

India-Canada tensions rise over pro-Khalistan activities and criminal sheltering

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India has accused Canada of fostering an environment conducive to illegal migration and organized criminal activities, as tensions between the two nations deepen. India has repeatedly expressed concern about Canada's alleged interference in its internal affairs. In a statement this week, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) rejected Canada's accusations of interference and highlighted Canada's role in facilitating criminal networks and illegal migration.

"Canada is the one consistently interfering in India's internal matters," the MEA stated, urging Canada to address the issue of illegal migration that it believes has been encouraged by certain support systems in Canada. Indian authorities have previously flagged the presence of criminals, including members of Lawrence Bishnoi's gang, who are wanted in India. Despite multiple requests for their arrest, Canada has taken no action on this matter.

Another source of contention has been Canada's handling of extradition requests for Hardeep Singh Nijjer, whose assassination in Canada in June 2023 escalated diplomatic tensions. Nijjer, facing charges in India, had been sought for extradition since 2018, but Canada never complied, granting him citizenship instead. A Canadian report alleged India's involvement in Nijjer's killing, adding that the Government of India may have clandestinely interfered in Canadian elections. Canada also accused India of targeting its Sikh diaspora, numbering around 800,000, to promote an anti-Khalistan narrative. India, however, has denied the allegations and condemned what it perceives as Canada's failure to address security concerns related to Khalistani separatism.

Tensions further escalated when Canada expelled Indian diplomats over a targeted campaign against Canadian citizens, prompting retaliatory expulsions by India.

Panama's president demands US stop spreading false claims about the Panama Canal

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Panama's President José Raúl Mulino on Thursday denounced the US for spreading "lies and falsehoods" regarding the Panama Canal. His comments followed claims from the US State Department that US government vessels would be able to pass through the canal without paying tolls.

Mulino's remarks came amid rising tensions between the two nations, with the US government seeking to address alleged Chinese influence over the vital waterway and pushing for stronger military cooperation with Panama.

On social media, Mulino said he planned to speak with US President Donald Trump about the matter. "It is intolerable that relations between our countries are being built on falsehoods," Mulino said.

Earlier, the Panama Canal Authority refuted the State Department's statement, denying that the government had agreed to waive crossing fees for US vessels. This claim was seen as an attempt to save millions of dollars annually for the US.

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Regular contacts between India and Russia positively impact strategic partnership, says President Murmu

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Droupadi Murmu emphasized the positive impact of ongoing regular contacts between India and Russia, which continue to strengthen their Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. She made these remarks during a meeting with Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of Russia's State Duma, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

President Murmu underscored that exchanges among public representatives, such as the ongoing interactions between Indian and Russian parliamentarians, not only foster stronger cooperation but also ensure that the partnership remains relevant and up-to-date. She pointed out that the regular interactions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the leadership level play a crucial role in this.

The President also highlighted the significance of mechanisms like the Inter-Parliamentary Commission in facilitating cooperation between the two countries'



parliaments. She stressed the importance of closer engagement between women and youth parliamentarians from both nations to further strengthen bilateral ties.

Additionally, President Murmu shared her recent experience at the New Delhi World Book Fair, where Russia was the "Focus Country." She encouraged greater engagement in cultural and artistic exchanges, which she believes would further deepen the cultural ties between the two countries.

Earlier, Volodin's delegation, which arrived in India to strengthen bilateral relations, also visited both houses of the Indian Parliament. During his meeting with VP Dhankhar, Volodin reiterated that India is one of Russia's key partners in Asia, noting the fivefold increase in bilateral trade over the past five years and the 15% growth in trade from January to November 2024.

The Russian delegation included notable figures like Deputy Speaker Alexander Babakov, Leonid Slutsky, and Maxim Topilin, among others.

Rajnath Singh and Hegseth discuss strengthening defense ties ahead of PM Modi's visit to the US

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a phone conversation with US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth to discuss ways to deepen the India-US bilateral defense partnership.

Singh congratulated Hegseth on his confirmation as the new US Secretary of Defence on January 25, 2025, and emphasized the need to expand cooperation between the two nations.

"I had an excellent conversation with Mr. Pete Hegseth today. I congratulated him on his confirmation and reviewed the ongoing defense cooperation. We also discussed ways to expand and strengthen our bilateral defense relationship," Singh posted on social media after the call.



The two leaders agreed to chart out an ambitious agenda, focusing on operational, intelligence, logistics, and defense-industrial cooperation. Singh expressed his eagerness to work closely with Hegseth in the future.

This conversation came just days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned visit to Washington, where he is set to meet with US President Donald Trump.

The visit is expected to further solidify the growing strategic partnership between the two nations.

In the past decade, India and the US have launched various initiatives to enhance defense collaboration, with the two nations uniting around shared democratic values and a commitment to a rules-based international order.

Under Hegseth's predecessor, Lloyd Austin, the Pentagon supported India's military modernization and advanced the US-India Roadmap for Defense Industrial Cooperation.

In June 2023, the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) was launched to bolster defense innovation between the two countries, a key outcome of the Critical and Emerging Technology initiative (iCET).

With PM Modi's visit to the US, more updates on defense and technology cooperation are expected to be announced.

India defends deportations from the US, cites diplomatic responsibilities

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar defended the repatriation of illegal Indian immigrants from the United States, emphasizing the universal obligation of nations to return their nationals found living abroad unlawfully.

Jaishankar's statement followed a debate in the Lok Sabha regarding the deportation of 104 Indian nationals. The deportees were sent back to India aboard a U.S. military flight, and protests erupted in Delhi against their treatment, including allegations that some were handcuffed during the process.

In response, Jaishankar referred to deportation figures from previous years to underline that such repatriations have been a routine diplomatic process under multiple administrations. He highlighted that deportations, including those from the U.S., have occurred annually, with numbers ranging from 500 to over 2,000 in various years.

Jaishankar also stressed the ongoing discussions with the U.S. government to ensure the humane treatment of deportees. Protests over the deportations, including the handcuffing claims, were organized by Congress party members and youth groups, criticizing the government's response to the issue.

Panama's president demands US stop spreading false claims about the Panama Canal

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US military vessels enjoy priority passage through the canal under a 1977 neutrality treaty, but all ships must still pay tolls based on their size and type. Mulino also questioned why a major claim had been made by the US government based on inaccuracies, calling it an unacceptable misrepresentation of the facts. He instructed Panama's ambassador to Washington to take immediate action against the claims.

Tensions had been mounting between the US and Panama after President Trump accused the Central American nation of being under China's influence, especially regarding the canal. In response to a recent visit by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Mulino made it clear that Panama had already formally decided to exit China's Belt and Road Initiative, although he denied it was due to pressure from the US.

Canada secures delay in tariff hikes with pledge to tackle border issues

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In a move to avoid a 25 percent tariff increase, Canada has secured a one-month reprieve by committing to a \$1.3 billion initiative aimed at curbing the flow of drugs and undocumented migrants into the United States through the northern border. This follows a similar arrangement with Mexico, which managed to delay its tariff hikes after promising to deploy 10,000 troops to its own border.

The tariffs were initially set to go into effect on Tuesday as part of the U.S. response to the ongoing drug and migrant flow issues. However, Canada's agreement to bolster its border security with new personnel, technology, and improved coordination with U.S. authorities led to the delay. U.S. President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau confirmed the postponement in social media posts following a second conversation between the two leaders.

Trump praised Canada's commitment to implementing its \$1.3 billion border plan, which includes measures to stop fentanyl trafficking, a significant concern due to the opioid crisis in the U.S. The agreement



also involves appointing a "Fentanyl Czar," listing cartels as terrorist organizations, and launching a Canada-U.S. Joint Strike Force to combat organized crime and fentanyl trafficking. Trump emphasized the importance of safeguarding U.S. citizens and expressed optimism about reaching a final economic deal with Canada in the coming month.

Earlier, Trump also secured a similar

30-day delay for Mexico, after President Claudia Sheinbaum agreed to deploy 10,000 Mexican soldiers to tackle the flow of fentanyl and illegal migrants. This delay gives both countries time to negotiate a more permanent solution, with key U.S. officials leading the talks. Trump expressed his eagerness to work with Sheinbaum to achieve a lasting agreement between the two nations.

BAPS inaugurates Southern Hemisphere's largest Hindu temple in Johannesburg

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir and Cultural Complex in Johannesburg, South Africa, has officially opened its doors as the largest Hindu temple in the Southern Hemisphere. The inauguration followed a grand procession in Sandton, where sacred idols were carried through the streets, celebrating the divine presence of God and the Guru. Thousands of devotees gathered to witness the temple's consecration during the Pran Pratistha ceremony.

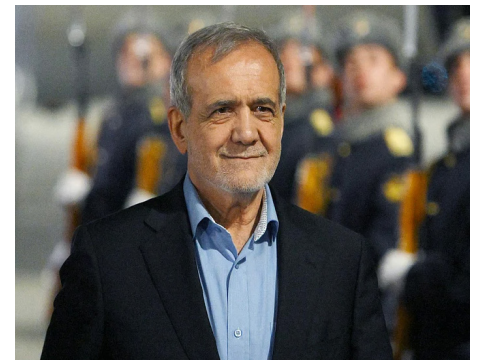
The temple, part of BAPS's growing network of over 1,300 temples worldwide, is a testament to the community's



enduring commitment to spirituality, culture, and service. The project is the culmination of decades of vision, beginning with the blessings of Yogiji Maharaj in 1960. It is a significant milestone for BAPS in South Africa, where the organization has been active for over six decades.

BAPS temples are renowned not only for their architectural beauty but also for their role in promoting peace, happiness, and spiritual growth. The Johannesburg temple joins a global network that includes iconic temples like the Akshardham Temples in India, the UAE, and the US, continuing BAPS's mission of cultural preservation and community service.

