase in electricity tariffs, the withdrawal of police cases, and justice for victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

12-year-old girl charged with killing Indian-origin man in the UK

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A 12-year-old girl has been charged in connection with the death of 80-year-old Bhim Sen Kohli, who died following an assault while walking his dog in a park near Leicester, England, in September. The girl, whose identity cannot be revealed due to her age, appeared in court on charges of manslaughter. Kohli, who had been hospitalized after the attack, passed away on September 2. Authorities have yet to reveal further details on the nature of the assault or the suspects involved.

In addition to the girl, a 15-year-old boy,

who was 14 at the time, had previously been charged with murder. The police arrested five children aged 12-14 in relation to the incident. Kohli's family expressed their grief, describing him as a loving father and grandfather who adored his family. A post-mortem confirmed his death was due to a neck injury. Local community members have been left shaken by the tragic event, which has raised concerns about youth violence.

Authorities have called the circumstances surrounding Kohli's death tragic for both his family and the community, and the case has sparked discussions about the impact of youth violence in the region.



Chennai-born Indian-American crowned Miss India USA 2024



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Caitlin Sandra Neil, a 19-year-old Chennai-born Indian-American teenager, was crowned Miss India USA 2024 at the annual pageant held in New Jersey. Caitlin, a second-year student at the University of California, Davis, expressed her desire to leave a positive impact on her community, with a focus on women's empowerment and literacy.

Having lived in the USA for the last 14 years, Caitlin is also interested in pursuing a career in web design, modeling, and acting. "I want to inspire and empower others through my work and bring attention to important issues that matter," Caitlin shared in a media statement.

Sanskriti Sharma from Illinois was crowned Mrs. India USA, and Arshita Kathpalia from Washington won Miss Teen India USA. The pageant, organized by the India Festival Committee (IFC), saw 47 contestants from 25 states competing in three categories. The event also recognized first and second runners-up, including Niral Desai of Illinois and Manini Patel of New Jersey in the Miss India USA competition, and Sapna Mishra of Virginia and Chinmayee Ayachit of Connecticut in the Mrs. India USA category.



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India dismisses reports of visa delays for Indian-origin Canadians as 'disinformation'



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India has rejected reports alleging delays in visa issuance for Indian-origin Canadians, calling them "disinformation." Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal responded to claims that the Indian High Commission had been denying visas to pro-Khalistan Canadian citizens, stating that visa issuance is India's sovereign right and not influenced by external pressures.

The Indian government also expressed concern over the recent murders of three Indian students in Canada, calling the incidents "tragic." Jaiswal reiterated that India is working closely with Canadian authorities to investigate the deaths and ensure the safety of Indian nationals, particularly students, in Canada.

India has advised its citizens to remain vigilant amid growing concerns about hate crimes and violence targeting the Indian community in Canada. Indian students, who make up a significant portion of Canada's international student population, have been urged to take precautions as the security environment deteriorates. The Indian government continues to monitor the situation closely and engage with Canadian authorities to address the challenges faced by its nationals.

India has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the safety of its citizens abroad while continuing discussions with Canadian authorities on the issues faced by the Indian community.

Indian woman deceived by agent returns home after 22 years in Pakistan

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Hamida Bano, an Indian woman who was tricked into traveling to Pakistan by a fraudulent agent 22 years ago, has finally returned to India. She arrived in a wheelchair and was handed over to Indian officials, who facilitated her transfer to a hospital for medical treatment. Hamida recounted how she was promised a job in Dubai, only to be taken to Pakistan instead. There, she endured years of hardship, living with a Sindhi man who later passed away. Her plight came to light in 2022 through the efforts of a local YouTuber, which helped reconnect her with her daughter. Grateful for the support of both the Indian and Pakistani governments, she expressed her relief at finally returning home.

Suchir Balaji, Indian-origin OpenAI whistleblower, dies by suicide in San Francisco

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Suchir Balaji, a 26-year-old former employee of OpenAI, has died by suicide in San Francisco. Authorities found his body on November 26 in his apartment on Buchanan Street. The medical examiner confirmed the death was a suicide, with no signs of foul play. Balaji had been known for speaking out against the practices of OpenAI, particularly its approach to using copyrighted material to train its ChatGPT AI model.

Balaji had made headlines earlier in the year for whistleblowing against OpenAI, alleging the company violated copyright law while developing its generative AI program, ChatGPT. His actions sparked a series of lawsuits from authors, journalists, and programmers claiming their copyrighted works were used without permission to train the AI model. Balaji, who grew up in Cupertino and studied computer science



at UC Berkeley, had left OpenAI, citing concerns that the technology could cause more harm than good. His mother has requested privacy during this difficult time. His death has raised awareness about the pressures faced by those working in the tech industry and the mental health challenges associated with whistleblowing.

UK peer faces suspension after referring to Indian-origin colleague as 'Lord Poppadom'

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Baroness Catherine Meyer, a Conservative Party peer in the UK Parliament, faces a recommendation for a three-week suspension after the House of Lords Conduct Committee determined she made offensive and derogatory remarks towards Lord Navnit Dholakia, an Indian-origin member of the Liberal Democrats. Meyer's actions have sparked a broader conversation about racial sensitivity and the importance of respecting colleagues in the workplace, particularly in a multicultural environment.

Meyer, during a visit to Rwanda in February 2024, referred to Lord Dholakia as "Lord Poppadom," which was deemed racially insensitive. A second incident involved her touching the hair of Labour MP Bell Ribeiro-Addy without consent. Meyer has shown remorse and apologized, but the committee found her actions to be harassment and a violation



of the code of conduct.

The committee has also recommended Meyer undergo behavior training to address her actions. The incident highlights the ongoing need for greater sensitivity and awareness of racial issues in public office and the potential impact of such remarks on colleagues.

12 Indian nationals die from carbon monoxide poisoning at resort in Georgia

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Twelve Indian nationals were found dead at a restaurant in the Gudauri mountain resort in Georgia due to carbon monoxide poisoning, according to local media reports. The victims, who were employees of the Indian restaurant 'Haveli,' were discovered in their bedrooms on the second floor of the facility.

Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs confirmed that there were no signs of injury or violence, and all victims died from carbon monoxide poisoning. The investigation indicated that a power generator placed indoors near the bedrooms may have caused the carbon monoxide buildup when it was turned on following a power outage.

The Indian mission in Tbilisi expressed



deep sorrow over the incident and said it was working closely with local authorities to repatriate the bodies and support the families of the victims. A forensic examination has been ordered to determine the exact cause of death, and authorities are actively investigating the case.

Biden grants clemency to four Indian-Americans



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Joe Biden has granted clemency to four Indian-Americans as part of a broader initiative to address sentencing disparities and support rehabilitation. The individuals receiving pardons or sentence commutations include Meera Sachdeva, Babubhai Patel, Krishna Mote, and Vikram Dutta. Sachdeva, sentenced for fraud in 2012, Patel, convicted for healthcare fraud and drug-related offenses, Mote, serving a life sentence for drug conspiracy, and Dutta, convicted of money laundering for a drug cartel, have all been given a second chance. Biden's decision, which also involved granting clemency to nearly 1,500 individuals, reflects his commitment to removing outdated laws and policies and ensuring fairness in the justice system, particularly for non-violent offenders.

British Indian hedge fund trader sentenced to prison in Denmark for tax fraud



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Sanjay Shah, a 54-year-old British Indian hedge fund trader, has been sentenced to 12 years in prison in Denmark for masterminding a massive tax fraud scheme. The court found Shah responsible for defrauding Denmark's tax authorities of over GBP 1 billion between 2012 and 2015. Shah's elaborate scheme involved fraudulent dividend tax refund applications, which resulted in significant losses for the Danish state.

Shah used a complex arrangement involving 190 American pension companies and 24 Malaysian companies, which submitted fraudulent claims for dividend tax refunds. In addition to his prison sentence, Shah's assets, including bank accounts, shares, and properties, have been confiscated, totaling around USD 1 billion. The case has drawn international attention due to the scale of the fraud and its impact on both Denmark's economy and the global financial system.

Shah has denied the charges and filed an appeal. He was extradited from Dubai to Denmark in 2023 and remains expelled from the country. The court's verdict has underscored Denmark's commitment to combating financial crimes, with officials stating the decision serves as a deterrent to others considering similar fraudulent schemes.



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Kurdish-led forces accuse Turkey of escalating attacks near Kobani



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have accused Turkish troops and their allied factions of escalating military operations near the Syrian border city of Kobani. According to the SDF, Turkish forces and their mercenaries launched a large-scale assault on the southern outskirts of Kobani, particularly near the Tishreen Dam area. The SDF reported that although they successfully repelled the attackers by nightfall, Turkish drones and artillery continued to target various parts of Kobani, while military reinforcements were gathering along the northern border. The SDF called for global opposition to Turkey's actions and urged local residents to arm themselves and resist any invasion attempts. While the SDF expressed support for de-escalation efforts led by the US, it warned that it would defend its land if necessary.

Finland increases defense spending to strengthen military and NATO ties



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Finland's Ministry of Defence has announced a 2025 defense budget of €6.5 billion (\$6.67 billion), marking an increase of €536 million from the previous year.

The budget focuses on enhancing national defense capabilities and supporting Finland's integration into NATO, with defense spending expected to make up around 2.5% of the nation's GDP. A significant portion of the funds—€2.5 billion—will be allocated to military operations, covering personnel salaries and training.

Additionally, €202 million will go towards aircraft procurement and defense materials, while €1.5 billion is designated for acquiring new defense equipment.

Finland's NATO-related expenses, including investments to improve interoperability and NATO troop reception, are also included. Since joining NATO in April 2023, Finland has bolstered its defense cooperation with Nordic neighbors, including Norway.

Germany heads for early elections as Chancellor Scholz loses confidence vote

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz lost a parliamentary confidence vote, triggering early elections scheduled for February 23. Scholz, whose three-party coalition collapsed in November, called the vote to allow voters to determine the country's future political direction. The vote passed with 394 MPs declaring no confidence in the Chancellor, with 207 votes in favor and 116 abstentions. Scholz, now leading a minority government, remains in office until the new elections are held. The coalition's collapse followed disagreements over debt management, particularly after the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) quit in protest over the sacking of Finance Minister Christian Lindner. Scholz defended his decision to call for early elections, arguing that disunity in the government could no longer



be tolerated. The election campaign has already begun, with debates intensifying

over issues like migration policy and economic challenges.

Nigeria reopens embassy in North Korea after COVID-19 closure

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Nigeria has reopened its embassy in North Korea after years of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The country's charge d'affaires, Patrick Imodu Imologhomo, announced the reopening plan during a meeting in Pyongyang with the Russian ambassador to North Korea. Nigeria's decision to resume diplomatic activities

follows the reopening of North Korea's borders in 2023. North Korea and Nigeria established diplomatic ties in 1976, though reports suggest the two countries may have engaged in arms trade or business deals in violation of UN sanctions. Nigeria and Egypt are the only African countries with diplomatic presences in North Korea. The embassy's reopening is part of a broader trend of countries resuming diplomatic operations in the isolated nation.



Britain increases military support to Ukraine with new aid package



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The UK is ramping up its military support for Ukraine with a new aid package, including naval drones, air defense systems, and artillery. British Defence Secretary John Healey confirmed that training for Ukrainian soldiers under Operation Interflex will continue through 2025. The new package includes £92 million for naval equipment, such as small boats and reconnaissance drones, and £68 million for air defense equipment, including radars. Additionally, £39 million will be spent on counter-drone systems. Healey emphasized that the UK's support for Ukraine is "ironclad" and vowed to stand alongside Ukraine as it faces ongoing challenges from Russia. The UK also plans to co-produce air defense systems with Ukraine and continue the training of Ukrainian soldiers, which has already seen 51,000 recruits trained since mid-2022.

Bushfire forces evacuation orders near Melbourne

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Abushfire in Victoria, Australia, has triggered evacuation warnings for residents and campers in the Grampians National Park, west of Melbourne. Authorities issued an emergency alert on Wednesday afternoon for the towns of Victoria Valley and Mirranatwa, urging residents to evacuate to the nearby town of Dunkeld, where a relief center has been set up. The fire, which began on Monday amid a heatwave in the region, has scorched 564 hectares of bushland and is continuing to spread. With temperatures reaching over 40°C, firefighters are facing challenges in containing the blaze, especially in



inaccessible areas. Authorities warn that the fire could burn for weeks and have

emphasized the importance of evacuating before conditions worsen.

Surgeons in the US complete fifth gene-edited pig organ transplant



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Surgeons in the US have successfully completed the fifth gene-edited pig organ transplant, marking a major step forward in addressing the organ shortage crisis. The procedure, which was carried out at New York University (NYU) Langone Health, involved transplanting a genetically modified pig kidney into 53-year-old Towana Looney from Alabama. Looney, who had spent eight years on dialysis, is now free from the procedure and in improved health.

This transplant is the third to involve a pig kidney with 10 gene edits. Looney's case is significant as she is currently the only person in the world living with a pig organ. The surgery is seen as a promising development in the field of xenotransplantation, offering hope to thousands of people in need of organ transplants.