Iranian president urges OPEC unity to resist U.S. pressure



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for unity among members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to prevent the United States from pressuring any member. Pezeshkian stated that OPEC countries should work together to avoid actions that might harm any member and prevent the U.S. from imposing sanctions. He made these remarks during a meeting with OPEC Secretary-General Haitham Al Ghais in Tehran.

The president emphasized the importance of maintaining a common policy, attitude, and approach within OPEC, warning against the politicization of the organization. In response, Al Ghais praised Iran's "constructive" role as a founding member of OPEC and its commitment to enhancing cooperation among member states to safeguard collective interests.

In other developments, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref stated that while talks with U.S. President Donald Trump are not impossible, they are not currently on Iran's agenda. Additionally, Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi reiterated that the U.S. "maximum pressure" campaign would fail once again. Iran's Atomic Energy Organization President Mohammad Eslami also reaffirmed that Iran has no intention of developing nuclear weapons.

EAM Jaishankar meets Greek counterpart to boost India-Greece ties

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Greek Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis to explore ways to strengthen the multifaceted relationship between India and Greece.

The discussions covered a broad range of topics, including trade, investment, shipping, connectivity, and cultural exchange. Both sides emphasized the importance of the India-Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEC) and the India-Mediterranean Connect as key initiatives for future collaboration.

Jaishankar expressed India's full support for Greece during its tenure as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for 2025-26. Both ministers underscored the growing strategic ties between their countries, with



particular focus on economic growth and cultural cooperation.

Gerapetritis praised the enhanced bilateral relations in recent years and expressed Greece's desire to continue strengthening ties with India, especially

in areas like tourism, trade, and cultural exchange.

The visit is part of Greece's efforts to boost diplomatic, strategic, and economic cooperation with India, with the two nations set to mark 75 years of diplomatic relations.

US judge temporarily halts Trump's buyout program for federal workers

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A U.S. District Judge temporarily blocked the Trump administration's proposed buyout for federal workers, giving labor unions an initial win in their lawsuit against the initiative. The ruling delays a midnight deadline that was set by the administration as part of a push to overhaul the federal government.

More than 60,000 federal employees had already signed up for the buyout offer, which promised to pay employees their regular salaries and benefits until October without requiring them to work. However, the program faced widespread skepticism, with labor unions and Democrats questioning its legitimacy, especially with the looming expiration of current spending laws.

The buyout is part of the Trump administration's broader plan to reduce the size of the federal bureaucracy, a move the president believes will help streamline government operations. The initiative also targets large cuts to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which could see its workforce reduced by more than 90%.

The court's temporary halt may signal further delays or a permanent block on the buyout program, depending on the outcome of a hearing scheduled for the following Monday. Federal workers, some of whom fear job loss or uncertain future conditions, have expressed mixed reactions to the offer.

House Democrats call for investigation into Elon Musk's government efficiency team

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Democrats on the U.S. House oversight committee have called for a national security investigation into potential breaches involving Elon Musk's "Department of Government Efficiency." The committee is concerned that Musk's team, which has been granted special status within the government, may have accessed sensitive government systems without proper security clearances.

The letter sent to multiple federal agencies, including the Treasury and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), highlights fears of unauthorized access to classified data and personal information of millions of Americans. Musk's team has been tasked with implementing drastic cuts within federal agencies, including the controversial downsizing of USAID.

While the White House maintains that Musk and his team are operating in compliance with federal law, the oversight committee expressed concerns about their ability to access government systems and data. This investigation comes amid heightened scrutiny over the Trump administration's handling of federal personnel and its ongoing efforts to reduce government spending.

Israel's withdrawal from the UN Human Rights Council sparks backlash from UN Special Rapporteur

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Israel has officially joined the United States in withdrawing from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), a decision praised by Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar. The move, announced during Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to the U.S., follows the Trump administration's stance against the UNHRC, which it has criticized for its perceived bias toward Israel. Sa'ar reiterated that the council unfairly targeted Israel while overlooking human rights violations in other countries, particularly in the Middle East.

In a related development, U.S. President Donald Trump also announced the U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), accusing it of being linked to Hamas and



of betraying human rights principles. This decision came amidst discussions between Netanyahu and Trump on issues including the Gaza ceasefire.

However, Israel's withdrawal has drawn

sharp criticism from the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Francesca Albanese, who condemned the move as "extremely serious." Albanese expressed concern that this decision would only escalate Israel's actions in the West Bank and Gaza, which she described as part of a broader "genocide" against Palestinians. She strongly criticized the continuing violence from Israeli soldiers and settlers, warning that the international community's indifference to these abuses was unacceptable.

Albanese also condemned Trump's proposal to "take over" Gaza, asserting that it violated fundamental human rights principles. She lamented the lack of European resistance to these actions, emphasizing the need for a stronger global stance on protecting human rights in the region.

Federal judge issues injunction on Trump's birthright citizenship order

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A federal judge issued an injunction on Wednesday, placing President Donald Trump's executive order on birthright citizenship on indefinite hold. The ruling is the second temporary block against the order, which sought to restrict citizenship to children born in the US to non-citizen parents, with the court ruling that the order contradicts the 14th Amendment.

"The executive order conflicts with the clear language of the 14th Amendment, which guarantees birthright citizenship," said U.S. District Judge Deborah L. Boardman during a hearing. "This court will not endorse the president's interpretation."

Trump's order was due to go into effect on February 19. The injunction follows a lawsuit filed by several organizations, including the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project and CASA, on behalf of pregnant women and their unborn children.



The judge's decision came on the heels of a similar ruling from U.S. District Judge John Coughenour in Seattle, who also blocked the executive order, citing its unconstitutionality.

Trump's order, aimed at limiting birthright citizenship to children of US citizens or permanent residents, had sparked controversy, particularly regarding those born to temporary visa holders. The administration's position is that birthright citizenship for children of undocumented immigrants is unconstitutional.

Trump signs executive order imposing sanctions on the International Criminal Court

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Donald Trump has signed an executive order imposing sanctions on the International Criminal Court (ICC), accusing it of "illegitimate and baseless actions targeting the United States and its close ally, Israel."

The executive order imposes financial and visa restrictions on individuals and their families who assist ICC investigations into American citizens or allies. Trump signed the measure while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was visiting Washington. Last November, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu over alleged war crimes in Gaza, which Israel denies. The ICC also issued a warrant for a Hamas commander.

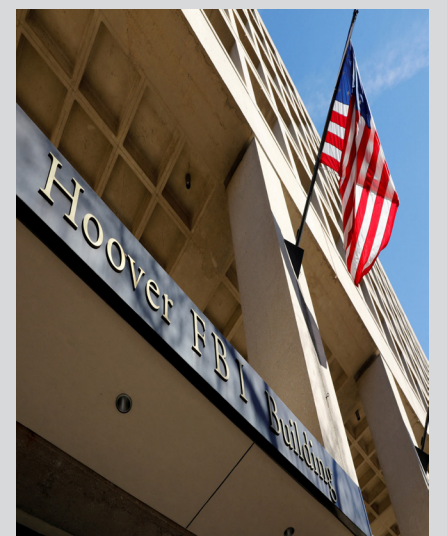
The White House circulated a fact sheet accusing the ICC of creating "shameful moral equivalency" by issuing warrants against both Netanyahu and Hamas at the same time.



Trump's executive order stated that the ICC's actions "set a dangerous precedent" that could expose Americans to "harassment, abuse, and possible arrest." It also warned that this conduct could infringe upon U.S. sovereignty and undermine national security.

The U.S. has long opposed ICC jurisdiction over American officials or citizens, as it is not a member of the ICC. Trump had previously imposed sanctions on ICC officials during his first term, targeting those investigating U.S. war crimes in Afghanistan. These sanctions were lifted by President Joe Biden's administration.

Justice Department assures FBI agents will not face penalties for January 6 cases



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

FBI agents involved in investigating the January 6 Capitol attack will not face penalties or termination for their roles, according to a memo issued by Acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove. The memo was a response to ongoing legal challenges from FBI employees who are seeking to protect their identities in connection with the investigations.

Bove emphasized that only those who acted with "corrupt or partisan intent" would be subject to penalties. This memo follows a broader investigation into the FBI's handling of the Capitol insurrection, which aimed to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

The Justice Department's decision was made amid growing legal challenges from FBI personnel, who argue that their involvement in the investigation could put their personal safety at risk. The FBI is also under scrutiny after its acting leadership initially refused to comply with requests for the names of key agents involved in the case.



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Chicago Office:
Lincolnwood, IL 60712
marketing@indoutribune.com

PUBLISHER
Dr. (H) Avi Verma
publisher@indoutribune.com
(773) 866-1222

Editor
Nikita Sharma
editor@indoutribune.com

Graphics & Web Development
Sunil Panchal
graphics@indoutribune.com

Board of Advisors
Rakesh Malhotra
Ramesh Soparwala
Madhu Patel
Vandana Jhingan
Neelam Verma

Legal Advisors
Seth Kebron
Ankush Ansal

Special Contributor
Rajesh Ansal

Special Correspondent
Sunita Verma

Social Media
Pooja Singh

Chicago Office:
Lincolnwood, IL 60712

Surrey Canada Office
surrey@indoutribune.com

San Jose Office
sanjose@indoutribune.com

Delhi Office:
delhi@indoutribune.com

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Trump's America—Shockwaves at home, ripples across India and the world



Dr. Avi Verma

Two weeks into Donald Trump's return to the White House, his presidency has been marked by rapid executive orders, policy reversals, and controversial statements. His aggressive stance on immigration, federal restructuring, and foreign policy has deeply polarized the nation—one side cheering his decisive leadership, while the other braces for what they see as reckless governance. With his latest comments on the U.S. "taking over" Gaza, the world is watching closely. Is Trump leading America toward stability, or is he plunging it into deeper uncertainty?