Israeli airstrikes target Houthi sites in Yemen, killing nine



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Israeli airstrikes on Yemen have resulted in at least nine deaths, with several others wounded, according to reports from Houthi-run al-Masirah TV. The attacks, which occurred early Thursday, targeted Yemen's capital, Sanaa, and ports in Hodeidah. Seven people were killed at the As-Salif port, while two others died at the Ras Issa oil facility. At least three others were injured in the strikes.

In Sanaa, the airstrikes also hit power stations in the Hizyaz and Dhahban areas, causing widespread damage. Local residents shared videos showing fires

raging at the port facilities of Ras Issa and As-Salif, with the flames still burning hours after the attacks.

The Israeli military confirmed the airstrikes, stating they were aimed at Houthi military targets in response to Houthi rocket attacks on Israel. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warned Houthi leaders that Israel would take action against them as well, emphasizing that missile fire and threats would not be tolerated.

This attack follows recent escalations, including a US Navy airstrike on a Houthi-controlled building in Sanaa and the Houthi rocket launch aimed at Israel.

Turkey and Lebanon vow joint action on Syrian issues



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Turkey and Lebanon have pledged to collaborate closely on Syrian matters following the fall of Bashar al-Assad, according to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Speaking at a joint press conference with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, Erdogan emphasized the importance of regional stability, asserting that the future of Syria is vital to the entire region's security.

Both countries have agreed to work together to address the reconstruction of war-torn Syria. Erdogan also reiterated Turkey's support for Lebanon amid ongoing Israeli attacks and condemned Israel's actions in Syria, urging Israel to adhere to ceasefire agreements. Prime Minister Mikati thanked Erdogan for Lebanon's support during the recent conflict with Israel and condemned Israel's actions in Syrian territories. He emphasized that international pressure should be applied to stop Israel's expansion in Syria.

New expressway opens in Tibet, linking Lhasa with the birthplace of Tibetan civilization



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A new expressway connecting Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, with the city of Shannan—known as the birthplace of Tibetan civilization—has officially opened. The Xizang S5 Expressway, spanning 47.46 kilometers, reduces travel time between the two cities to just one hour, down from over two hours.

The \$1.3 billion expressway features a two-way, four-lane design with numerous tunnels and bridges, making up 65 percent of the route. The project is expected to boost local tourism, agriculture, and animal husbandry, contributing to the region's economic development.

The new road is part of ongoing improvements in Tibet's transport infrastructure, which includes a newly opened highway between Lhasa and Xigaze, cutting travel time in half. This development is aimed at enhancing connectivity in Tibet and with neighboring regions, while supporting the area's growing economy.

South Korea's acting president vetoes six controversial bills

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

South Korea's Acting President, Han Duck-soo, has exercised his veto power for the first time since assuming interim leadership, rejecting six contentious bills passed by the opposition. The veto, announced on Thursday, includes four agricultural bills and two bills related to parliamentary procedures, which were approved by the opposition Democratic Party last month.

Han requested that the National Assembly reconsider these bills, stating that cooperation between the government and political parties is more essential than ever.

He explained that some agricultural bills could distort market dynamics and lead to a glut of rice, burdening the government financially. He also criticized amendments to parliamentary procedures, which could potentially undermine the timely execution of the national budget.

The vetoed bills include the Grain Management Act, which mandates government purchases of surplus rice, as well as amendments to laws governing the National Assembly's budget process and data submission requirements. Han's veto comes amid political tensions, as President Yoon Suk Yeol faces impeachment over a controversial martial law proposal.

Yemen calls for international help to tackle economic and humanitarian crises

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council has called for urgent international assistance to address the country's worsening economic and humanitarian crises. The council highlighted that Houthi attacks on Yemen's oil infrastructure have paralyzed oil exports, cutting off about 70 percent of the country's revenue since 2022.

The council is seeking support for a government-led economic rescue plan designed to address the national budget deficit, manage price fluctuations, and improve the humanitarian situation.

The council also stressed the importance of restoring state institutions to ensure stability, sustainable development, and peace, with international backing.

Yemen has been embroiled in a civil war since 2014, which has devastated the country's infrastructure and led to severe humanitarian suffering.

In the southern province of Lahj, fighting between Yemeni government forces and Houthi fighters intensified, further exacerbating the conflict as Yemen enters its second decade of war.

Zimbabwe ramps up anti-smuggling efforts ahead of festive season



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Zimbabwe is intensifying its efforts to combat smuggling as the festive season approaches, with authorities estimating a loss of up to \$1 billion in revenue due to illegal border activities. Tafadzwa Muguti, the Permanent Secretary for Presidential Affairs, highlighted that smuggling typically increases during the Christmas and New Year holidays, particularly as Zimbabwean expatriates return from neighboring countries like South Africa. Goods commonly smuggled include food items, clothes, drugs, beverages, and electronics. To tackle the issue, Zimbabwe launched an anti-smuggling campaign in November, setting up taskforce teams involving tax authorities, police, and other agencies. Muguti warned that smuggling not only undermines the economy but also poses health and safety risks, especially regarding unregulated food and medicine. Smuggled goods, including second-hand clothes and foodstuffs, will be confiscated and either destroyed or donated to charity.

India improves ranking in WEF tourism development index



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India has climbed to 39th place in the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024, up from 54th in 2021. This rise reflects improvements in infrastructure and government policies promoting tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism has supported development through initiatives like 'Swadesh Darshan' and 'PRASHAD' and has facilitated growth in medical tourism with the launch of the "Advantage Healthcare India" portal. India's rich cultural heritage, including 43 World Heritage Sites, has also boosted its tourism appeal.

Mamata Banerjee criticizes Centre over Christmas holiday cancellation

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee criticized the Union government for canceling Christmas as a national holiday. Speaking at the "Kolkata Christmas Inauguration" event, Banerjee emphasized that her state has maintained and even increased the number of holidays, respecting all religious festivals.

"The Union government canceled Christmas as a national holiday, but here in West Bengal, we continue to honor such occasions," Banerjee said. She also

condemned Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent remarks about Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, calling them disrespectful.

At a Christmas event at St. Xavier's College, Banerjee reiterated that festivals are universal and should be celebrated, regardless of religion. She further criticized the BJP for what she called their casteist and anti-Dalit stance, especially in the context of Ambedkar's contributions.

Banerjee stressed the importance of India's diversity and the need for unity in the country, in contrast to the current government's divisive approach.



Varanasi's wooden crafts gain global popularity ahead of Christmas



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Varanasi's traditional wooden craft industry has seen a surge in demand, with large orders being sent to the United States, Brazil, and Spain ahead of the Christmas season. Wooden toys and religious figures, including representations of the Shri Ram Temple and Kashi Vishwanath Dham, have gained international appeal, particularly among the Indian diaspora.

The local artisans, including around 60 women, are crafting thousands of hanging ornaments such as Santa Claus, Christmas trees, and angels. Subhi Agarwal, a wooden toy maker, shared that they have already completed a large order for export to the U.S. and Brazil. Additionally, the city's woodcraft industry has earned a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, further boosting its global recognition.

SC dismisses contempt plea against UP authorities for 'Dharam Sansad'



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

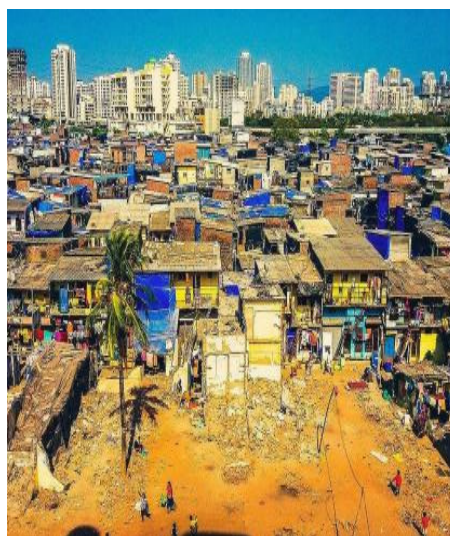
The Supreme Court has rejected a contempt petition filed against Uttar Pradesh authorities for allowing the controversial 'Dharam Sansad' event in Ghaziabad, organized by Hindu seer Yati Narasinghanand. The petition, accusing the authorities of not enforcing the SC's previous directions regarding hate speech, was dismissed with the court suggesting the petitioner approach the local high court instead.

The Court also ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to monitor the event and ensure no hate speeches are made. Authorities were instructed to maintain law and order during the event, with video recordings required for evidence of compliance.

Dharavi's upper-floor residents included in redevelopment scheme

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In a groundbreaking move, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) has introduced a policy to include upper-floor tenement residents in its rehabilitation plan. Traditionally excluded as illegal structures, these residents were often displaced with no alternatives. Under a new Government Resolution (GR), upper-floor residents in Dharavi (as of November 2022) are eligible for a hire-purchase rehabilitation scheme. This will provide them with 300 sq ft homes outside Dharavi at a nominal rent for 25 years, after which they will own the units. Residents can also make a lump-sum payment anytime during this period. This initiative aims to improve living standards and provide modern housing with essential amenities, such as private toilets and kitchens. The project



will also include commercial spaces, green areas, and infrastructure for better community living.

SC orders immediate medical assistance for fasting farmer leader

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Supreme Court has directed the Punjab government to ensure immediate medical care for farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on a hunger strike in support of demands for a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) and agricultural reforms. Dallewal, a 70-year-old cancer patient, has been fasting since November 26.

The state reported that a temporary hospital has been set up near the protest site, but Dallewal has refused medical examination. The Court urged the

government to persuade him to accept treatment for at least a week. The matter will be reviewed at a hearing on Friday.



Calcutta HC allows protest over RG Kar rape-murder case



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Calcutta High Court has granted conditional permission for the West Bengal Joint Platform of Doctors to hold a sit-in protest in central Kolkata against the default bail granted to two accused in the rape and murder case of a junior doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College & Hospital.

The court approved the protest, set to run from December 20 to 26, but limited the gathering to 200 individuals. The doctors' group is protesting the decision by a special court granting default bail to R.G. Kar's former principal and a police officer accused of tampering with evidence.

The CBI has charged one individual, Sanjay Roy, in the case, but no further charge sheets have been filed. The West Bengal Junior Doctors' Front had earlier suspended their protests but has now resumed them due to dissatisfaction with the investigation. The state government was directed to respond to the demands of the protesting doctors.

BJP stages walkout over Waqf land notification in Karnataka Assembly

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

BJP legislators in Karnataka staged a walkout in the Assembly after the Congress-led government refused to withdraw a 1974 gazette notification regarding Waqf land ownership. The BJP leaders demanded the withdrawal of notices issued to farmers and religious institutions claiming Waqf ownership, which they argued had altered land records.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah dismissed

the request, questioning why the BJP did not address the issue during their time in power. However, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda clarified that the government would not interfere with lands granted to farmers under the 'Inam Regrant' and Land Reforms Act. He also emphasized that the government would not claim temple or burial ground lands, ensuring the protection of farmers' interests. A committee, led by a retired judge, will be formed to address grievances regarding Waqf land.



Maharashtra passes amendment to VAT Act

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Maharashtra legislature has passed the Maharashtra Value Added Tax (VAT) Act 2002 (Amendment) Bill, 2024, aimed at boosting state revenue and improving tax collection systems.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar highlighted that the state government will work through the GST Council to secure relief for farmers from GST on essential commodities, fertilizers, seeds, and

medicines related to agriculture.

The amendment also targets tax evasion by revising the definition of retail outlets and clarifying tax applicability on sales by organizations or clubs to their members. Pawar emphasized that Maharashtra contributes 16% of the total tax collected in the country, and the state will focus on increasing coherence and transparency in its GST system.

Additionally, the government will combat tax evasion near state borders and ensure stricter enforcement in the agricultural sector.



Security heightened along India-Bangladesh border in Tripura ahead of HM Shah's visit

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's three-day visit to Tripura and the 72nd Plenary Session of the North Eastern Council (NEC), security along the India-Bangladesh border has been ramped up. Officials, led by Tripura Chief Secretary J.K. Sinha, visited several border areas to review security measures. Discussions focused on border management, including joint operations to curb cross-border crime, addressing illegal migration, and improving infrastructure at Border Outposts (BOPs). BSF officials also briefed senior leaders about the security situation. The visit is part of the preparations for Shah's meeting in Agartala, which will involve a review of ongoing development projects in the northeastern region.

Priyanka Gandhi, Anurag Thakur join 31-member committee on 'One Nation, One Election'

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) has been formed to examine the feasibility of the 'One Nation, One Election' proposal. The 31-member committee includes representatives from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, including prominent figures like Priyanka Gandhi Vadra (Congress), Anurag Thakur (BJP), and Kalyan Banerjee (TMC).

The committee will review the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024, and other related legislation, aiming to synchronize national and state elections.

The committee's recommendations will be crucial in shaping the future of India's electoral process. The bills were introduced by Law Minister Arjun Meghwal and are now under the committee's scrutiny.