The good: Strong leadership or decisive overreach?

Trump has quickly moved to fulfill his campaign promises. His administration's hardline stance on illegal immigration has led to mass deportations, which his supporters see as necessary for border security. His plan to offer early retirement to federal employees is viewed as an attempt to reduce bureaucracy, though critics worry it could lead to a loss of expertise.

On the international stage, Trump's re-engagement with India stands out. The president has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the White House next week, signaling a renewed focus on strengthening U.S.-India relations. Trump's administration is also considering revising trade agreements with India, which could benefit both economies as global alliances shift. Business leaders are cautiously optimistic, particularly with Trump's

deregulatory measures boosting Wall Street's outlook.

The bad: Governing by shockwaves?

Despite his strong start, Trump's leadership has been unpredictable. His "freeze-and-thaw" approach to federal grants left states scrambling, disrupting vital infrastructure and research programs. The mass deportation strategy has led to legal battles and humanitarian concerns, sparking protests across the country.

Trump's tariff strategy has also raised alarm globally. After threatening higher tariffs on European and Asian imports, he has since "paused" the plan, leaving trading partners uncertain about the stability of U.S. economic policy.

His preference for executive orders over working through Congress has deepened political divisions. Both Democrats and Republicans warn that governing by decree could lead to long-term instability and dangerous precedents.

The Gaza proposal: Ambition or overreach?

Trump's recent statement about Gaza has sent shockwaves around the world. He suggested the U.S. should "take over" Gaza and relocate its Palestinian residents to neighboring countries such as Egypt and Jordan. His vision is to transform Gaza into a prosperous "Riviera of the Middle East."

The proposal has drawn immediate global backlash. Critics argue that forcibly relocating Palestinians would amount to ethnic cleansing and violate international law. Arab nations, including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, have strongly rejected any resettlement plan, warning that such a move would be unacceptable.

Domestically, reactions are mixed. Some view it as a bold solution to a longstanding conflict, while others see it as an overreach that could deepen instability in the Middle East. With no clear legal authority to carry out such a plan and fierce regional opposition, the feasibility of the proposal is highly questionable.

Foreign policy: America first or America alone?

Trump's foreign policy remains aggressive, marked by both outreach and confrontation. His renewed focus on India suggests he views Modi as a key ally in countering China's rising influence. However, his stance on Canada and Greenland has raised eyebrows, with speculation that he may seek to renegotiate trade deals under tougher terms. His renewed interest in the Panama Canal's strategic importance signals a shift in U.S. regional influence.

With Modi's visit to the White House next week, the Gaza proposal could cast a shadow over the discussions. India, with its large Muslim population and interests in the Middle East, may express concerns about the potential destabilization such a plan could cause. The proposal could also influence India's views on international interventions and national sovereignty.

The path forward: Stability or further uncertainty?

Trump's early actions, from immigration crackdowns to economic shifts and now his Gaza proposal, reflect a willingness to disrupt traditional policies and pursue unconventional solutions. His supporters see him as a bold leader unafraid to take risks. But his critics warn of the potential for increased instability, economic uncertainty, and international backlash.

With Modi's visit, unresolved tariff threats, and the Gaza controversy dominating headlines, Trump's next steps will be crucial. If he can channel his aggressive tactics into structured governance and diplomacy, his presidency could yield economic and diplomatic successes. But if unpredictability continues to define his approach, both America and the world will brace for more turbulence.

For now, the only certainty is uncertainty.

Best Regards,
Dr. Avi Verma,
Publisher, IndoUS Tribune



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Second bird flu strain detected in US dairy cattle

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



The U.S. Department of Agriculture confirmed that a second strain of bird flu, previously unseen in dairy cattle, has been detected in Nevada. The H5N1 virus, which has been spreading across the U.S. and impacting poultry, was found in dairy cows for the first time after genome sequencing of milk samples. This new strain, known as the D1.1 genotype, is different from the B3.13 genotype that had previously infected dairy herds. The discovery of this strain adds to concerns about the ongoing spread of the virus, which has already led to a significant loss of poultry and impacted milk production. Experts believe wild birds transmitted the virus to cattle, and state officials are urging farmers to strengthen biosecurity measures to prevent further spread. With dairy herds under quarantine in parts of Nevada, experts warn that the virus could spread to other states if not contained quickly.

Trump's freeze on foreign aid hinders global efforts to address hunger

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Trump administration's freeze on foreign aid has severely disrupted global efforts to combat hunger. With President Trump's order freezing US foreign aid programs for a 90-day review, critical famine relief and humanitarian operations have been put on hold, leaving millions of people in dire need of assistance.

The freeze, which took effect on January 20, has created confusion among aid organizations, as they are unclear about which programs are allowed to continue. A significant portion of US-provided food aid is now sitting in storage, unable to be distributed.

Humanitarian groups report that about 500,000 metric tons of food, worth approximately \$340 million, are currently in limbo. Cash assistance for food purchases in regions such as Sudan and Gaza has also been halted, further exacerbating the crisis.

The situation is worsened by the temporary closure of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which has been the primary channel for

providing global famine relief. As aid workers struggle to get answers about which programs will be funded, life-saving projects are being delayed.

Additionally, the US State Department's Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), a key entity in predicting and responding to food insecurity, has been shut down. This is a devastating blow, as FEWS NET's reports have guided many humanitarian efforts to prevent starvation in crisis regions.

The US is the largest single donor of humanitarian aid globally, contributing over 38% of the total food aid. The suspension of assistance comes at a time when nearly 282 million people face extreme food shortages worldwide.

The halt in aid is expected to further strain the global effort to combat famine, particularly in countries affected by conflict and political instability. Experts warn that the suspension of FEWS NET and aid programs could lead to a worsening of global food insecurity, especially in regions like Sudan, where nearly 30,000 metric tons of food aid are waiting to be distributed.

India condemns attack on Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's residence

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India has strongly condemned the vandalism of the residence of Bangladesh's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Dhaka, calling the act "regrettable." The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, said that the destruction of the historic residence on February 5, 2025, should be condemned. "The residence is a symbol of Bangladesh's heroic resistance against oppression, and this attack is an act of vandalism," he added. India also expressed deep concern over the attack, emphasizing the residence's historical and cultural significance. The government urged that those responsible be held accountable, emphasizing the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the region. A mob stormed Rahman's residence in Dhaka, reportedly protesting against the Awami League and calling for a ban on it. They broke into the house, setting parts of it on fire and damaging portraits of Rahman.

On Thursday, Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs lodged a protest against comments made by India's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, accusing her of instigating instability with "false and fabricated" statements.

Bhutan's King's visit to Maha Kumbh highlights strong India-Bhutan ties, says MEA

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The visit of Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck to India for the Maha Kumbh Mela is a symbol of the deep and enduring relationship between India and Bhutan. The King, who attended the event in Uttar Pradesh, participated in the sacred ritual of taking a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The visit is part of ongoing high-level exchanges between the two countries, reflecting their close ties.



visited several other holy sites, including the Akshayavat and Bade Hanuman Temple, during his time in India.

The Maha Kumbh Mela, a massive spiritual gathering, has attracted millions of devotees, including diplomats from 71 countries. The event, which began in January, is set to continue until February 26, drawing attention from across the world and serving as a platform for global spiritual unity.

The Ministry of External Affairs highlighted that India and Bhutan share a special partnership based on mutual respect and trust. The King's visit underscores the importance of this relationship, which continues to strengthen through various diplomatic and cultural engagements. The King also

EU braces for tough trade talks with the US, says Ursula von der Leyen

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has stated that the European Union is prepared for challenging negotiations with the United States to protect its economic interests. This statement comes in response to US President Donald Trump's plans to impose tariffs on EU imports. Von der Leyen underscored the importance of transatlantic trade, highlighting that millions of jobs in both the EU and the US are linked to this partnership.

She stressed that both sides have a lot at stake and expressed the EU's willingness

to engage in tough negotiations to resolve trade disagreements. The EU aims to find solutions that benefit both parties while defending its economic interests. Von der Leyen reaffirmed the EU's commitment to protecting its industries from unfair trade practices, making it clear that the EU would act decisively when necessary.

The EU's stance is rooted in the belief that tariffs, like those imposed by the US on various countries, disrupt global trade and lead to economic harm on all sides. The EU remains focused on maintaining open markets and respecting international trade rules to ensure stable and sustainable economic growth.

MEA plans new law to protect and support Indian workers abroad

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is considering enacting a new law, tentatively titled the 'Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024', which will replace the outdated Emigration Act of 1983, according to a report by the Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs.

The Committee emphasized the need for comprehensive legislative reform to address the contemporary dynamics of global migration. The MEA has stated that the proposed draft is currently being consulted with various ministries and will later be open to public consultations. The Committee has urged that the bill be enacted within a year.

In response to a Lok Sabha query, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh mentioned that around 15 million Indian nationals, including unskilled workers,



skilled workers, and professionals, are employed abroad.

The report also acknowledged India's growing influence on the global stage, with the country's rising economic, scientific, and technological stature, and its expanding diplomatic outreach through various international initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

Sweden's worst mass shooting in history leaves 11 dead at school

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Swedish authorities have confirmed that 11 people were killed in what is now considered the deadliest mass shooting in the country's history.

The tragic event occurred at Risbergska Skolan in Orebro, central Sweden, where a gunman opened fire, resulting in fatalities.