Kerala High Court expands nodal officer's jurisdiction to address grievances

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Kerala High Court has decided to extend the jurisdiction of the nodal officer to accept complaints of harassment from individuals in the Malayalam film industry who have not yet approached the Justice Hema Committee. The court set a deadline of January 31 for such complaints to be registered.

Once the complaints are received, the nodal officer will forward them to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) for further investigation. The court had previously appointed the nodal officer to handle grievances related to the Justice Hema Committee report. This expansion ensures that individuals not previously involved with the committee can also file complaints in confidence, with SIT conducting the investigation.

The court stressed that this process offers



confidentiality not available when filing a report at a police station. The case will be heard again after the Christmas break.

PM Modi expresses grief over Mumbai boat tragedy, announces aid for victims' families

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of 13 lives in a boat accident off Mumbai's coast. In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) confirmed that Modi had announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

The incident occurred when an Indian Navy speedboat, undergoing engine trials, collided with a passenger ferry near Raigad Coast. The ferry, named 'Neelkamal,' was carrying 110 tourists to Elephanta Islands when the crash occurred.

A massive rescue operation followed, involving Navy helicopters, local police, and other vessels. By evening, 13 deaths were confirmed, including three Navy sailors, and dozens of others were rescued.

Kejriwal announces free healthcare for senior citizens under 'Sanjeevani Yojana'

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has announced a new scheme providing free healthcare for senior citizens in the city. Under the 'Sanjeevani Yojana,' all residents aged 60 and above will receive free treatment at both government and private hospitals. Kejriwal made the announcement in the presence of senior ministers and emphasized that the scheme would be implemented once the AAP is re-elected in the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls. The initiative, seen as a pre-election promise, aims to provide significant relief to the elderly. The BJP has criticized the move, calling it an attempt to garner votes with free schemes.



Kerala High Court urges Centre to relax debt norms for Wayanad rehabilitation

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Kerala High Court has asked the central government to consider relaxing debt repayment norms so that the state can utilize Rs 180 crore in outstanding debt for relief efforts in landslide-hit Wayanad. The court made this suggestion while hearing a suo moto case regarding the massive landslide that struck Wayanad in July, causing widespread devastation. The court highlighted the urgency of utilizing available funds for rehabilitation work, especially as the state struggles with pending dues. The Centre has been asked to consider relaxing the norms to allow funds to be directed toward immediate relief efforts.

Starbucks workers plan strike in 3 cities ahead of Christmas rush

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Workers United, the union representing over 10,000 Starbucks employees, announced that its members will strike in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Seattle on Friday morning. The union is protesting unresolved issues surrounding wages, staffing, and scheduling.

The union, which represents workers at 525 Starbucks locations across the U.S., stated that the walkouts will expand daily, potentially affecting hundreds of stores by December 24 unless an agreement is reached. The strike comes as Starbucks grapples with rising labor unrest across the service industry.



The union has been urging the company to increase wages, address staffing shortages, and improve scheduling practices, which it claims have negatively impacted employee well-being and store operations.

Starbucks confirmed its willingness to continue negotiations, but the union claims the company has not made substantial progress on a fair economic proposal since February.

This strike comes as the coffee chain is undergoing a transformation under CEO Brian Niccol, who is working to improve customer experience and streamline operations. However, the timing of the walkouts could impact Starbucks' crucial holiday sales.

CVS faces lawsuit for filling and billing government for illegal opioid prescriptions

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The U.S. Department of Justice has filed a lawsuit against CVS, accusing the pharmacy chain of filling illegal opioid prescriptions and submitting false claims to federal health programs, thus contributing to the opioid epidemic. The lawsuit, which was unsealed on Wednesday, alleges that CVS violated the Controlled Substances Act by filling prescriptions for dangerous quantities of opioids without legitimate medical justification.

The Justice Department claims CVS ignored red flags, including prescriptions from "pill mills," resulting in opioid overdoses and deaths. CVS has denied the accusations, stating that it has cooperated with the DOJ's investigation and strongly disputes the allegations. The lawsuit originated from a whistleblower complaint and is part of broader legal action against pharmacies and drug distributors involved in the opioid crisis. CVS previously agreed to pay \$5 billion in 2022 to settle thousands of similar claims, though the company did not admit to wrongdoing in that deal. The new lawsuit highlights ongoing concerns about the role of pharmacies in the opioid epidemic, with over 800,000 opioid overdose deaths in the U.S. since 1999.

Amazon workers strike at seven US facilities amid holiday rush



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Workers at seven U.S. Amazon facilities walked off the job on Thursday, protesting what they claim are unfair working conditions at the company. The strikes, organized by the Teamsters union, are taking place at locations including New York, Atlanta, and San Francisco. While Amazon operates over 600 U.S. facilities, the strikes represent a small fraction of its workforce, which exceeds 800,000 employees.

Workers are protesting what they describe as unreasonable quotas that

contribute to physical strain, with some employees claiming that meeting these quotas leads to injury and exhaustion. Amazon has denied these claims, maintaining that it provides industry-leading wages and uses automation to minimize repetitive tasks. Despite the walkouts, Amazon does not anticipate major disruptions to its operations, including during the busy holiday period. In addition, Amazon announced a \$2.1 billion investment earlier this year to increase employee pay. The strikes are the latest in a series of labor actions against large corporations amid growing calls for better worker treatment and conditions across industries.

Trump, SoftBank CEO announce \$100 billion US investment plan



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President-elect Donald Trump and SoftBank CEO Masayoshi Son have announced a \$100 billion investment in the U.S. over the next four years. The pledge, which was made at an event at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, is expected to create 100,000 jobs in artificial intelligence and related industries. This announcement mirrors a similar one made in 2016, when Son promised a \$50 billion investment under Trump's first administration. While SoftBank's finances have faced challenges following the downfall of WeWork and other tech investments, Son remains focused on AI and plans to increase SoftBank's exposure in the sector. However, analysts are skeptical about the concrete details of the investment, with some questioning the viability of SoftBank's plans in an increasingly competitive market.

FDA approves Ionis Pharmaceuticals' drug for rare genetic disorder

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Ionis Pharmaceuticals' drug, Tryngolza, to treat familial chylomicronemia syndrome (FCS), a rare genetic disorder. This approval marks the company's first fully-owned drug and offers a new treatment option for those suffering from the condition.

FCS, which affects fewer than 5,000 people in the U.S., prevents the body from breaking down fats, leading to dangerously high triglyceride levels and pancreatitis. Tryngolza is designed to be used in combination with a low-fat diet to lower triglycerides in adults with the condition.

The approval is significant for patients who have limited treatment options, as current therapies only involve strict dietary control. Ionis is preparing to launch the drug and will



provide further pricing details soon. Though the disorder is rare, analysts do not anticipate substantial revenue growth for the drug due to competition from future treatments. The

approval of Tryngolza also adds to Ionis' growing portfolio of novel therapies, signaling potential future growth in the rare disease treatment market.

Qantas agrees on USD 76 million compensation for illegally dismissed workers

Qantas has reached an agreement to pay compensation to over 1,800 workers who were unlawfully dismissed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Australian airline and the Transport Workers Union (TWU) have decided to set up a compensation fund, valued at 120 million Australian dollars (76 million USD), to address the grievances of the workers. These workers had their roles outsourced in 2020 amidst pandemic restrictions, resulting in a lengthy legal battle. The Federal Court ruled the outsourcing illegal in 2021, with the High Court upholding this decision in 2023. The settlement is expected to provide economic relief and compensation for emotional distress to the affected workers, with final compensation capped at approximately 12 months' salary. The airline expressed its commitment to resolving the issue amicably and bringing closure to the affected employees before the holiday season, emphasizing the importance of moving forward.

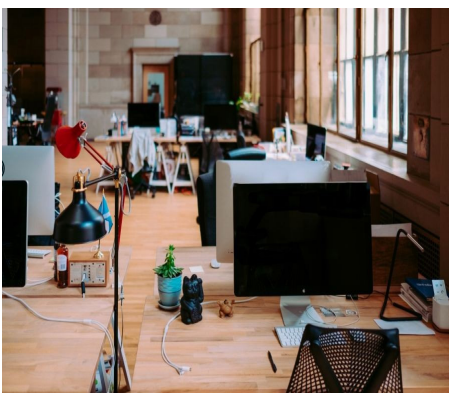
Giriraj Singh rolls out red carpet for Japan's Uniqlo to invest in PM Mitra Parks



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India's Textile Minister Giriraj Singh has invited Japanese retail giant Uniqlo to invest in the PM's Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks, aiming to strengthen India's textile sector. The parks offer a supportive ecosystem for businesses to thrive, with a focus on sustainable and efficient operations. Uniqlo's participation in these parks aligns with India's vision to enhance cotton production capabilities and elevate its textile industry. With India being the world's largest cotton producer, this collaboration will leverage India's rich agricultural landscape to boost cotton productivity. The engagement also includes a commitment to research new natural fibers, fostering sustainability within the textile industry.

India to end 2024 with record office space leasing activity, leads globally



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India is expected to achieve a record high in office space leasing activity in 2024, with an estimated 83-85 million square feet of leasing. This growth, driven by sectors such as IT-BPM, BFSI, and engineering, reflects India's rising attractiveness as a hub for global capability centers (GCCs). GCCs now account for 30% of leasing activity and are projected to grow further. India's office real estate market is set to lead globally, with the country expected to absorb nearly 70% of the total office space in the APAC region. Fresh leasing continues to drive the market, particularly in emerging micro-markets where demand for flexible workspaces and proximity to talent hubs is increasing. The continued rise in demand for office space is a sign of economic recovery, driven by the return-to-office trend and the country's growing startup ecosystem. As India's office real estate market remains resilient, it further reinforces the country's role as a key player in the global economy.

US grants combined \$958 million subsidy to chip maker SK hynix

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The U.S. Department of Commerce has awarded a combined \$958 million subsidy to South Korean semiconductor company SK hynix to support the construction of its new plant in Indiana. This financial assistance, provided under the CHIPS and Science Act, includes direct funding of \$458 million and a loan of up to \$500 million. The plant will focus on packaging memory chips for AI products and developing advanced packaging R&D facilities. This investment aims to



strengthen the U.S. semiconductor supply chain and support the growing demand for AI technology.

The project is expected to create jobs and stimulate the local economy, as SK hynix collaborates with U.S. universities and business partners. SK hynix, along with other global chipmakers, has been in discussions with the U.S. government to secure subsidies under the CHIPS Act, which seeks to bolster U.S. leadership in semiconductor manufacturing. As part of the broader strategy, the U.S. government continues to attract foreign investment to secure its technological future.

Narayana Murthy defends 70-hour workweek concept again, calls on youth to work hard



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy has reiterated his support for a 70-hour workweek, urging young Indians to work hard to drive the country's growth. Murthy emphasized that India needs to set high aspirations and create jobs that can lift millions out of poverty. While his comments have sparked debate, particularly regarding the impact of long working hours on health and well-being, Murthy maintains that entrepreneurial

hard work is crucial to India's economic success. He believes that businesses, through job creation and wealth generation, play a pivotal role in nation-building, and urged young people to work towards making India a global leader. Murthy's call also highlighted the importance of balancing ambition with responsibility, urging young professionals to adopt a holistic approach to career and personal life. His comments come amid concerns over workplace stress, but he continues to advocate for personal sacrifice as a necessary component of national progress.

Google appoints Preeti Lobana as Country Manager, VP for India



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Google has appointed Preeti Lobana as the new Country Manager and Vice President for India, where she will oversee the company's sales and operations. Lobana brings a wealth of experience from her previous role as Google's Vice President for gTech and partner operations. Her leadership will be pivotal in advancing Google's digital initiatives in India, with a particular focus on accelerating digital literacy and AI adoption. Lobana's appointment comes as Google continues to expand its presence in India, which is expected to be a key driver of the company's global growth. The company is also committed to empowering millions of Indians with AI-driven digital solutions.

US accounts for 18 per cent of Indian exports in FY24

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The U.S. remains a crucial trading partner for India, accounting for 18% of India's total exports in FY24, with a value of \$77.5 billion. India's exports to the U.S. have shown steady growth over the past 30 years, driven by key sectors such as pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals, and telecom equipment. While exports to the U.S. have historically outpaced overall export growth, the report suggests that India should focus on diversifying its export markets to reduce over-dependence on any one country.

The U.S. continues to be an important market for Indian goods, with pharmaceuticals and precious stones being top export items. The Indian government aims to reach a target of \$2 trillion in exports by 2030. As India continues to bolster its manufacturing and industrial capabilities, the report recommends exploring new trade partnerships to strengthen its position in the global market and minimize



risks associated with over-reliance on specific regions. The focus on diversification is seen as a strategic step to ensure long-term growth and stability for India's export sector.

Grubhub settles for \$25 million over misleading fees and driver pay

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Grubhub has agreed to pay \$25 million to settle charges that it misled customers about delivery costs and drivers about their earnings.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Illinois attorney general accused the company of deceptive practices, including adding hidden service fees that inflated prices and advertising inflated pay rates for drivers.

The settlement requires Grubhub to be more transparent about delivery charges, accurately advertise driver pay, and only list restaurants that have agreed to be on the platform. While Grubhub denied the allegations, it stated that settling was in its best interest.

The FTC had originally sought \$140 million, but agreed to a reduced penalty based on Grubhub's financial situation. The company is also in the process of being acquired by Wonder Group.

Newcastle looks forward to high-quality Carabao Cup semifinal against Arsenal



Newcastle United secured a spot in the Carabao Cup semi-finals with a 3-1 win over Brentford and will now face Arsenal in a two-legged tie. Head coach Eddie Howe is eager to take on the Gunners but expressed a preference for playing the home leg second. Despite last year's 0-2 loss in the Carabao Cup final, Newcastle is determined to reach their second consecutive final. The first leg is scheduled for the week of January 6, 2025, and the second leg will take place in early February. Howe remains confident that his team can rise to the challenge against one of the Premier League's top sides, looking to secure their first major trophy since 1955.

India reaches U19 Women's Asia Cup final with 4-wicket win over Sri Lanka



India advanced to the final of the U19 Women's Asia Cup with a four-wicket win over Sri Lanka. Aayushi Shukla led the charge with 4 wickets for 10 runs, helping restrict Sri Lanka to 98/9. In the chase, G Trisha and G Kamalini made key contributions, with Trisha scoring 32 off 24 balls. Despite a brief slump, Mithila Vinod's calm 17 not out guided India to victory in 14.5 overs. India will face the winner of the Bangladesh-Nepal match in the final. With a well-rounded performance, India looks to claim the inaugural title, continuing their strong momentum from the Women's U19 T20 World Cup win earlier this year.

Ravichandran Ashwin announces retirement from international cricket

Veteran Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has officially announced his retirement from international cricket, bringing an end to a distinguished career. Ashwin made the revelation at the conclusion of the third Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test in Brisbane, which ended in a draw due to rain. While he still feels he has some cricket left in him, Ashwin intends to continue at the club level rather than at the international stage. With 537 wickets in 106 Tests, Ashwin ranks as India's second-leading wicket-taker in the format. He also represented India in 116 ODIs, claiming 156 wickets, and 65 T20Is, with 72 wickets to his name.

Ashwin was a key player in India's victories in the 2011 World Cup and 2013 Champions Trophy. He was also crucial in India's historic win in the 2020/21 Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia. A prolific all-rounder, Ashwin is one of only 11 players to score 3000 runs and take 300 wickets in Test cricket. His record of 11 Player-of-the-Series awards highlights his



consistent brilliance.

In his emotional farewell, Ashwin thanked his teammates, coaches, and the Australian cricket team for their competi-

itive spirit. He expressed his gratitude to the BCCI and assured that while his international playing days are over, he plans to stay involved in cricket in some capacity, as the game has given him everything.

LeBron James makes NBA history with most career minutes played

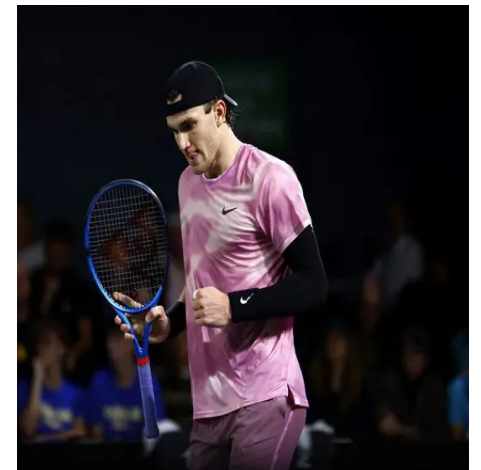
LeBron James set a new NBA record for the most minutes played, surpassing Kareem Abdul-Jabbar with 57,447 minutes during the Los Angeles Lakers' win over the Sacramento Kings. The all-time points leader, LeBron attributed his longevity to his commitment and passion for the game. He also holds NBA records for career field-goal attempts

and turnovers. In the Lakers' 113-100 victory, LeBron contributed 19 points, 7 assists, and 6 rebounds, helping his team improve to a 15-12 record for the season.

The milestone further solidifies LeBron's legacy as one of the greatest players in NBA history. With his relentless drive, he continues to defy age and lead the Lakers toward another playoff run.



Jack Draper to miss United Cup due to hip injury, stays hopeful for Australian Open



Britain's top male tennis player Jack Draper will miss the United Cup due to a hip injury but remains optimistic about his chances for the Australian Open, starting on January 12. Draper had hoped to represent Great Britain at the season-opening tournament, but the injury will now require more time to recover. He expressed disappointment about missing out on the United Cup, a competition he was excited to play in, and also confirmed he would skip the Davis Cup tie against Japan. However, Draper is focused on his rehabilitation and aims to be fit for the year's first Grand Slam.



Chelsea's Mykhailo Mudryk suspended for doping violation

Chelsea forward Mykhailo Mudryk has been provisionally suspended after failing a doping test, reportedly due to the presence of Meldonium, a banned substance. Mudryk denies knowingly using any banned substances and is working with authorities to investigate. Since joining Chelsea in 2023, Mudryk has struggled with form, scoring 10 goals and 9 assists in 73 appearances.



India-Pakistan matches at ICC events till 2027 to be held at neutral venues



The International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed that matches between India and Pakistan in upcoming ICC events until 2027 will be played at neutral venues. This decision applies to the 2025 ICC Men's Champions Trophy, which will be hosted by Pakistan, and other major tournaments including the 2025 Women's Cricket World Cup and

2026 Men's T20 World Cup. The decision comes amid ongoing tensions over the hosting of these matches. Dubai is expected to host India's matches in the Champions Trophy, and the arrangement will also apply to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in 2028. The ICC aims to ensure fair competition while maintaining neutrality in these high-profile matchups.

Spanish Football Federation elects Louzan as new president despite ongoing legal case

Rafael Louzan has been elected as the new president of the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) after securing a victory over his sole rival, Salvador Gomar, with a vote count of 90 to 43. His election comes despite a pending legal issue—a seven-year ban from holding public office for perverting justice during his tenure as president of the Provincial Deputation of Pontevedra. Louzan has appealed the decision, with the Spanish High Court set to hear the case in February. If the ban is upheld, Louzan would become the fourth consecutive RFEF president to face

such legal challenges.

Louzan's election comes at a critical time for Spanish football, following Spain's confirmation as one of the hosts for the 2030 World Cup, alongside Portugal and Morocco. The RFEF is still recovering from the fallout of the Luis Rubiales scandal, which involved Rubiales' unsolicited kiss of Jenni Hermoso after Spain's 2023 Women's World Cup victory. Rubiales resigned as RFEF president and UEFA vice president after the incident, and he has been banned from football-related activities for three years by FIFA.



Ancelotti reflects on Real Madrid's Intercontinental Cup triumph



Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti expressed satisfaction after his team clinched the 2024 FIFA Intercontinental Cup title with a 3-0 win over Pachuca. Ancelotti praised his players for executing the tactics they had prepared for and was particularly pleased with the attacking quality of stars like Kylian Mbappé, Rodrygo, and Vinícius Jr., who scored in the final. The victory capped off a remarkable year for the club, who secured five trophies in 2024. Ancelotti also joked about his growing legacy at Real Madrid, humorously speculating about a potential statue. Vinícius Jr. was named Player of the Tournament, and Valverde won the adidas Silver Ball, further cementing their individual and team successes.

Pakistan to participate in Kho Kho World Cup 2025, will face India in opening match

The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) has confirmed that Pakistan will take part in the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup in 2025, with the first match against India scheduled for January 13, 2025. Organisers have assured there will be no visa issues, allowing Pakistan's team to travel for the tournament, which will take place in New Delhi from January 13 to

19. Alongside this announcement, Bollywood superstar Salman Khan has been appointed as the tournament's brand ambassador. He expressed his excitement for the event, highlighting Kho Kho's unique qualities and its growing global popularity. The tournament will feature 21 men's and 20 women's teams, bringing together athletes from around the world to celebrate the sport.



Mercedes appoint Bottas as reserve driver for 2025 season



Mercedes AMG Petronas has announced that Valtteri Bottas will return to the team as a reserve driver for the 2025 season. The Finnish driver had previously competed for Mercedes from 2017 to 2021, securing 10 career wins and multiple pole positions. After a less successful stint with Sauber, Bottas is eager to contribute to Mercedes' championship aspirations in his new role. His responsibilities will include attending most Grand Prix events and supporting race drivers George Russell and Kimi Antonelli. Bottas expressed his excitement about returning to a team where he achieved significant success and looks forward to bringing his experience to the reserve driver role.

India to host World Boxing Cup Final and Congress in November 2025

India will host the 2025 World Boxing Cup Final and World Boxing Congress in November 2025. The events will showcase top global boxers and discuss the sport's future. This achievement highlights India's growing prominence in the global boxing community and will strengthen its position as a hub for international sporting events.



Laura Wolvaardt reprimanded for breach of ICC Code of Conduct

South Africa's captain, Laura Wolvaardt, has been reprimanded for a Level 1 breach of the ICC Code of Conduct after showing dissent at an umpire's decision during a Test match against England. As a result of the offence, one demerit point has been added to Wolvaardt's disciplinary record. This is her first offence in a 24-month period.

Diljit Dosanjh surpasses Shah Rukh Khan to top UK's Top Asian Celebrity list



Diljit Dosanjh has secured the top spot on the UK's Top 50 Asian Celebrities list, surpassing Shah Rukh Khan and Allu Arjun. The Punjabi singer-actor celebrated this achievement in true style, sharing his joy through his music on Instagram. Reposting an article about the recognition, he added his popular track "Born To Shine" and his latest song "Don" to express his emotions. Dosanjh's success is attributed to his chart-topping music, successful films, international collaborations, and the success of his Dil-Luminati Tour. The 2024 edition of the list, published by Eastern Eye, also features Charli XCX, Allu Arjun, Priyanka Chopra, and Arijit Singh. Currently, Diljit is performing across India, with the tour concluding in Guwahati on December 29.

Bachchan and Khan families attend Aaradhya and AbRam's joint performance



Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, along with their families, attended a school event in Mumbai to watch their children, Aaradhya Bachchan and AbRam Khan, perform together. The Christmas-themed performance by the young stars stole the spotlight. Celebrities like Kareena Kapoor, Shahid Kapoor, and Karan Johar also cheered for the children. Amid recent rumors about their parents, Aaradhya and AbRam's performance brought joy to the star-studded audience, with both families recording and capturing moments of their children's acts.

Diddy's bail request under review in sex trafficking case

Sean "Diddy" Combs may be granted bail next week after being jailed since September on sex trafficking charges. The judge is expected to rule on his bail request following submissions from both the defense and prosecution. Prosecutors have warned that Combs poses a risk of obstruction, citing previous allegations of abuse and misconduct, as well as his attempts to disrupt the case from behind bars.



Combs' lawyers had proposed \$50 million bail for house arrest with surveillance, but two judges previously rejected bail, citing concerns about public safety. Meanwhile, prosecutors argue that no conditions can mitigate the risk Combs

poses, citing his alleged interference with witnesses and jury tampering. The allegations against Combs include physical and sexual abuse over several

years, with new evidence potentially leading to more charges. Combs is facing additional legal challenges as his trial preparation continues.

Guneet Monga Kapoor's 'Anuja' shortlisted for Best Live Action Short Film at Oscars



Guneet Monga Kapoor's film Anuja has been shortlisted for Best Live Action Short Film at the Oscars. The film tells the story of a young girl, Anuja, working in a garment factory in New Delhi and facing a life-changing decision when offered a

chance to attend an elite school. Monga's earlier productions, Period. End of Sentence and The Elephant Whisperers, both won Oscars in the past. Monga expressed her pride in the film's recognition, highlighting its powerful message about hope, resilience, and child labor.