The shooter is believed to be among the dead, though investigations are ongoing, and the exact number of victims may vary.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson described the shooting as a deeply tragic event for the nation. Authorities have indicated that there were no prior

warnings and do not suspect terrorism as the motive behind the attack.

The police investigation continues as they try to uncover the reasons behind the violence, which has shocked Sweden, a country with very low rates of gun-related incidents.

The shooting has brought attention to the increasing violence in Sweden, where there has been a rise in armed violence outside of schools in recent years.

Local experts expressed concerns that such incidents could spread to educational institutions, as seen in this devastating attack. Swedish officials are under pressure to address the growing issue of gun violence within the country.

Black Hawk wreckage recovered from Potomac River after fatal collision

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The wreckage of a military helicopter that was involved in a mid-air collision with a passenger jet, which resulted in the deaths of all 67 people on both aircraft, was recovered from the Potomac River on Thursday, federal officials reported. Additional parts were also found from the American Airlines plane that had been en route to Reagan National Airport when it collided with the UH-60 Black Hawk on January 29, according to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

The recovered wreckage will be offloaded onto a barge and taken to a secure location for further investigation. The NTSB is still searching for key components, including the Black Hawk's engine and tail rotor. This development comes two days after the recovery of all 67 victims' bodies, including many passengers who had been returning from a training camp following the 2025 U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Wichita, Kansas.

The Black Hawk helicopter had three crew members on board, and was on a training mission from Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The NTSB is working to determine the cause of the collision, with initial findings suggesting the helicopter was flying at 300 feet, exceeding the typical 200-foot ceiling required by federal aviation regulations. Flight data from the two "black boxes" of the American Airlines plane, including the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder, are being analyzed.

Health clinics face closures due to ongoing funding disruptions

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Despite a judge blocking a funding freeze, many health clinics and nonprofits still can't access essential federal funds, jeopardizing their operations.

In Virginia, three health clinics have closed, and a Mississippi health center faces a \$500,000 deficit.

These disruptions stem from a vague memo from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that paused federal financial assistance, which was meant to align with President Trump's agenda. Though the freeze was lifted, several organizations still report difficulties accessing funds for critical expenses.

Health centers, which rely on federal grants to serve low-income and rural communities, are particularly affected. In Virginia, 11 centers remain without access to funds, and similar issues have been reported across the country, including in Maine, Alabama, and Michigan. Some clinics are using reserve funds to stay afloat, while others may have to scale back or close services.

Despite efforts by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to resolve the issue, the disruptions threaten the stability of these essential health services.

USAID to cut workforce to approximately 290 employees amid federal workforce



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is set to dramatically reduce its workforce to approximately 290 employees, down from over 5,000, according to sources familiar with the plans. Thousands of USAID workers were informed this week that they would be placed on administrative leave starting at 11:59 p.m. Friday, as part of broader federal workforce cuts.

The restructuring will leave only a small number of employees working in key bureaus, with just 12 people designated for Africa and eight for Asia. USAID's European operations, once supported by around 600 employees, will now be served by only 10. While most of the agency's contractors have already been fired or furloughed, the future of foreign service nationals employed

globally remains uncertain.

In response to the cuts, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the action was necessary to obtain cooperation from USAID, although exceptions may be made for employees with extraordinary circumstances. The American Foreign Service Association, which represents USAID workers, filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration, claiming the actions were not authorized by Congress and have caused a global humanitarian crisis. The lawsuit seeks to halt the shutdown of the agency.

The move to reduce the workforce is part of the Trump administration's broader efforts to streamline the federal government, including offering buyouts to about 2 million federal workers. However, a federal judge recently temporarily blocked the buyout offer.

Trump signs executive order imposing sanctions on the International Criminal Court

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday that sanctions the International Criminal Court (ICC), accusing the court of improperly targeting the United States and Israel.

The order includes financial sanctions and visa restrictions on ICC officials who have assisted in investigations involving U.S. citizens or allies. This move comes in response to the ICC issuing arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas leaders in November 2024. The Trump administration has described these actions as

creating a "shameful moral equivalency." The ICC's investigation into potential war crimes in Gaza sparked bipartisan backlash, with the U.S. arguing that both Israel and the U.S. maintain robust legal systems and should not be subject to the court's jurisdiction. Neither the U.S. nor Israel are parties to the Rome Statute that established the ICC, which allows signatories to carry out arrest warrants, but many nations observe the principle of legal immunity for heads of state.

Earlier this year, the House passed a bill to sanction the ICC, though it was blocked in the Senate. The executive order represents an escalation of tensions between the U.S. and the ICC, which is based in The Hague, Netherlands.



U.S. lawmakers introduce bill to ban China's DeepSeek software from government devices



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

U.S. lawmakers are pushing for a ban on China's DeepSeek artificial intelligence software from government devices, citing national security concerns. Representatives Darin LaHood (R-Ill.) and Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.) introduced the bipartisan legislation after a third-party analysis revealed that DeepSeek's chatbot app could capture sensitive login information and share it with China's largest state-owned mobile telecommunications company, China Mobile.

LaHood warned that the technology poses an espionage risk, asserting that the U.S. cannot afford to lose the technological race with the Chinese Communist Party. According to the analysis by Ivan Tsarynny, CEO of Feroot Security, DeepSeek's app contains hidden code that could send user data to China Mobile, which has already been banned from operating in the U.S.

In response, the Chinese Foreign Ministry opposed the bill, calling it an unwarranted expansion of national security concerns and reaffirmed that the Chinese government protects data privacy and security. DeepSeek, which has already faced restrictions from other governments including South Korea, Italy, Australia, and Taiwan, has also sparked fears in the U.S. for potentially delivering superior AI results at a fraction of the cost American tech firms can achieve.

Alabama carries out execution using nitrogen gas for 1991 murder and rape

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Demetrius Terrence Frazier, 52, was executed Thursday for the 1991 murder and rape of 41-year-old Pauline Brown. This marks the fourth execution in the U.S. to use nitrogen gas. He had been convicted of breaking into Brown's apartment in Birmingham, demanding money, and then raping and killing her. Prosecutors also noted that Frazier returned later to eat and search for more money. Alabama became the first state to use nitrogen gas for executions last year, when three inmates were put to death using the method. Nitrogen gas is administered through a respirator mask, replacing breathable air with pure nitrogen, leading to death by asphyxiation.

A federal judge recently dismissed Frazier's request to block the execution, despite concerns over the method's effectiveness. Media witnesses reported that the previous executions with nitrogen gas involved the prisoners shaking on the gurney, though the judge ruled that this did not indicate severe distress. Frazier had been convicted of the 1992 murder of Crystal Kendrick in Michigan before being transferred to Alabama's death row in 2011.

Trump administration sues Illinois and Chicago over sanctuary city policies



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Trump administration filed a federal lawsuit against Illinois and Chicago, claiming their sanctuary city policies obstruct federal immigration law enforcement. The lawsuit is the first of its kind from the Trump Justice Department against sanctuary jurisdictions.

Filed a day after the issuance of a sanctuary jurisdiction directive, the 22-page suit argues that policies in Illinois, Chicago, and Cook County intentionally hinder federal efforts to enforce immigration laws. The suit specifically targets Illinois' "Trust Act," Chicago's "Welcoming City Ordinance," and Cook County's "Policy for Responding to ICE Detainers." These laws limit local cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker's office defended the state's law, stating it prioritizes police resources for fighting crime while allowing coordination with federal agencies for criminal enforcement. The state vowed to fight the suit in court, asserting that it aligns with federal law. Chicago's law department is also reviewing the lawsuit.

New Orleans braces for Super Bowl 59 with record hotel demand and high security

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



New Orleans is preparing for Super Bowl 59, expecting about 125,000 visitors and heightened security, including a possible presidential visit. As the Kansas City Chiefs face the Philadelphia Eagles, hotel demand in the area has surged dramatically, with rates averaging \$650 per night. Hotel interest has spiked, especially from travelers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Kansas, and Missouri. Caesars Entertainment is making the most of the occasion, with a significant renovation of its casino property, previously known as Harrah's, in anticipation of the influx.

Security around the city is intense following a New Year's Day attack that killed 14 people. Law enforcement agencies, including Homeland Security, are preparing for the Super Bowl, with over 700 officials expected to be on the ground.

Trump signs executive order banning transgender women from competing in women's sports

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Donald Trump has signed an executive order prohibiting transgender women and girls from competing in women's sports, marking the fourth executive action targeting transgender people since he took office. The order, dubbed the "No Men in Women's Sports Executive Order," aims to protect women's athletic opportunities and roll back guidance issued under the Biden administration. This guidance had allowed transgender students to participate in school sports based on their gender identity. The new measure bars students assigned male at birth from joining girls' and women's teams or using women's restrooms.

Trump, during the announcement at the White House, called it a necessary step to end the supposed erasure of biological sex by the "radical left," claiming that transgender women were "stealing" victories in women's sports. His



remarks also included a disputed claim about an Algerian boxer, Imane Khelif, whom he misidentified as assigned male at birth.

The order also impacts sports beyond schools, with the administration planning to work with international governing bodies, such as the International Olympic Committee, to ensure compliance. It includes reviewing visa policies for athletes coming into the U.S. claiming to be women but assigned male at birth. The NCAA swiftly responded, announcing that only students assigned female at birth would be allowed to compete in women's sports. The announcement coincided with National Girls & Women in Sports Day, which promotes the inclusion of women in athletics.

While transgender athletes like Schuyler Bailar have criticized the order for fostering discrimination, conservative figures such as Riley Gaines have supported it, claiming it is essential for fairness in sports. LGBTQ organizations, including Lambda Legal, condemned the executive action, arguing that it unfairly targets a vulnerable population.