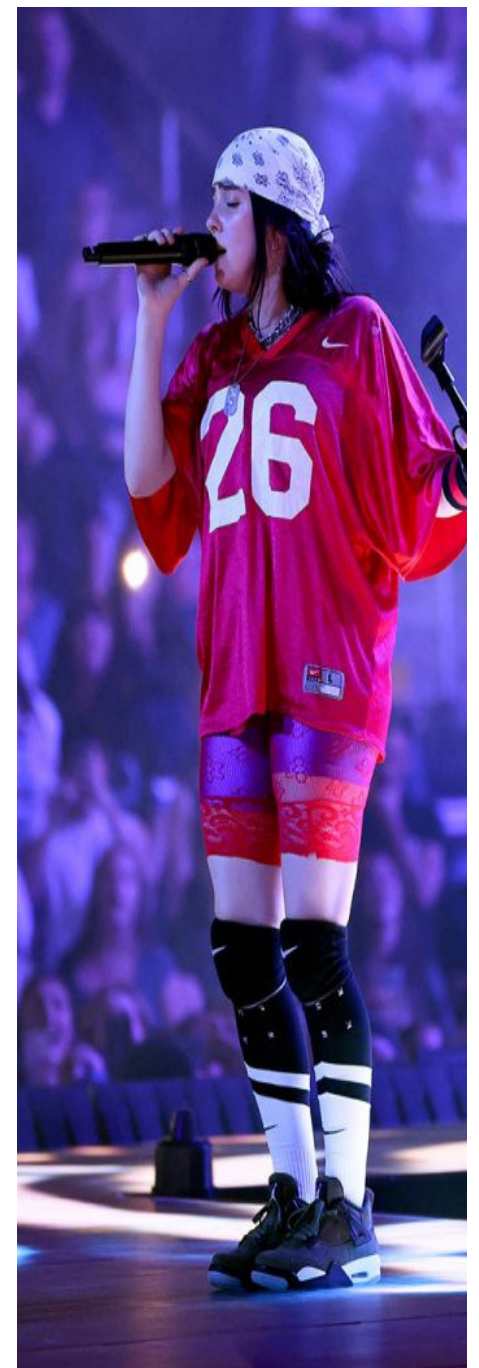
Ed Sheeran adds a second show in Bengaluru for his record-breaking India tour

Ed Sheeran has announced an additional show in Bengaluru for his + - = + x Tour, now set for February 8 and 9, 2025. The overwhelming demand for tickets led to the addition of this second performance in the city. The India leg of Sheeran's tour

will also visit Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Shillong, and Delhi. Fans can expect Sheeran's signature acoustic performances and hits like "Shape of You" and "Thinking Out Loud." BookMyShow is the exclusive ticketing partner for the event, with a focus on preventing unauthorized reselling.



Billie Eilish shares why hearing fans sing 'The Greatest' at concerts means so much



Billie Eilish has revealed the emotional significance of hearing fans sing her song "The Greatest" during concerts. In an interview with Apple Music, she described the special feeling of hearing thousands of fans sing along to the track from her 2024 album Hit Me Hard and Soft. Eilish reflected on how the song holds personal meaning for her, and hearing the crowd sing it back to her was a powerful reminder of the impact her music has on her audience. The song was first performed live in June on The Stephen Colbert Show.

Tom Cruise awarded US Navy's highest civilian honor



Tom Cruise has received the US Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award for his contributions to military awareness through his film work, particularly *Top Gun* and its sequel, *Top Gun: Maverick*. The award was presented by US Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro at a ceremony in Surrey, UK. Cruise expressed gratitude for the honor, reflecting on his belief that leadership is about serving others. His portrayal of Maverick in *Top Gun* helped boost military enlistments and revitalized interest in the Navy. The award has also been presented to figures like Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. Cruise, who has been a vocal supporter of military personnel, has spent decades using his platform to raise awareness about the sacrifices made by service members. This prestigious honor recognizes his unwavering support for the armed forces, both on and off-screen.

Bryan Adams expresses love for Indian food during his tour



Canadian music icon Bryan Adams, currently on his *So Happy It Hurts* Tour in India, has shared his fondness for Indian cuisine. As his seven-city tour wraps up in Goa, Adams mentioned his excitement to enjoy dishes like rajma chawal, gol gappas, and masala dosa. The musician, known for hits like "Summer of '69" and "(Everything I Do) I Do It for You," has sold over 100 million records worldwide. He also discussed his deep connection to India and its vibrant culture, noting the significance of his vegan food choices while touring. Adams, who has visited India several times, expressed how much he enjoys the warmth and hospitality of the people, adding that his love for the country's food is just one of the many reasons he feels at home there. As he finishes his tour, Adams reflected on the profound impact his Indian fans have had on his career.

Ryan Reynolds honored with the Order of Canada

Ryan Reynolds has been appointed to the Order of Canada, the nation's highest civilian distinction. The 48-year-old actor expressed his pride and emotion after receiving the honor, acknowledging the communities that shaped him.

Reynolds, known for his roles in

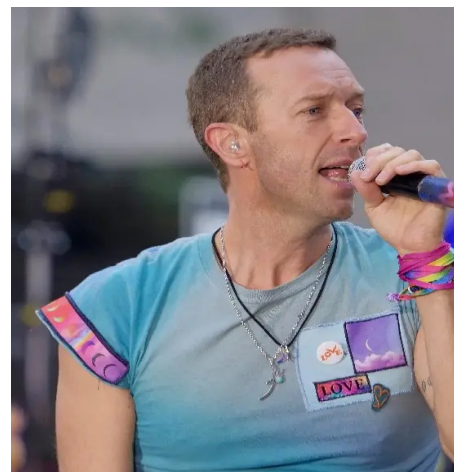
Deadpool and *The Proposal*, was recognized not only for his acting but also for his philanthropy, supporting causes like Water First Education and Covenant House Vancouver. He promised to "use my powers for good" and continue contributing to Canadian society. The Order of Canada celebrates individuals making extraordinary contributions to the nation. In addition to his notable acting

career, Reynolds has made significant efforts to raise awareness for important social causes. His appointment is a recognition of his continued dedication to giving back to his country and the world. Despite living in New York with his wife Blake Lively and their children, Reynolds remains deeply connected to his Canadian roots and is proud to represent his country on the global stage.



Chris Martin opens up about empty nest syndrome

Coldplay's lead singer, Chris Martin, recently discussed the emotional experience of becoming an empty nester as both of his children, Apple and Moses, have left for college. Reflecting on the changes at home, Martin described the feeling as "sad," though he acknowledged it as a natural part of life and emphasized the importance of their independence. Martin, known for his humor, shared that he maintains a close relationship with his children and enjoys playful moments, such as joking about his son in public to embarrass him. He also expressed his love and support for his daughter ahead of her debutante ball, admitting he never imagined attending such an event but did so out of deep love for her. Despite



the quiet home, Martin's bond with his children remains strong, and he continues to celebrate their milestones.

Kareena Kapoor plays perfect host at Taimur's birthday celebration



Kareena Kapoor Khan proved to be the perfect host and guardian at her son Taimur Ali Khan's eighth birthday party. The actress made sure the event was an enjoyable experience for the children, while also taking responsibility for their safety. In a video circulating online, Kareena can be seen coordinating the post-party arrangements, asking each child, "You have a car, right?" to ensure they were safely sent home after the celebration.

On Friday, Kareena and her husband Saif Ali Khan hosted a vibrant sports-themed birthday bash for Taimur. Several videos from the event surfaced on social media, showing Kareena and Saif having fun with Taimur and his friends. In one clip, the couple is seen at a lively playground with children, while Yash Johar chats with Kareena and little Jeh happily plays with his trophy.

Karan Johar shares his resolution for 2025

Filmmaker Karan Johar has revealed his resolution for 2025, encouraging his fans to focus on personal growth. He shared the message "Evolution should be your only resolution" on his Instagram stories. Johar, who is known for his cryptic posts, has recently shared other thought-provoking messages, such as reflecting on ego in relationships and the importance of surrounding oneself with good people. He also shared his philosophical thoughts on avoiding difficult conversations. On the work front, Johar celebrated the 23rd anniversary of *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, calling it a "pinch-me moment" and thanking fans for their continued love. He is also gearing up for the release of his upcoming film *Chand Mera Dil*, set for 2025.





Blood drive at National India Hub on January 11: Donate, save lives, and win big!

● By: Dr Avi Verma

The Indo-American community is invited to participate in a blood drive that promises to make a meaningful difference in the lives of many. Organized by National India Hub and co-sponsored by State Representative Michelle Mussman, this event is an opportunity for individuals to contribute to saving lives while strengthening bonds within the community.

Event Details

Date: Saturday, January 11, 2025

Time: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Location: National India Hub, 930

National Pkwy, Schaumburg, IL

Hosted by: National India Hub

Co-Sponsored by: State Representative Michelle Mussman

How to Participate

To schedule an appointment, call 877.258.4825 or visit vitalant.org. Use Group Code: 100561374 to locate the event.

Prepare for Your Donation

- ▶ Stay well-hydrated.
- ▶ Eat a healthy meal before donating.
- ▶ Bring valid photo identification.

Exciting Opportunity

All donors will automatically be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three \$10,000 gift cards, redeemable via email.

Why Donate Blood?

Blood donations save lives every day, helping accident victims, cancer patients, and those undergoing critical surgeries. By taking part in this drive, you can help ensure that hospitals and patients have the blood supplies they need.

For any eligibility-related questions, contact 877.258.4825.

Make a positive impact in the new year—donate blood and be a hero to someone in need!

IndoUS Tribune encourages readers to spread the word and support this noble cause.



Social Security Fairness Act: What it means for Indian-origin seniors in the U.S.

● By: Dr Avi Verma

As the Senate moves toward a final vote on the Social Security Fairness Act, the potential impact on seniors of Indian origin working or retired in public sector jobs has drawn significant attention. The proposed legislation seeks to repeal provisions that have long reduced Social Security benefits for individuals with public sector pensions.

This measure could affect approximately 25,000 seniors of Indian origin in the U.S., many of whom have worked in public education, healthcare, and government roles where Social Security taxes were not paid.

Key Provisions of the Bill

The bipartisan proposal aims to eliminate two controversial rules:

Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP): Reduces Social Security benefits for individuals with pensions from jobs not covered by Social Security taxes.

Government Pension Offset (GPO): Cuts benefits for spouses, widows, and widowers who also receive government pensions.

These provisions have disproportionately impacted immigrant communities, including Indian-origin retirees who have contributed to public service roles but find their Social Security benefits significantly reduced or eliminated.

Voices of Opposition and Support

While the bill enjoys bipartisan support, it faces criticism over its financial implications. Sen.

Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) raised concerns about the projected \$196 billion cost over the next decade and its impact on the already strained Social Security trust fund.

“We are on the verge of passing an unfunded \$200 billion package for a program that could face insolvency within the next 10 years,” Tillis argued.

However, proponents of the bill, including advocacy groups for immigrant seniors, emphasize its fairness and necessity. They argue that the WEP and GPO provisions unfairly penalize retirees who worked in public service and rely on these benefits for financial stability.

Impact on Indian-Origin Seniors

For many Indian-origin seniors, the repeal of WEP and GPO could mean substantial increases in their monthly income.

Retired Teachers and Public Health Workers

A significant number of Indian-origin seniors served as educators or healthcare professionals in roles where Social Security taxes were not paid.

Under current rules, their Social Security benefits are slashed, often leaving them with inadequate income in retirement.

Spouses and Widows: The GPO has drastically reduced survivor benefits,

leaving many widows and widowers in financial distress. If passed, the bill would provide these retirees with the full benefits they deserve, alleviating economic challenges for thousands of Indian-origin families.

A Test for Equity and Sustainability

The Social Security Fairness Act represents a test of the U.S. government’s commitment to equity in its social safety net while balancing long-term sustainability.

While critics highlight the financial strain of repealing these rules, supporters argue that the bill addresses an essential fairness issue, particularly for immigrant communities like the Indian diaspora.

The Senate is expected to hold a final vote on the bill in the coming days, offering hope to seniors of Indian origin and others impacted by WEP and GPO. If passed, this legislation could bring long-overdue relief to retirees who have dedicated their careers to public service.

Panic among Indian Americans over Trump's immigration policy: 18,000 Indians face deportation

By: Dr Avi Verma

The Indian American community is on edge as President-elect Donald Trump prepares to take office with a hardline stance on immigration. Nearly 18,000 undocumented Indians in the United States face the risk of deportation, according to data from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This alarming revelation has sent shockwaves through families and communities, many of whom are grappling with fear and uncertainty.

Key figures and concerns

India ranks 13th among 208 countries with undocumented immigrants in the U.S., with ICE identifying 17,940 Indians with final orders of removal. Many of these individuals come from high-migration states such as Punjab, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh, regions known for their significant diaspora populations.

In recent years, ICE has reported an average of 90,000 apprehensions annually of Indian nationals attempting to enter the U.S. illegally. These statistics underline the community's vulnerability amid Trump's push to reduce both legal and illegal immigration.

Legal hurdles and international challenges

For undocumented Indians, securing



legal status in the U.S. remains a major challenge. Many are caught in lengthy legal proceedings, with court hearings often scheduled years into the future. Complicating matters further, India is among 15 nations classified as "uncooperative" by ICE for delays in verifying citizenship and issuing travel documents for deportation.

India's status as an uncooperative nation—alongside countries like Pakistan, China, Iran, and Venezuela—means deportation efforts often face significant delays, adding to the uncertainty for those at risk.

Community and economic impact

The potential deportations have sparked widespread panic, with families fearing separation and disruption to their lives. For many Indian Americans, this situation strikes at the heart of a community that has long contributed to sectors such as technology, healthcare, and education in the U.S.

The economic repercussions could also be significant. Deporting skilled workers could create gaps in industries that heavily rely on Indian professionals, impacting businesses

and innovation.

Advocacy efforts in the community

Indian American advocacy groups and legal aid organizations are rallying to provide support. These efforts include raising awareness about individual rights, offering legal assistance, and engaging policymakers to address the concerns of those affected.

Community leaders are also urging individuals to review their legal status and seek assistance from trusted immigration attorneys. Organizations are calling for solidarity and cautioning against fraudulent schemes promising quick fixes to legal challenges.