California governor urges Trump to support wildfire relief

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

California Governor Gavin Newsom met with President Donald Trump to request federal assistance following devastating wildfires that ravaged Los Angeles. The fires, which began on January 7, destroyed entire neighborhoods, claimed 29 lives, and left over 16,000 structures damaged or destroyed. Newsom expressed the critical need for federal support to help rebuild and assist those impacted by the disaster, emphasizing the cooperation between local, state, and federal agencies in recovery efforts.

Trump's visit to the area on January 24 came amid ongoing tensions between the

Republican president and the Democratic governor, particularly over policies like water management. Despite their political differences, the two men reportedly set aside their disputes to focus on the wildfire recovery efforts. The White House has not provided additional details about the meeting, but Newsom's office stressed the importance of collaboration between all levels of government.

The wildfires burned nearly 200,000 acres, an area close in size to Washington, D.C., and are projected to cause more than \$250 billion in damages, which would make them the most costly natural disaster in U.S. history. The magnitude of the destruction has spurred urgent calls for federal aid and support in the long recovery process.



Southern California Edison acknowledges potential link between equipment and Eaton fire

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



Southern California Edison has acknowledged that videos suggest a possible connection between its equipment and the Eaton Fire, which devastated about 14,000 acres in Los Angeles, killing 17 people and injuring nine firefighters. While the utility has not confirmed the cause, it is conducting a thorough investigation.

The utility also indicated that its equipment may have caused the Hurst Fire, which burned about 800 acres and damaged two homes. Edison has not identified any specific evidence linking its equipment to the Eaton Fire's ignition but remains focused on uncovering the cause.

Musk's DOGE team granted access to Medicare, Medicaid systems

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has gained access to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as part of efforts to root out fraud and waste within federal spending. CMS, which manages healthcare for seniors, disabled individuals, and lower-income Americans, granted DOGE representatives "read-only" access to its systems. The goal is to analyze CMS's payment systems and contracts to identify inefficiencies or fraudulent activities without altering any data.

The move comes after Musk was tasked



by President Donald Trump to reform government operations, making them more efficient and transparent. Musk's team has

focused on reviewing key systems, including those related to payments and contract management, to determine where resources can be better utilized. They are also evaluating CMS's organizational design and staffing structure to identify potential improvements.

Despite concerns over privacy, officials stressed that DOGE's access does not include sensitive personal health information. Musk publicly indicated that he believes fraud is rampant within CMS systems, although no specific evidence has been presented. White House representatives have defended the collaboration, arguing that it is in line with Trump's broader push to make the government more accountable and cost-effective.

Indian engineers make waves in Elon Musk's DOGE, marking a proud moment for the community

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In a groundbreaking achievement for the Indian community, several engineers of Indian origin have secured key roles within Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), marking a significant recognition of their skills on the global stage.

At the forefront of this group is Akash Bobba, a 22-year-old engineer with an impressive background in artificial intelligence, data analytics, and financial modeling. His resume includes internships at top firms like Meta, Palantir, and Bridgewater Associates, where he fine-tuned his expertise. Bobba's appointment to DOGE highlights the recognition of young, talented professionals from the Indian diaspora.

Nikhil Rajpal, another standout, has been representing DOGE at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). His role involves integrating advanced technological solutions within



NOAA, a testament to the trust placed in his technical expertise and ability to drive impactful change.

Additionally, Sriram Krishnan, an Indian-American venture capitalist and technologist, has been appointed as the

Senior White House Policy Advisor on Artificial Intelligence. Krishnan's vast experience leading product teams at major tech companies positions him as a key player in shaping AI policies that will have a lasting impact on the future of government operations.

The inclusion of these talented professionals in DOGE has sparked immense pride and excitement within the Indian community worldwide.

Their appointments not only reflect their individual accomplishments but also highlight the growing influence of Indian-origin professionals in the global tech and government sectors.

Community leaders have praised these milestones, recognizing the importance of representation in high-level government positions. The achievements of Bobba, Rajpal, and Krishnan serve as an inspiration to aspiring engineers and technologists, showing how dedication and expertise can lead to significant global influence.

As DOGE embarks on its mission to innovate and streamline government operations, the contributions of these Indian-origin engineers are expected to play a crucial role in shaping a more efficient and responsive government infrastructure.

Indian-origin rapper Subhas Nair begins jail term for racially charged online posts in Singapore

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Indian-origin rapper Subhas Nair has started his six-week jail sentence in Singapore after being convicted of attempting to promote ill will among racial and religious groups through online posts.

The 32-year-old Singaporean, whose full name is Subhas Govin Prabhakar Nair, was found guilty on four charges by a district court in 2023 after a trial. His appeals against the conviction and sentence were dismissed by the High Court.

Justice Hoo Sheau Peng upheld the lower court's decision, ruling that the six-week jail term was neither excessive nor unjust. Under Singaporean law, attempting to incite ill will between racial or religious groups carries a maximum sentence of up to three years in prison, a fine, or both.

The charges stem from racially charged

statements Nair made between July 2019 and March 2021. He and his sister, Preeti Nair, had performed a YouTube video featuring racist lyrics. Although authorities issued him a two-year conditional warning for the video, he reoffended by making additional racial comments on social media.

In one of his posts, Nair appeared to compare the consequences of calling out racism and "Chinese privilege" with those of an unrelated criminal case, implying a disparity in how different issues were treated by authorities.

Additionally, he later displayed a hand-drawn replica of his social media comments during a stage performance.

A district judge sentenced Nair to six weeks in prison in September 2023, in line with the prosecution's proposed sentence. His appeal was ultimately rejected, leading to his current jail term.



US deportee briefly goes missing in Punjab, returns home safely

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Davinderjit Singh, a 27-year-old US deportee from Landra village in Phillaur, briefly went missing after returning home, raising concerns among his family and local authorities.

Singh was among the 104 Indians deported from the United States and arrived in Amritsar before being dropped off at his home by a revenue official late at night. However, at around 5 a.m. the next morning, he left on his bike without informing his family, leading them to alert the police when he failed to return for several hours.

His mother, Balbir Kaur, stated that Singh appeared visibly distressed before leaving. Fearing for his well-being, the family



contacted local authorities, prompting a search by the police and the naib tehsildar. The sudden disappearance added to concerns over the mental and emotional state of deportees returning from the US under challenging circumstances.

Authorities later confirmed that Singh had safely returned home. The incident highlights the ongoing struggles faced by deportees adjusting to life back in Punjab after their forced return from abroad.

Video of deported Indians in chains sparks outrage, India seeks US assurance

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A video released by US Customs and Border Protection (USBP) showing 104 deported Indians in hand and leg restraints has sparked outrage. The deportees were seen boarding a US Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft, which later landed in Amritsar.

USBP Chief Michael W. Banks defended the deportation, stating it demonstrated the US's commitment to enforcing immigration laws and ensuring swift removals.

India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar acknowledged opposition concerns but emphasized that such deportation procedures are not new and that restraints are legally permitted. He assured Parliament that women and children were not restrained and that India is engaging with the US to ensure



deportees are treated humanely.

Authorities, including Punjab Police and intelligence agencies, questioned the deportees upon arrival to check for any criminal records. The US action came just days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Washington for talks with President Donald Trump.

Melbourne-based Acharya Bhawna Nath Puri promotes Maha Kumbh globally



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Acharya Bhawna Nath Puri, an Aghori Sadhak from Melbourne and likely the only woman practicing as a Karamkandi Brahmin, has been actively promoting the Maha Kumbh festival. As a brand ambassador, she has encouraged devotees, including foreigners and NRIs, to visit Prayagraj for the holy dip at Sangam.

Australian pilgrims David Jonas, Catherine, Sujoy, and Paul praised Puri for facilitating their Amrit Snan on Basant Panchami. She thanked the local Brahman Sabha for assisting in travel and accommodation for 25 Australian devotees.

Puri has been instrumental in spreading Hindu teachings in Victoria, Australia, inspiring many to experience the Maha Kumbh firsthand. She highlighted the festival's cultural significance, noting the deep appreciation of India's spiritual heritage by visitors from Australia, Nepal, Norway, New Zealand, the US, and Canada.

NAPA urges Punjab government to create rehabilitation fund for deported youths

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



The North American Punjabi Association (NAPA) has called on the Punjab government to establish a rehabilitation fund for young men and women deported from the United States. NAPA Executive Director Satnam Singh Chahal warned that without proper support, these returnees could face unemployment, mental health struggles, and potential involvement in illegal activities, posing social and economic challenges for the state.

With reports of another US deportation flight carrying 205 Punjabis and others expected to land in Amritsar, Chahal stressed the need for skill development programs, employment opportunities, and mental health counseling to help reintegrate deported individuals. He urged policymakers to collaborate with organizations like NAPA to develop comprehensive strategies, emphasizing that addressing this crisis is crucial for Punjab's future stability.

Shots fired at Punjabi singer Prem Dhillon's home in Canada amid gang threats

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Gunshots were fired outside the residence of Punjabi singer Prem Dhillon in Canada, allegedly by a member of the Jaipal Bhullar gang. The attack is believed to be linked to ongoing gang rivalries involving Punjabi artists. Gang associate Jenta Kharad, who is also connected to wanted gangster Arsh Dala, took responsibility for the attack in a social media post. He accused Dhillon of betraying the late singer Sidhu Moosewala and warned of further consequences. The post referenced jailed gangster Jaggu Bhagwanpuria, suggesting ties to previous conflicts within the Punjabi music industry.

Dhillon, known for hit songs like 'Boot Cut', 'Old Skool', and 'Majha Block', is the latest Punjabi singer to face violent threats. Similar attacks have previously targeted singers AP Dhillon and Gippy Grewal in Canada, highlighting the increasing influence of organized crime within the industry.



Originally from Amritsar, Premjeet Singh Dhillon, known professionally as Prem Dhillon, made his music debut with 'Chan Milondi' and gained widespread recognition with 'Boot Cut', which garnered over 37 million views. His collaboration with Moosewala on 'Old Skool' further cemented

his place in the Punjabi music scene.

Canadian authorities have not yet identified any suspects, and an investigation is underway. The incident underscores growing security concerns for Punjabi artists facing threats from criminal groups operating in Canada.

Indian-American musician Chandrika Tandon wins Grammy for "Triveni"

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Indian-American vocalist and entrepreneur Chandrika Tandon has won a Grammy in the Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album category for her album 'Triveni'. She shared the award with South African flautist Wouter Kellerman and Japanese cellist Eru Matsumoto. Tandon, the older sister of former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi, dedicated her win to the power of music, calling it "love, light, and laughter." This marks her first Grammy win after a previous nomination in 2009 for Soul Call. Triveni, named after the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers, blends ancient Vedic chants with flute and



cello to create a meditative soundscape. The album, released in 2024, features seven tracks designed to promote healing and mindfulness. Tandon has performed at prestigious venues such as the Kennedy Center and Lincoln Center, further cementing her impact on global music.

Indian-origin Bishop John Perumbalath retires amid misconduct allegations



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Right Reverend Dr. John Perumbalath, the Indian-origin Bishop of Liverpool, has announced his retirement from the Church of England after facing misconduct allegations from two women—claims he strongly denies.

Perumbalath, originally from Kerala and ordained in 1994, said he sought permission from King Charles III to retire, citing a "trial by media" that made his position "untenable."

He emphasized that his decision was not an admission of guilt but aimed at preventing distractions for the Diocese of Liverpool.

The Church of England defended him, stating an independent risk assessment found no ongoing safeguarding concerns. A second complaint was dismissed due to a missed deadline.

However, a Channel 4 News report alleged misconduct in his previous role as Bishop of Bradwell.

The Diocese of Liverpool and Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell acknowledged his decision, expressing support for all affected. The controversy comes amid broader scrutiny of the Church's handling of misconduct cases.

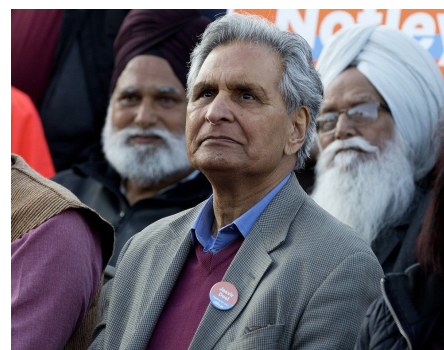
Raj Pannu, pioneering Punjabi-Canadian politician, passes away at 91

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Raj Pannu, a highly respected Punjabi-Canadian educator, politician, and community leader, has passed away at the age of 91 in Edmonton, Alberta. He was a trailblazer in Canadian politics, advocating for social justice and greater diversity.

Born in Punjab, India, in 1934, Pannu immigrated to Canada in 1962 and began his career as a high school teacher in Whitecourt, Alberta. He later pursued higher education, earning a PhD in Sociology from the University of Alberta in 1973. He joined the university's faculty in 1969 and spent nearly three decades as a professor before retiring in 1996.

Pannu transitioned into politics in 1997 when he was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Edmonton-Strathcona under the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP). In 2000, he became the leader of the Alberta



NDP, making history as one of the first South Asian Canadians to lead a major political party in Canada. He remained in office until 2004, using his platform to champion progressive policies and advocate for workers' rights, affordable housing, and healthcare.

Throughout his career, Pannu was known for his integrity, dedication, and unwavering commitment to public service. His contributions helped pave the way for greater representation of minorities in Canadian politics, leaving behind a lasting legacy.



South African president rejects Trump's accusation of land confiscation

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's recent claims that South Africa is "confiscating land." Ramaphosa emphasized that the country's Expropriation Act is not intended to seize land but rather is a constitutionally-mandated legal process aimed at ensuring equitable public access to land.

The South African Presidency issued a statement dismissing Trump's accusations, explaining that the Expropriation Act is based on constitutional principles. The statement also clarified that many countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., have similar laws that allow land expropriation for public purposes.

Trump made his remarks on Truth Social, threatening to cut off all future funding to South Africa until a full investigation of the land situation is conducted. In response, Ramaphosa expressed openness to discussing South Africa's land reform policy with the Trump administration.

The Expropriation Act was signed into law by Ramaphosa in January 2024, repealing the apartheid-era Expropriation Act of 1975. The law allows the government to expropriate land for public purposes, provided just and equitable compensation is offered.

Iranian president vows to strengthen ties with Azerbaijan



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed his country's commitment to enhancing relations with Azerbaijan in various sectors, including economic, political, cultural, defense, and security. He made these remarks during a meeting with Hikmat Hajiyev, assistant to the Azerbaijani president, in Tehran. Pezeshkian called for the swift removal of obstacles to cooperation in trade and transportation, emphasizing that maintaining the territorial integrity of regional countries is a core principle of Iran's foreign policy. He also stressed the importance of unity among Muslim nations to prevent foreign interference and division.

Hajiyev, who was visiting Iran at the invitation of Iranian political aide Mehdi Sanaei, reiterated Azerbaijan's strong commitment to expanding ties with Iran. He noted that the groundwork for further cooperation was already in place, and both countries are eager to deepen their relations.

Belgium's new government sworn in after months of political deadlock

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Belgium's new government was sworn in, ending months of political deadlock over forming a stable coalition. Bart De Wever, leader of the Flemish nationalist New Flemish Alliance (N-VA), took office as Prime Minister, marking the first time a Flemish nationalist has led the federal government.

The swearing-in ceremony took place at the Royal Palace, where De Wever and 14 ministers took the oath before King Philippe. The new coalition, called the 'Arizona' alliance, includes five major parties: the N-VA, the Flemish Christian Democrats, the socialist Vooruit, the French-speaking Reformist



Movement, and the centrist Les Engagés.

The coalition agreement, finalized after challenging negotiations, outlines several key priorities, such as increasing defense spending, reforming healthcare, and implementing stricter asylum policies. Discussions also focused on budget cuts, tax hikes, and pension reforms aimed at stabilizing Belgium's public finances.

Belgium's political landscape is often divided along regional and linguistic lines, with the country split into three regions: Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels-Capital, each with its own government. The government formation process is often prolonged due to these divisions.

EU leaders focus on strengthening military capabilities at first-ever defense meeting

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

European Union leaders convened for their first-ever defense meeting, emphasizing the need to enhance military capabilities, increase defense funding, and strengthen strategic partnerships. European Council President Antonio Costa highlighted the urgency of addressing critical defense gaps, particularly in air and missile defense, ammunition production, and military mobility, in collaboration with NATO.

Defense spending among 23 EU member states has risen by 30 percent from 2021 to 2024, with an average of 2 percent of GDP allocated to defense. Costa stressed the importance of strengthening the European

defense industry to accelerate military equipment production.

With the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, EU leaders reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Ukraine "for as long as necessary and whatever it takes." Costa noted that EU defense discussions have shifted from debating whether to strengthen defense to how to implement these goals, focusing on creating a more independent European security framework.

Additionally, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer participated in the discussions. The summit occurred amid growing concerns that the EU must be more self-reliant in defense matters, as reliance on the United States wanes.



South Korea and the US discuss potential top diplomats' meeting in Washington

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

South Korea is in talks with the United States to arrange a meeting between their top diplomats in Washington. If confirmed, this would be the first such meeting since the start of the Trump administration. Seoul's foreign ministry confirmed the discussions and indicated that Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul may visit Washington as early as next week to meet US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The two sides have previously expressed intentions to coordinate for in-person talks.

Cho's visit is expected to take place before his potential trips to Germany and South Africa for international gatherings later this month. The Munich Security Conference in Germany runs from February 14-16, and South Africa will host the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting from February 20-21.

Cho's trip would mark his first overseas visit since the political instability caused by President Yoon Suk Yeol's brief martial law declaration and impeachment. Cho will likely discuss a range of topics with Rubio, including the bilateral alliance, North Korea's threats, and key economic concerns. The visit may also be an opportunity for Cho to emphasize South Korea's international commitments and diplomatic role, despite the temporary political leadership in the country.

Turkish, Syrian presidents discuss security and economic cooperation

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Syria's interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa have reaffirmed their commitment to restoring relations and boosting cooperation between their nations.

At a joint press conference in Ankara, Erdogan offered support for rebuilding Syria's devastated cities and emphasized Turkey's role in enhancing security in Syria, particularly by combating terrorist organizations like the Kurdish People's Protection Units, which Turkey sees as linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party.



In addition to security cooperation, both leaders expressed their intent to improve economic ties. Erdogan pointed to trade, civil aviation, energy, health, and education as key areas for collaboration. Al-Sharaa echoed these sentiments, stressing the importance of reviving commercial relations between the two countries to help Syria's economic recovery.

Al-Sharaa also invited Erdogan to visit Damascus soon, marking a significant step in their efforts to restore diplomatic and economic relations. Turkey, which cut ties with Syria in 2011, has pledged to support Syria's transition to a peaceful government and the drafting of a new constitution.

Former German president Horst Koehler dies at 81



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Horst Koehler, former President of Germany, has passed away at the age of 81 following an illness. Koehler served as Germany's president from 2004 to 2010 but resigned unexpectedly in May 2010 after his remarks on the overseas operations of Germany's military stirred controversy.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier expressed his condolences and praised Koehler's service to the country. Before his presidency, Koehler was head of the IMF and held several roles in the civil service and banking. He was known for his belief in Germany's strength and the creativity of its people.