Outlook amid uncertainty

While President-elect Trump has reaffirmed his commitment to strict immigration policies, experts have raised logistical and financial concerns about implementing mass deportations. Estimates suggest such an operation could cost the U.S. nearly a trillion dollars over the next decade.

For now, the Indian American community remains vigilant, navigating this period of uncertainty with resilience and hope. Advocacy and community support will be critical in ensuring that those affected are aware of their rights and options.

The high cost of truth: Tech whistleblowers who paid the ultimate price

The tragic death of Suchir Balaji has put a spotlight on the dangers faced by whistleblowers in the technology industry. A 26-year-old AI researcher and former OpenAI employee, Balaji exposed alleged copyright violations in the company's use of data to train its models, including ChatGPT. Found dead in his San Francisco apartment on November 26, 2024, his death was ruled a suicide. Balaji's allegations against one of the most prominent AI firms raised serious questions about ethics in tech innovation and the cost of speaking out.

Balaji's story is not an isolated incident. Other whistleblowers have also paid dearly for their courage:

Aaron Swartz: A visionary internet activist, Swartz fought for open access to information but faced aggressive legal action over the unauthorized download of academic papers. He tragically took his own life in 2013, sparking global debates about digital freedom.

Ian Murdock: The founder of Debian and a champion of open-source software, Murdock died under mysterious circumstances in 2015. His contributions to tech were immense, but his later years highlighted the immense pressures faced



by innovators who challenge norms.

John Barnett and Joshua Dean: Former Boeing employees, these whistleblowers exposed critical safety flaws in aircraft production. Their revelations, however, were followed by untimely deaths,

leading to speculation about the risks whistleblowers face when targeting corporate giants.

These tragic stories reveal a common thread: the immense personal toll faced by individuals who prioritize truth over

silence. While their courage inspires change, it also calls for systemic reforms to protect those who dare to hold powerful corporations accountable. Their sacrifices are a sobering reminder of the work still needed to create a more ethical and transparent tech world.

Hindu community in Chicago works to create first-ever culturally specific funeral facility



By: Vandana Jhingan

A recent fundraising event in Chicago for Mokshdham was met with overwhelming success, bringing together community leaders, supporters, and families to raise awareness and resources for a groundbreaking project. The event highlighted the collective determination of Chicago's Hindu community to create the first Hindu-oriented funeral home and crematorium in the United States.

Mokshdham, a nonprofit organization, is spearheading the initiative to provide a culturally respectful and affordable option for Hindu families to honor their loved ones. The organization's mission addresses the rising demand for cremation services, which have grown by 30% in recent years, particularly

among the over 250,000 Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists living in the Chicago metro area.

Dr. Bharat Barai and Dr. Rashmi Patel, with the support of dedicated community members, are leading the effort to establish this facility. The project will offer funeral services aligned with Hindu rituals, including the sacred Antim Agni-Sanskar, a vital tradition currently hindered by the lack of appropriate facilities and exorbitant costs. Mokshdham's vision includes an affordable cremation facility integrated with a Shiva Temple, providing families with a dedicated space to perform last rites while preserving cultural and spiritual practices.

The center will also cater to broader community needs, offering resources for religious ceremonies and social services. Zoning approval and land

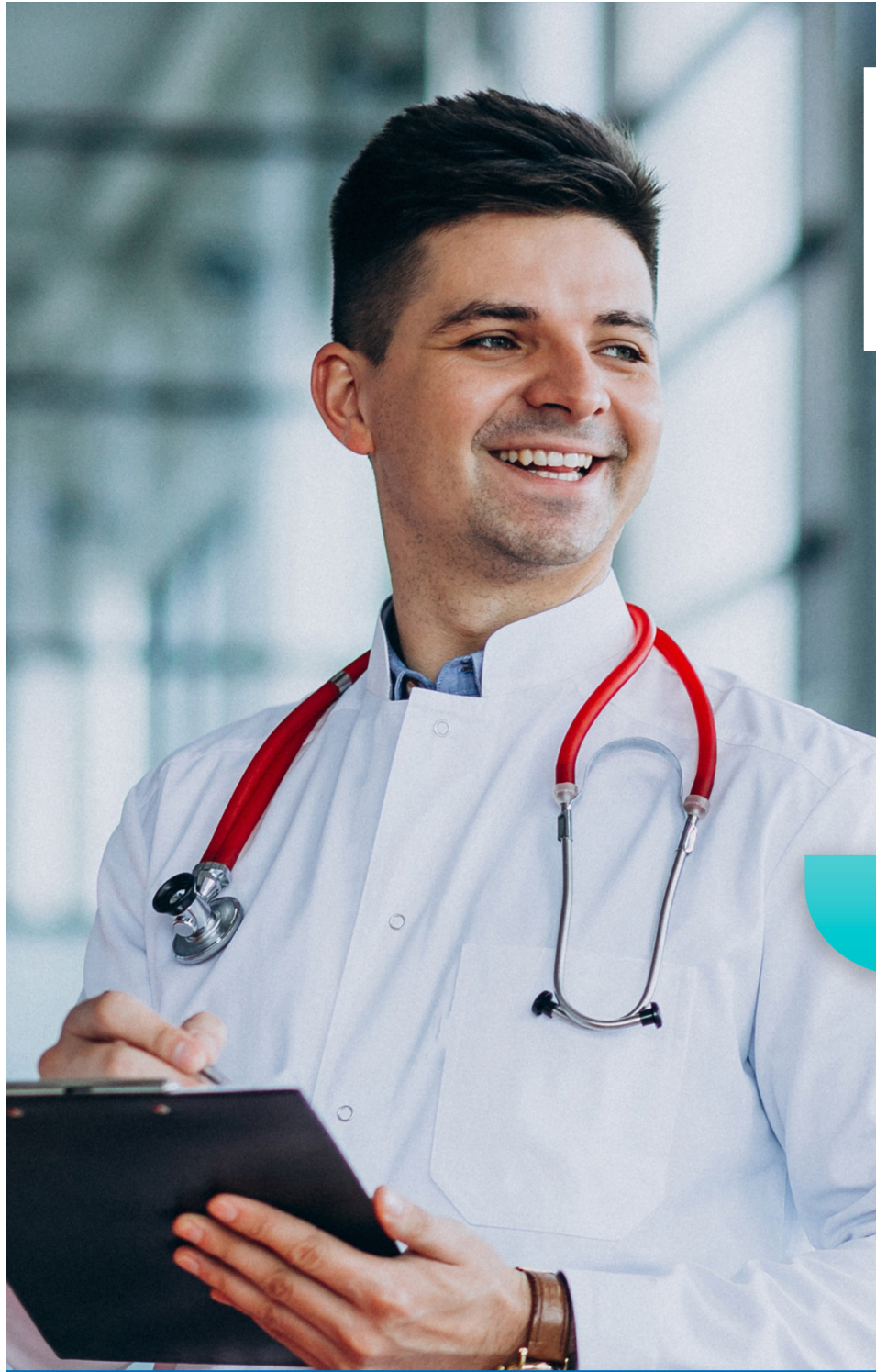


acquisition are already underway, with the total cost of the project estimated at \$4.9 million. Contributions are tax-deductible, and organizers are actively seeking donations to make this vision a reality. "This project will ensure that Hindu families in the U.S. can perform their last rites with dignity and respect," said Dr. Patel.

The recent fundraiser demonstrated the community's strong commitment

to supporting the project, with many expressing pride in creating a facility that fulfills the cultural and spiritual needs of Hindu families. Mokshdham aims to serve as a cornerstone for the community and a model for other regions. To support the initiative, community members are encouraged to contribute through donations, time, or services. Every effort brings this essential resource closer to fruition for Chicago's Hindu community.






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चार धाम यात्रा का दूसरा पड़ाव: जगन्नाथ पुरी



चार धाम यात्रा के दूसरे पड़ाव में श्रद्धालु ओडिशा के पुरी स्थित भगवान जगन्नाथ मंदिर पहुंचते हैं। यह स्थान न केवल हिंदू धर्म के सबसे पवित्र तीर्थों में से एक है, बल्कि यहां की अनोखी परंपराएं और अधूरी मूर्तियों की पौराणिक कथाएं इसे विशेष बनाती हैं।

यह लेख भगवान जगन्नाथ, बलभद्र, और सुभद्रा की मूर्तियों के रहस्यमयी इतिहास और मंदिर की दिव्यता पर प्रकाश डालता है।

जगन्नाथ पुरी और अधूरी मूर्तियों के पीछे की रोचक कथा

पुरी स्थित भगवान जगन्नाथ का मंदिर अपनी अनूठी परंपराओं और अधूरी मूर्तियों के कारण विश्वभर में प्रसिद्ध है। हर साल यहां आयोजित होने वाली रथ यात्रा में हजारों श्रद्धालु हिस्सा लेते हैं। आइए जानते हैं भगवान जगन्नाथ, बलभद्र और सुभद्रा की अधूरी मूर्तियों के पीछे छिपी पौराणिक कथा।

अधूरी मूर्तियों का रहस्य

पुरी के मंदिर की मूर्तियां अन्य मंदिरों की मूर्तियों से भिन्न हैं। भगवान जगन्नाथ, उनके भाई बलभद्र और बहन सुभद्रा की मूर्तियां बिना गर्दन, कान और हाथ-पैर के अधूरी लगती हैं। यह विशेषता एक पौराणिक कथा से जुड़ी हुई है।

राजा इंद्रद्युम्न की तपस्या

सत्ययुग में राजा इंद्रद्युम्न भगवान विष्णु के परम भक्त थे और उनके लिए एक भव्य मंदिर बनवाना चाहते थे। लेकिन वे यह नहीं जानते थे कि मूर्तियां कैसी बनें। उन्होंने इस सवाल का उत्तर पाने के लिए तपस्या की। उनकी तपस्या से प्रसन्न होकर भगवान ब्रह्मा ने राजा को भगवान विष्णु की कृपा से मूर्तियों के निर्माण का तरीका जानने का निर्देश दिया।

नीम की लकड़ी और अनोखा शिल्पकार

राजा को सपना आया कि उन्हें बैकमुखाना नामक स्थान पर नीम की एक लकड़ी मिलेगी, जिससे मूर्तियां



बनेंगी। राजा ने लकड़ी ढूंढ तो ली, लेकिन कोई भी शिल्पकार इसे काटकर मूर्ति का रूप नहीं दे पाया। तभी भगवान विश्वकर्मा एक वृद्ध कलाकार अनंता

महाराणा के रूप में आए और मूर्तियां बनाने का प्रस्ताव रखा। उन्होंने शर्त रखी कि जब तक वे खुद अनुमति न दें, कोई भी उनके कार्यक्षेत्र में प्रवेश नहीं करेगा।

अधूरी मूर्तियों की स्वीकार्यता

महीनों के इंतजार के बाद राजा से रहा नहीं गया और उन्होंने कार्यक्षेत्र का दरवाजा खोल दिया। अंदर उन्हें अधूरी मूर्तियां मिलीं और कलाकार गायब थे। राजा ने भगवान ब्रह्मा से मार्गदर्शन मांगा। ब्रह्मा ने बताया कि मूर्तियां अधूरी नहीं, बल्कि ईश्वर की इच्छा का प्रतीक हैं। ब्रह्मा ने राजा को आश्वासन दिया कि भगवान विष्णु स्वयं इन मूर्तियों में वास करेंगे।

पुरी मंदिर की महिमा

पुरी का जगन्नाथ मंदिर 12वीं शताब्दी में बना था। यहां की मूर्तियां लकड़ी से बनी होती हैं और कुछ वर्षों बाद इन्हें बदल दिया जाता है। रथ यात्रा के दौरान भगवान जगन्नाथ, बलभद्र और सुभद्रा की मूर्तियां तीन विशाल रथों में स्थापित की जाती हैं, जिन्हें सैकड़ों भक्त खींचते हैं। यह उत्सव पूरी दुनिया में प्रसिद्ध है और हिंदू आस्था का अद्भुत उदाहरण है।

पुरी मंदिर और रथ यात्रा भगवान विष्णु के प्रति अटूट भक्ति और मानवता के संदेश का प्रतीक हैं। अधूरी मूर्तियां दशाती हैं कि ईश्वर का रूप किसी भी सीमा में बंधा हुआ नहीं है।



Special on Gita Jayanti

The powerful support of life's challenges - The message of the Gita

The conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna during a difficult moment of battle in the Mahabharata era is known as the Bhagavad Gita in Hinduism. Although the Srimad Bhagavad Gita is considered a Hindu religious text, it provides guidance for the welfare of all humanity and a suitable solution to every question related to life. This message is not only for Hindus but for all of humanity. Its message for humanity is so powerful that this text has been translated into more than 75 languages worldwide. Originally, this wonderful text was spoken in verse form in the Sanskrit language. There are seven hundred verses in this text. Since Sanskrit is no longer the language of the common man, I have tried to write a simple Hindi translation of these verses in the form of couplets.