Thousands flee homes as Australia battles massive floods

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



A woman has died, and thousands of people have been forced to evacuate as northern Queensland faces severe flooding due to torrential rainfall. More than 1,000mm (39 inches) of rain has fallen in parts of the region, with record rainfall expected to continue. Meteorologists warn that these floods may be the worst in over 60 years.

The floodwaters have inundated thousands of homes, and officials have ordered evacuations in several towns. One woman died after a State Emergency Service dinghy capsized while rescuing people. Thousands are without power, and roads remain cut off in many areas. Authorities have warned residents to be cautious of crocodiles in the floodwaters, adding to the region's already challenging conditions.

Cambodia completes restoration of 1,000-year-old temple in Angkor Park

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Cambodia has completed the restoration of a more than 1,000-year-old brick temple located on the north side of Phnom Krom Temple within the UNESCO-listed Angkor Archaeological Park, according to the APSARA National Authority (ANA). The Hindu temple, originally built in the late ninth century, measures about six meters in width and over seven meters in height.

The restoration work, which began in June 2024, was completed by late December 2024. Ros Visoth, a conservation officer at the ANA's Department of Conservation of Monuments and Preventive Archaeology, explained that the temple had deteriorated significantly before the restoration, with damage to the roof and walls caused by weather, plant growth, and aging.

The restoration team salvaged intact bricks where possible, cutting new bricks to fill in gaps and reconstructing the walls to align with



the original design. Visoth believes that the temple will now become an attractive site for visitors.

Phnom Krom Temple, situated on a hill, offers stunning views of Tonle Sap Lake, nearby villages, and picturesque rice fields, making it a popular destination

for tourists. The Angkor Archaeological Park, located in Siem Reap province, spans 401 square kilometers and is home to 91 ancient temples built between the ninth and 13th centuries. In 2024, the park attracted over 1 million international tourists, generating \$47.8 million in ticket sales.

Netanyahu supports Trump's idea of displacing Palestinians from Gaza

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed support for U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal to allow Palestinians in Gaza to leave, despite international criticism. Netanyahu emphasized the idea of allowing Gazans to relocate, calling it a "good idea" and suggesting that the Gaza Strip should be rebuilt.

While Netanyahu did not directly address Trump's suggestion of a U.S. takeover of Gaza, he supported the concept of facilitating voluntary movement for Gazans. The proposal has been criticized by rights groups as ethnic cleansing, though Netanyahu dismissed concerns about U.S. troop involvement and financing for Gaza's reconstruction.



Trump's suggestion that Palestinians could relocate to other Arab nations, including Egypt and Jordan, has been rejected by those countries and Palestinian leaders.

Trump delays Mexico tariff hike, says 'deal' is coming



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

U.S. President Donald Trump announced a one-month delay in the planned tariff hikes on Mexican goods, signaling that a "deal" may be in the works. The decision came after a conversation with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, who agreed to deploy 10,000 Mexican soldiers to secure the U.S.-Mexico border and curb the flow of fentanyl and illegal migrants.

Trump's tariff hikes on imports from Mexico and Canada, as well as goods from China, were set to go into effect soon. However, the new deal with Mexico, which includes a temporary halt on the tariff increases, is aimed at addressing concerns over border security and illegal immigration.

Trump also spoke with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, discussing various issues, including drug trafficking through the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders. The U.S. government is engaged in ongoing negotiations with both Mexico and Canada to address trade and security concerns.

PM Modi virtually attends Maha Kumbhabhishekam of Jakarta Murugan Temple

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated virtually in the Maha Kumbhabhishekam ceremony at the Shri Sanathana Dharma Aalayam (Jakarta Murugan Temple) in Indonesia, the country's first temple dedicated to Lord Murugan. Modi praised the temple as a beacon of spirituality and cultural unity and expressed his deep connection to the event despite being miles away.

Highlighting the historical and cultural ties between India and Indonesia, Modi spoke of shared religious and spiritual heritage, emphasizing the bond through figures like Lord Murugan, Sri Ram, and Lord Buddha. He celebrated the temple's inauguration as a testament to their shared values, noting that the temple embodies a confluence of Indian, Javanese, and Balinese traditions. The ceremony was conducted with the support of 72 Gurukals from India, reflecting the deep cultural exchange between the two nations.



Shivakumar dismisses Delhi exit poll predictions, urges patience until results

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Karnataka Congress President and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar dismissed the predictions made by exit polls regarding the Delhi Assembly elections, expressing that he does not place any faith in such surveys. Speaking with the media in Bengaluru, Shivakumar stated, "I do not believe in any exit poll results. Let's wait for the final decision of the voters." The exit polls had forecast a victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party in Delhi.

Shivakumar also commented on the ordinance aimed at preventing harassment by certain microfinancing institutions (MFIs). He confirmed that the ordinance has been sent to the Governor for approval and will be finalized after discussions with Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

On the topic of Bengaluru's second international airport, Shivakumar clarified that while the government has plans to build the airport, the final decision on its location will be made after consultations with the Airport Authority of India and other relevant authorities. The potential sites under consideration include Bidadi, Nelamangala, Solur, and Tumakuru.

Priyanka Gandhi to start extensive visit to Wayanad, dismisses 'tourist MP' claims



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will begin an extensive visit to her Wayanad constituency this Saturday. During the visit, she will interact directly with the people and address their concerns. A close associate of Priyanka clarified that she is not a "tourist MP," emphasizing that her upcoming visit will be focused on addressing the needs of her constituents. Her visit is expected to last until February 10.

Priyanka plans to visit all seven Assembly constituencies across the Kozhikode, Wayanad, and Malappuram districts. While there will be no large public meetings, she intends to personally meet with the people to understand their issues.

Additionally, she will engage with local party leaders to discuss the Congress party's expectations for them. Her two constituency offices—one in Kalpetta (Wayanad) and the other in Mukkom (Malappuram and Kozhikode)—will serve as bases for her activities. These offices, previously used by her brother Rahul Gandhi, are staffed by the same team.

In an effort to better connect with the locals, Priyanka has started learning Malayalam. She has also instructed local Congress leaders to update her on the developments within the constituency every week. Priyanka, who won her electoral debut in Wayanad with a margin of over four lakh votes, had previously stayed in the region for a brief familiarization visit following her win.

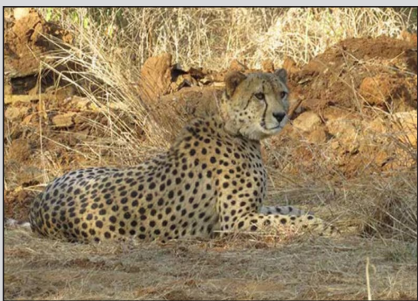
Karnataka HC grants temporary relief to Yediyurappa, denies plea to quash POCSO case

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



The Karnataka High Court has denied the request of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa to quash charges against him under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) case. However, the court granted him anticipatory bail, providing immunity from arrest. The case will proceed in the POCSO court, but the court did not comment on the eligibility of the case as presented by Yediyurappa. The prosecution argued that Yediyurappa's plea to dismiss the case was strategic, filed after the complainant's mother, who had initially filed the FIR, passed away. Yediyurappa's defense claimed that the petition was filed without knowledge of the mother's death, and he disputed the complainant's credibility. The charges stem from allegations that Yediyurappa sexually harassed a minor girl and attempted to cover it up by paying the victim to delete evidence.

New wildlife corridor will allow cheetahs to roam freely between Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Cheetahs from Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park will soon be able to move into Rajasthan thanks to a new wildlife corridor under development. Rajasthan's Forest Minister Sanjay Sharma confirmed that the corridor will allow for the free movement of tigers and cheetahs between the two states. This will help integrate the cheetahs into Rajasthan's natural environment, as they will now be able to enter the state from Kuno without barriers.

The wildlife corridor will span approximately 6,500 square kilometers, linking Dholpur in Rajasthan to Sita Mata Wildlife Sanctuary. An official memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed soon between the two states, and the project will be jointly monitored by both state governments. This new development comes after India's cheetah reintroduction program, which saw the release of eight cheetahs in Kuno National Park in September 2022. As of February 2024, five additional cheetahs were released into the park, with one female, Veera, giving birth to cubs just days earlier.

Foreign delegation at Maha Kumbh praises Indian culture after taking sacred dip

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A special 118-member foreign delegation, including diplomats and heads of missions from 77 countries, visited the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, and took a sacred dip at the Triveni Sangam. The delegation, which included ambassadors and their families, praised India's culture, spirituality, and the event's organization. They expressed gratitude to the Indian and Uttar Pradesh governments for the opportunity to witness the historic occasion and immerse themselves in the sacred waters.

Colombia's Ambassador Victor Chaveri called the experience "wonderful" and

emphasized the power and spirituality at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers. Diana, wife of the Russian Ambassador, appreciated the organization and cleanliness of the event, while Slovakia's Ambassador Robert stressed the peace and unity at the site. Cuban Ambassador Juan Carlos Marjan and Ecuadorian Ambassador Fernando also shared their awe at the rich spiritual experience.

Senior BJP leader Siddharth Nath Singh affirmed that world-class facilities were provided at the event and noted that more than 30 crore people, both Indian and foreign, were expected to take a dip. The Uttar Pradesh government projected a total of 45-50 crore visitors.

SC declines to intervene in FIRs related to Justice Hema Committee report



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Supreme Court has declined to interfere with the criminal investigations launched following the Justice Hema Committee report, which highlighted the exploitation of women in the Malayalam film industry. The court ruled that once information about a cognizable offense is revealed, criminal law must take its course. The Kerala High Court will examine the grievances of those who provided testimonies to the committee and ensure that FIRs are filed based on the Special Investigation Team's (SIT) findings.