On the auspicious occasion of Gita Jayanti, I am very happy to present this presentation to you all, especially for Hindi-speaking people, and particularly for the Indian community living abroad. The name of my book is:

“Srimad Bhagavad Gita as Transliterated Complete Couplet Edition”

This book is published by Madhusaala Prakashan Pvt Ltd, Bharatpur, Rajasthan and is available on Amazon (Amazon.in). This is the first and unique book of its kind in India written in the Doha style. It will be easy for all of you to read and, due to the simple language, the meaning will also be easy to understand.

How the most popular verses of the Gita have been transformed into couplets can be seen in the examples given below. I hope this humble effort of mine will make your Gita Jayanti even more meaningful. Here are some examples:

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil, for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age. Couplet transformation For the salvation of the devotees, for the destruction of the wicked, I am born in every age, establishing righteous dharma.

You have a right only to action, but never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction. Couplet transformation Only to actions are you entitled, never to their fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction. Do not consider yourself the cause of the results of your actions, nor be attached to not doing them.

The special attraction of this book is not only the presentation of the meaning of



the Sanskrit verses of the Sri Gita in the true form of couplets, but also giving the essence of all the chapters in one couplet and dealing with the nine different mental states of a person - anger, ego, lust, greed, delusion, fear, despair, depression, and envy, as well as nine adverse mental states - pain caused by discrimination, guilt, death of a loved one, uncontrolled mind, laziness, confusion, forgiveness, loneliness, and the search for peace. Below are some examples so that every person can find a meaningful solution to the problems they face in their life path.

In this context, some verses related to the following disorders are noteworthy.

Anger: Chapter 2, verse 63 in couplet form

When anger arises, then delusion follows, and from delusion, memory is corrupted. When memory is corrupted, intelligence is automatically destroyed. Where intelligence is destroyed, the behavior of human beings becomes corrupt, understand all kinds.

Ego: Chapter 3, verse 27 in couplet form Possessed by ego, this living being is deluded, and calls itself the doer of all actions. Whereas all the actions of the world are subject to the natural qualities, this prakriti, the three-natured nature, is involved in the creation of the world.

Lust and Desire: Chapter 3, verses 39, 40 in couplet form Covered by knowledge-filled consciousness, lust is the enemy of the living being in the world, burning like fire, the mind is never satisfied. The senses, mind, and intellect are the dwelling place of lust, deluding the living being, covering the real knowledge.

Greed: Chapter 3, verse 17 in couplet form True knowledge is born only from sattva guna, greed arises from rajo guna, and tamas and delusion are ignorance.

Delusion: Chapter 16, verse 16 in couplet form Confused and agitated mind, bound in the net of delusion, attached to the enjoyment of the senses, falls into the hellish trap.

Fear: Chapter 4, verse 10 in couplet form Those who are free from anger, attachment, and fear, and are completely absorbed in me, become my devotees. Through the knowledge-form of tapasya, they become pure and my devotees, and attain my form, remaining absorbed in me.

Despair: Chapter 9, verse 34 in couplet form Always keep your mind meditating on me, offer salutations and worship, awaken devotion in your mind. Be completely absorbed and filled with me, you will certainly attain me in this way.

Depression: Chapter 2, verse 14 in couplet form Listen, O Bharata, happiness, sorrow, decay, and rise, are like cold and heat, similar to coming and going. They arise from the senses, understand this, O Arjuna, and bear these feelings with a steady mind, like a wise man.

Envy: Chapter 4, verse 22 in couplet form Be satisfied with whatever you get, be free from duality, be devoid of duality and envy, and be self-satisfied. Keep your mind the same in success and failure, while being engaged in action, do not be bound by the three threads.

Similarly, for adverse mental states, appropriate instructions have been given as follows:

Pain caused by discrimination: Chapter 9, verse 29 in couplet form I reside in all beings, I am always the same, I have no enemy or beloved, truly know this. But whoever loves me and meditates on me, I become in them and they become in me.

Guilt: Chapter 4, verse 36 in couplet form Let the greatest sinner be known

as a sinner, even he will be given divine knowledge and will cross over birth.

Death of a loved one: Chapter 2, verse 27 in couplet form Whoever is born here, death is always certain, rebirth happens again, so why lose yourself? Perform your duty, which is inevitable, and why should you unnecessarily carry sorrow?

Uncontrolled mind: Chapter 6, verse 35 in couplet form It is indeed very difficult to keep the mind pure, but it is easy with the practice of detachment.

Laziness: Chapter 5, verse 6 in couplet form No one can be happy by abandoning all actions, but by doing the devotion of Bhagavan, one attains the supreme essence.

Confusion/Forgetfulness: Chapter 5, verse 25 in couplet form Those who remain free from duality and doubt, and are absorbed in the Self, keep their minds pure. Being free from sin and always engaged in the welfare of living beings, they attain the state of complete nirvana.

Forgiveness: Chapter 16, verse 3 in couplet form Patience, forgiveness, pure mind, free from hatred, no desire for honor, these are the qualities of Arjuna, divine and great, those who possess them forever are known as gods.

Loneliness: Chapter 13, verse 16 in couplet form I reside in all beings, both external and internal, although they are very far away, yet they are close. They are beyond perception and sight, those subtle qualities, because they are very subtle, keep the unique form.

Search for peace: Chapter 5, verse 12 in couplet form He who is a pure and steady devotee attains perfect peace, he donates all the fruits of his actions to me. But those who are not attached to Bhagavan, filled with the desire for the fruits of their own labor, become bound unknowingly.

Thus, it is clear that the Srimad Bhagavad Gita provides comprehensive guidance for a happy, contented, and peaceful life at every level of human life, by adopting which every individual can make life successful in the world. If my effort has benefited even one person, I will consider my life blessed.



By: Ganga Prasad Yadav 'Aatrey'

Exposing the Swami Premanand cult: A spiritual empire built on favoritism, deception, and exploitation

Swami Premanand Ji Maharaj, a self-proclaimed spiritual leader with a massive online following, has positioned himself as a beacon of equality, devotion, and enlightenment. His ashram, which claims to offer solace and spiritual guidance, draws thousands of devotees eager to experience his teachings. However, behind the polished image lies a disturbing reality of favoritism, exploitation, and a system that prioritizes celebrity status over spiritual equality. IndoUS Tribune's investigation into the operations of the ashram exposes a culture of inefficiency and elitism that starkly contradicts the very values Swami Premanand preaches.

The Elusive Scheduling Process

Our journey began with multiple attempts to schedule a meeting with Swami Premanand Ji. We followed the official process, submitting numerous emails over several weeks, but received no response. Eventually, with the help of insiders, we secured a token for an EKANTIC session. However, this wasn't without its hurdles. Devotees are required to arrive at the ashram as early as 4:00 AM to stand in line for limited tokens. The atmosphere was one of chaos and exhaustion as attendees were shuffled through a system that felt less spiritual and more bureaucratic.

EKANTIC: A Show of Favoritism

The EKANTIC session, meant to be a space for personal spiritual guidance, turned into a glaring display of favoritism. Devotees must submit their questions in advance, and only five or six are selected for the session. Our question was chosen as the second to be addressed. Yet, after answering the first question, the session took an unexpected turn. A family, accompanied by five or six individuals, was granted an exclusive audience with the Swami. The rest of the attendees were hurriedly ushered out, despite hours of waiting. This family was even presented with special saropas (scarves of honor), marking them as recipients of distinct privilege. When questioned about the preferential treatment, staff members



responded aggressively. One retorted, "Do you even know who those people were?" Another compared the process to seeking an audience with high-ranking officials, stating: "Do you think you can just go meet the IG or DGP like that? You have to go through the process." These comments, delivered with hostility, were disheartening for those seeking a spiritual connection.

A Day Wasted in Bureaucracy

The entire process consumed four plus hours, during which attendees were shuffled through four separate staging areas before being allowed into the EKANTIC session. The sense of regimentation was palpable, and the lack of transparency about how questions and audiences were prioritized left many attendees frustrated. At the end of the session, when concerns were raised about the inequitable treatment, staff members dismissed them outright. Some even suggested that dissatisfied attendees could

wait another hour and a half outside in the line to ask their questions directly to a junior Swami. Such dismissive and combative responses from staff starkly contrasted with the ethos of compassion and equality Swami Premanand Ji Maharaj preaches.

A Militarized Atmosphere

The ashram's atmosphere felt more like a military camp than a spiritual sanctuary. Attendees were expected to follow strict instructions without question and were denied the freedom to move or seek clarity on the process. This rigid structure and aggressive enforcement by staff left many feeling alienated rather than spiritually uplifted.

A Call for Accountability, Fairness, and Transparency

Swami Premanand Ji Maharaj's teachings are undeniably influential, but the institutional failures at his ashram must

be confronted. The ashram's practices—marked by favoritism, inefficiency, staff hostility, and a militaristic atmosphere—are incompatible with the values of equality, compassion, and spiritual growth that the Swami espouses. This gap between the teachings and the practices undermines the credibility of the institution and the authenticity of its spiritual mission.

In addition to the organizational issues, the ashram imposes strict control over its attendees, prohibiting them from taking pictures and even confiscating their phones. This policy contrasts sharply with the Swami's team of 3-4 cameramen, who are continuously taking photos and videos for the sole purpose of promoting the Swami's brand on social media. Another group of 5-6 staff members is also tasked with circulating these videos, carefully curating content for further promotional purposes. This manipulation of media, under the guise of spiritual activities, raises significant ethical concerns about the ashram's priorities and its true purpose.

It is clear that substantial reforms are needed. The ashram must eliminate its VIP culture, streamline its processes to prioritize accessibility and transparency, and ensure that staff members embody the principles of humility and respect. Additionally, there must be greater fairness in media representation, allowing for the participation of all attendees in a more open and genuine manner, rather than using them as mere props for promotional content. Only through such changes can the ashram begin to truly reflect the inclusive, compassionate spirituality that Swami Premanand Ji preaches. Until these issues are addressed, the ashram will continue to fail its devotees, leaving them disillusioned and spiritually alienated.



Essential beauty products to keep your skin glowing all winter long

Winter brings colder temperatures, low humidity, and indoor heating, all of which can leave your skin feeling dry, dull, and irritated. To maintain a healthy and radiant complexion, it's essential to adjust your beauty routine to meet the unique demands of the season. Here are some must-have beauty products that can help you keep your skin nourished and protected during the winter months.

▶ Moisturizing creams & lotions

As the temperature drops, the skin's natural moisture barrier can weaken, leading to dehydration and dryness. During winter, it's crucial to switch to a richer, more emollient moisturizer to replenish lost moisture and prevent your skin from feeling tight or flaky.

Body creams: Rich body creams formulated with ingredients like shea butter, cocoa butter, or ceramides are excellent for restoring moisture and keeping your skin smooth.

Facial moisturizers: Look for thicker, more hydrating facial moisturizers with ingredients like hyaluronic acid, glycerin, or squalane to keep your skin hydrated throughout the day.

▶ Hydrating serums

Serums provide an extra layer of hydration and can help address specific skin concerns. Look for serums with hydrating ingredients like hyaluronic acid to help your skin retain moisture. Vitamin C serums are also great for combating winter dullness, brightening your complexion, and providing antioxidant protection.

▶ Lip balms & scrubs

Chapped lips are a common winter problem. A nourishing lip balm is essential for protecting and moisturizing



the delicate skin on your lips. For extra smoothness, incorporate a lip scrub into your routine a few times a week to exfoliate dry, flaky skin and prevent chapping.

▶ Rich hand creams

Your hands are often the first to show signs of dryness in winter. To keep them soft and hydrated, use a rich hand cream formulated with nourishing oils or butters. Applying hand cream frequently, especially after washing your hands, can help prevent cracked, rough skin.

▶ Face oils

If your skin tends to get especially dry in winter, adding a nourishing face oil to your routine can make a noticeable difference. Face oils help to lock in moisture, provide extra nourishment,

and create a protective barrier against the harsh elements.

▶ Winter sunscreen

It's easy to forget about sunscreen when it's cold and gloomy outside, but UV rays can still damage your skin in winter. A broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher is essential for daily protection, even on overcast days. For added hydration, choose a sunscreen with moisturizing properties to keep your skin smooth and protected.

▶ Winter hair care products

Cold air, wind, and indoor heating can also cause hair to become dry, frizzy, and prone to breakage. To keep your hair nourished, switch to moisturizing shampoos and conditioners that hydrate and protect your strands. Deep

conditioning treatments or hair masks can provide extra moisture and strength to your hair.

▶ Winter-proof makeup

Winter weather can leave your skin looking dull and dehydrated, so it's a good idea to switch up your makeup routine for a more radiant look. Look for foundations and primers that offer hydration, as well as highlighters or setting sprays that give your skin a dewy, glowing finish.

▶ Heated beauty tools

To combat the harsh effects of winter on your skin, a heated beauty tool like a facial roller or massager can be a game-changer. These tools stimulate circulation, reduce puffiness, and promote lymphatic drainage, helping to keep your skin looking fresh and rejuvenated.

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Personal finance insights: Market sentiments, investment strategies & economic trends

● Dr. K C Gupta, YBB Personal Finance

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SENTIMENTS

AAII Bull-Bear Spread +11.6% (above average)

\$NYA50R, NYSE %Above 50-dMA 50.76% (positive, barely)

\$SPXA50R, SP500 %Above 50-dMA 47.60% (negative)

Delta MSI 60.2%% (positive, lagging)

ICI Fund Allocations (Cumulative)

OEFs & ETFs: Stocks 61.62%, Hybrids 4.36%, Bonds 17.84%, M-Mkt 17.17%

INTEREST RATES

CME FedWatch

Cycle peak 5.25-5.50%

Current 4.50-4.75%

FOMC 12/18/24+ cut

FOMC 1/29/25+ hold

Treasury

T-Bills 3-mo yield 4.34%, 1-yr 4.24%; T-Notes 2-yr 4.25%, 5-yr 4.25%, 10-yr 4.40%; T-Bonds 30-yr 4.61%; (all 4.xx%; near flat yield-curve)

TIPS/Real yields 5-yr 1.85%, 10-yr 2.07%, 30-yr 2.33%; (normal upslope)

FRNs Index 4.347%

US Savings I-Bonds rate from 11/1/24 - 4/30/25 is 3.11%; the fixed rate is 1.20%, the semiannual inflation is 0.9506%.

For current banking rates, see www.depositaccounts.com/

Stable-Value (SV) Rates, 12/1/24

TIAA Traditional Annuity (Accumulation) Rates

Restricted RC 5.50%, RA 5.25%

Flexible RCP 4.75%, SRA 4.50%, IRA-101110+ 4.75%

TSP G Fund 4.250% (previous



4.375%).

Due to publication lag, the data above are as of the Sunday preceding.

MARKETS

The US stock market is expected to do well through the yearend & into 2025. The good seasonality is from November 1 to April 30; it's a weak effect that doesn't always work, but it is likely to work this time.

Among the emerging markets (EMs), India has been an exception - it has done well & it's quite expensive. But the EMs overall have been cheap for years & they need market specific catalysts. China & India dominate the EM indexes.

The EM middle class is growing, but due to lagging infrastructure developments, adoption of technologies such as wireless communications, online banking, e-commerce, drone applications, etc is rapid. The US tariffs will impact the EMs differently. Some EMs are moving production to lower-cost EMs, or to the US or Europe to escape tariffs.

ECONOMY

The new RBI Governor is Sanjay Malhotra (26th; 2024-27). His backgrounds are in computer science (IIT/K), public policy (Princeton) & finance (IAS, GoI). Look for some new digital initiatives at RBI under Malhotra. Renowned Chicago Economist Dr Raghuram Rajan

was the 23rd Governor, 2013-16.

The former Governor Shaktikanta Das (25th; 2018-21-24) completed his 2nd 3-yr term. Some had expected a rare 3rd term for Das, but December RBI rate hold (at 6.5%; bank reserves were reduced by 50 bps to 4.50%) just ahead of the potential renewal date meant that was unlikely. Malhotra RBI may cut rates in February, if not earlier.

Russia-Ukraine war may have a negotiated settlement & India may have some role in facilitating that. Russian oil that was diverted from Europe to Asia may return to Europe; as a result, China & India may lose access to lot of cheap oil. However, there will be beneficial improvements in global supply-chains. A construction boom in Ukraine would follow.

That may be a reason for the new Reliance (Ambani) - Rosneft 10-year deal to lockup supply of around 500,000 barrels/day of Russian crude oil. Benchmark will be Dubai oil prices with small spreads. Reliance will pay in rubles. The deal may be renewed for another 10 years. Refined oil products will be exported globally.

Switzerland revoked India's MFN (most favored nation) status citing lack of reciprocity after an adverse court ruling by the Supremes on Nestle. Supremes held that MFN clauses aren't automatic, but the Income Tax Department must also rule on them (strange).

Now that Nippon Steel bid to buy US Steel is likely dead, Japan will be looking for acquisitions or joint-ventures elsewhere to try to become #2 global steel producer, possibly in India, Indonesia, or Vietnam. Indian steel imports are high (including from China) & India would be wise to allow new steel production by an India-Japan joint-venture even if it may mean losing #2 place to Japan. (Global steel production rank now: #1-China, #2-India, #3-Japan, #4-US).

FUNDS

India closed-end funds (CEFs) have been around for decades (MS IIF 1994- , Abrdn IFN 1994-). The CEFs have fixed number of shares. Their assets can grow only from IPOs, secondaries, pre-approved shelf-registrations & consolidations (M&A). Premiums or discounts may develop depending on their demand. Distributions may include return of capital (ROC); some have managed distribution policies (IFN).

Many CEFs use leverage (but IIF is unleveraged & IFN has negligible leverage) & their ERs tend to be high because the costs of leverage are included in the ERs. They are quite volatile & are generally riskier than ETFs & mutual funds (OEFs; limited availability). India ETFs were discussed in several recent articles (2024: 07/05, 08/16, 09/13, 09/27, 10/10).

For more information, see ybbpersonalfinance.proboards.com/



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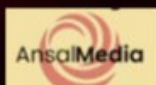
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Organizer: Dr. Avi Verma



Lakhbir Singh Lakha

Medical Doctor program (MD) - 4 year hybrid study

By: Dr Avi Verma

The International University of the Health Sciences (IUHS) School of Medicine offers a flexible and accredited 4-year MD program, with a 5-year option available. This hybrid program combines online and in-person study, making it ideal for allied health practitioners and recent graduates who want to become medical doctors without quitting work or relocating.

Program Highlights

Hybrid Learning: The first two

years consist of pre-clinical studies conducted online, complemented by local physician mentorships. The final two years involve clinical rotations in hospitals.

Innovative Technology: The program employs award-winning tools like the DxR virtual patient simulator and the Distributed Online Campus System, allowing students to study from anywhere in the world.

Global Reach: Graduates are eligible to sit for licensing exams in numerous countries, including the USA, Canada,

Australia, Mexico, UAE, India, and South Africa.

Affordable Tuition: The program's tuition is competitively priced, averaging only 40% of the cost of most other private medical universities.

Course Structure

Years 1 & 2 - Pre-Clinical Years

The pre-clinical phase is a 92-week program divided into 11 blocks, focusing on the basic sciences and the development of clinical skills.

▶ **Block 0:** Introduction to Medicine



(12 weeks)

- ▶ **Block 1:** Introduction to Basic Medical Science (8 weeks)
- ▶ **Block 2:** Microbiology & Immunology (8 weeks)
- ▶ **Block 3:** Respiratory & Cardiovascular Systems (8 weeks)
- ▶ **Block 4:** Endocrine & Reproductive Systems (8 weeks)
- ▶ **Block 5:** Gastrointestinal & Renal Systems (8 weeks)
- ▶ **Block 6:** Central & Peripheral Nervous Systems (8 weeks)
- ▶ **Block 7:** Hematology, Musculoskeletal, Pathology, Dermatology, Anatomy, Behavioral Science (8 weeks)
- ▶ **Block 8:** Epidemiology, ENT, Histology, Legal, Autoimmune & Tropical Diseases (8 weeks)
- ▶ **Blocks 9 & 10:** Exams & remediation, customized study plan for board exams (16 weeks)

Throughout the pre-clinical years, students participate in a mentorship program with local physicians to gain early exposure to patients and clinical environments.

Years 3 & 4 - Clinical Years

The clinical phase involves 80 weeks of rotations in hospitals, divided into core and elective rotations:

Core Rotations (48 weeks):

- ▶ Internal Medicine (12 weeks)
- ▶ Surgery (12 weeks)
- ▶ Obstetrics & Gynecology (6 weeks)
- ▶ Pediatrics (6 weeks)
- ▶ Psychiatry (6 weeks)
- ▶ General Family Practice (6 weeks)

▶ **Elective Rotations (32 weeks):** Students can choose specialties based on their interests and career goals.

Additional Information

Award-Winning Innovation: IUHS was awarded the Zairi Award for Excellence in Digital Innovation in 2023 for its advanced use of technology in medical education.

Year-Round Applications: IUHS accepts applications year-round, with start dates in May and September.

Supportive Learning Environment: The university fosters a collaborative and supportive learning environment, integrating technology with best practices in medical education.

Join IUHS to transform your dream of becoming a medical doctor into reality.

For more information and to apply, visit www.iuhs.edu



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A breakthrough in organ transplants – Gene-edited pig kidney gives new hope



By: Dr Avi Verma

In a groundbreaking development in transplantation medicine, a 53-year-old woman from Alabama became the world's first person to successfully receive a gene-edited pig kidney. This monumental procedure was

performed at NYU Langone Health, marking a significant step in the field of xenotransplantation—the transplantation of organs between species.

Having donated her kidney to her mother in 1999, the patient later faced kidney failure herself due to

pregnancy-related complications. Years of dialysis and limited options led her to join a clinical trial for pig kidney transplants. The surgery, performed on November 25, has restored her quality of life, with her health showing marked improvement.

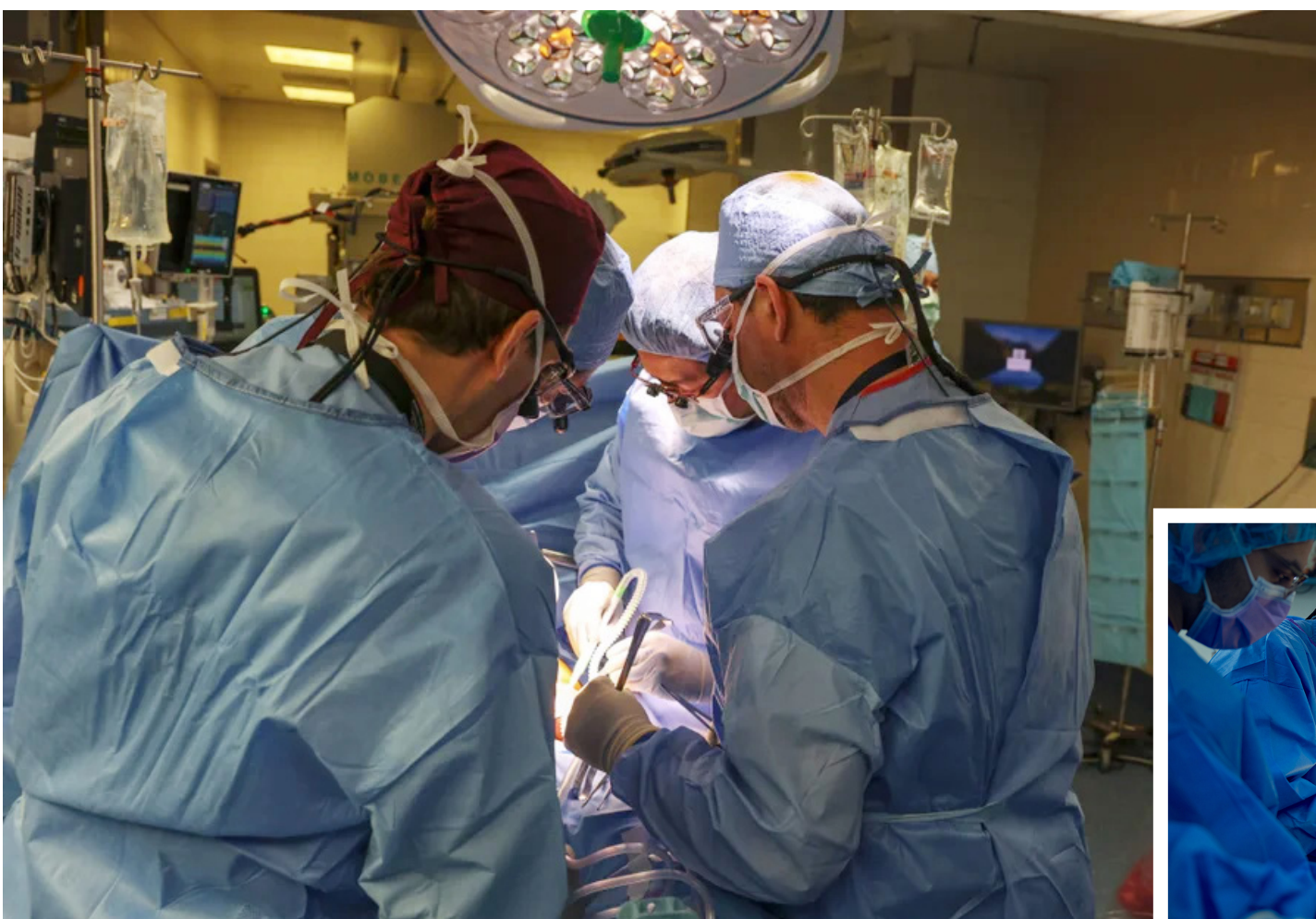
Gene-edited pigs have emerged as

potential organ donors due to their anatomical compatibility, rapid growth, and genetic malleability. These advances are particularly promising in addressing the organ shortage in the U.S., where over 90,000 people await kidney transplants.

This case represents a hopeful moment for the future of transplantation, paving the way for clinical trials and wider acceptance of this revolutionary approach. While challenges remain, such as immune rejection and long-term viability, this success heralds a new era in medical science, offering renewed hope for thousands in need.

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