The Justice Hema Committee report, which included testimonies from 51 industry professionals, exposed severe issues like casting couches and poor working conditions. The report prompted the registration of 11 FIRs against various film industry figures. Several actors and directors are now facing legal scrutiny, with ongoing investigations.

Supreme Court grants police protection to Discovery officials after threats from Asaram Bapu's supporters

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Supreme Court has granted police protection to officials from Discovery+ after they received threats from groups claiming to be supporters of Asaram Bapu, following the release of the documentary "Cult of Fear: Asaram Bapu?" The court issued an interim order to ensure the safety of the officials and their colleagues, who have been subjected to criminal intimidation and threats. The documentary explores the life of Asaram Bapu, who is serving a life sentence for crimes including rape and murder.

The petition filed by Discovery+ highlighted the threats, including social media harassment and a group attempting to forcefully enter the company's office. The Supreme Court directed authorities to



provide adequate protection to the officials and ensure they can continue working without fear of harm. The court has set a hearing for March, while Discovery+ waits for the final protection order.

Calcutta HC rejects Bengal government's plea for death penalty in R.G. Kar case



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Calcutta High Court has rejected the West Bengal government's petition seeking the death penalty for Sanjay Roy, the sole convict in the rape and murder of a junior doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College & Hospital. However, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) petitioned the court for the death penalty, which the bench has accepted. The court ruled that only the CBI, as the investigating agency, has the right to file such a petition.

Roy was sentenced to life imprisonment for the crime, with the special court finding that the case did not meet the criteria for the "rarest of the rare" punishment. The victim's parents, however, have expressed opposition to the death penalty, believing that Roy was not the sole perpetrator. The ruling is a significant moment in the case, which has sparked ongoing debate in the state.

Haryana Minister Anil Vij calls for deportation of illegal immigrants, citing U.S. example



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Suggested that India should adopt a policy similar to the U.S. and deport "illegal immigrants" in the country. His comments followed the deportation of 104 Indian immigrants by the U.S., which arrived at Amritsar airport. Vij stated that countries have the right to deport individuals residing illegally, adding that these individuals should be sent back to where they were born.

Vij's remarks came after an investigation was launched against travel agents who allegedly promised the deportees a "green card" and citizenship. The investigation will be overseen by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed to tackle issues of illegal immigration. Meanwhile, Punjab's Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann criticized the treatment of deportees by the Haryana government, accusing them of further distressing individuals who had already faced hardships.

Kejriwal accuses exit polls of manipulation, says AAP candidates are being poached

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Arvind Kejriwal, national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), dismissed exit polls predicting a BJP victory in the Delhi Assembly elections as fake, alleging they were part of a strategy to disrupt his party's momentum.

In a post on X, he criticized surveys showing the BJP winning more than 55 seats, stating that AAP candidates had received offers to switch parties in exchange for money and ministerial positions. Kejriwal questioned why the BJP would need to poach AAP members if they were truly leading.

Exit polls, including one by Axis My India,



forecasted BJP securing 45-55 seats, while AAP would only manage 15-25. Congress was predicted to win just 0-1 seat. Kejriwal's comments came amid allegations that BJP leaders were attempting to destabilize AAP with bribes. AAP MP Sanjay Singh accused the BJP of running an "Operation Lotus" to undermine the party's strength.

Arunachal Christian body plans protests against anti-conversion law

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Arunachal Christian Forum (ACF) has announced a series of protests against the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act of 1978, a 46-year-old anti-conversion law that the state BJP government intends to implement. ACF president Tarh Miri revealed that they will begin a week-long fast on February 10, followed by a mass prayer and a protest in front of the state Assembly on March 6, when the Act is expected to be discussed. Miri criticized the law, claiming that despite its title, it curtails the religious

freedoms of the people.

Miri emphasized that the law, which aims to prohibit forced conversions, has remained inactive for decades. He pointed out that previous attempts to address the issue with the state government, including discussions with Chief Secretary and a letter to Chief Minister Pema Khandu, were met with indifference.

The Chief Minister had previously indicated that the law would be implemented after drafting the necessary rules, following a directive from the Gauhati High Court.

Gujarat prepares for Parikrama Mahotsav with an expected 15 lakh devotees

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Gujarat is gearing up for the Parikrama Mahotsav at the Shri Arasuri Ambaji Mata Temple, a significant religious event set to take place from February 9 to February 11. The event, which includes a circumambulation of 51 Shakti Peeths, is expected to draw over 15 lakh devotees. Cultural programs, including a light and sound show at Gabbar Hill, will be held in the evenings, adding to the festival's vibrancy. The tradition, initiated in 2004 by then-Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, has grown significantly over the years. The temple now hosts replicas of all 51 Shakti Peeths, allowing devotees to complete a



parikrama in one location. The festival aligns with the auspicious days of Magha Sud 12 to Magha Sud 14, marking a major religious gathering in Gujarat.

Nitish Kumar inaugurates 172 projects in Sheikhpura

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar inaugurated 172 developmental projects in Sheikhpura district as part of his 'Pragati Yatra,' totaling an investment of Rs 133.24 crore. This included 120 completed projects worth Rs 96.33 crore and 52 new projects, valued at Rs 36.71 crore. Kumar's visit featured the inauguration of a sports ground, a renovated Rajiv Gandhi Service Centre, and a library. Additionally, he visited the Kasturba Gandhi girls' school, inspected a health and wellness center, and reviewed stalls from various departments.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the success of the Jivika program, which



empowers women through self-help groups. He further directed officials to build a new Panchayat building by June 2025. As part of his visit, cheques totaling Rs 18.56 crore were distributed to beneficiaries under the Mukhya Mantri Udhyami Yojana, and Rs 49.46 crore was given to over 1,200 self-help groups, underscoring the importance of improving community welfare and self-reliance.

Karnataka HC quashes plea for CBI investigation into MUDA case against CM Siddaramaiah



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Karnataka High Court has quashed a petition seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The case revolves around allegations that Siddaramaiah used his political influence to secure compensation for sites in his wife's name in exchange for land acquired by MUDA. The court ruled that the Karnataka Lokayukta could continue investigating the matter. The petitioner, who sought the CBI's involvement, criticized the ongoing investigation by the Lokayukta, arguing that an independent agency was necessary. The defense contended that the case did not warrant such an investigation and that the Lokayukta, an independent body, could handle the case without external intervention. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is also investigating related matters, with notices issued to Siddaramaiah's wife and the Karnataka Urban Development Minister.

Tejashwi Yadav blames Nitish Kumar for rising crime in Bihar



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Bihar's Leader of Opposition, Tejashwi Yadav, has criticized Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for the rising crime rates in the state. Yadav shared a video of armed criminals robbing a petrol pump in Saharsa and accused the Chief Minister of failing to maintain law and order. He claimed that crimes such as rape, murder, and theft have become commonplace in Bihar, attributing the government's weakness to the increasing criminal activity.

Yadav's remarks come amid rising concerns over police actions in Bihar, including the custodial death of a man in Muzaffarpur. The RJD pointed to incidents of brutality by police and the growing lawlessness in the state. Yadav condemned the police for their involvement in the death of Shivam Kumar Jha and expressed outrage over the government's inaction.

Quiksilver, Billabong, and Volcom stores to close across the U.S. as operator files for bankruptcy

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

All Quiksilver, Billabong, and Volcom stores in the United States will close after their operator, Liberated Brands, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in Delaware. Over 100 stores selling apparel for skaters, surfers, and snowboarders will shut down.

Liberated Brands cited economic challenges, rising interest rates, inflation, and shifting consumer preferences as key reasons for the bankruptcy. CEO Todd Hymel noted that while the brands saw a surge in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, expanding their retail footprint from 67 to 140 stores, post-pandemic inflation and increased online shopping led to declining profitability. The shift toward fast fashion also contributed to lower sales.

Despite the closures, parent company Authentic Brands Group assured that the brands will continue under a new operator, ensuring their presence in the market.

Honeywell to split into three companies after investor pressure

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Honeywell has announced plans to split into three independent, publicly traded companies, marking a major shift for one of America's last remaining industrial conglomerates. The decision follows pressure from activist investor Elliott Management, which took a \$5 billion stake in the company.

The company will separate its aerospace and industrial automation divisions, in addition to its previously announced spin-off of the advanced materials unit. Honeywell expects to complete the split in the second half of 2026, with the move being tax-free for shareholders.

Shares fell nearly 4% following the announcement, as the company also issued lower-than-expected financial guidance for 2025. Honeywell forecasted an adjusted profit per share between \$10.10 and \$10.50, below analysts' estimates of \$10.93. Sales projections of \$39.6 billion to \$40.6 billion also fell short of Wall Street expectations.



Despite the short-term market reaction, analysts believe the breakup could unlock long-term value. Honeywell's aerospace division, which generates about 40% of its revenue and supplies major clients like Boeing and Airbus, has been valued between \$90 billion and \$120 billion.

Elliott Management pushed for the breakup after Honeywell's stock underperformed

compared to the broader market. CEO Vimal Kapur has focused on streamlining operations, shedding assets outside the aviation, automation, and energy sectors.

The move follows similar splits by industrial giants like General Electric and 3M, reflecting a broader trend of companies spinning off divisions to enhance focus and shareholder value.

BOJ signals more rate hikes as labor shortages drive inflation

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk



The Bank of Japan (BOJ) is shifting focus from weak demand to chronic labor shortages as the key driver of inflation, reinforcing the case for further rate hikes.

Industries like construction, hospitality, and retail are struggling due to worker shortages, pushing wages up by an average of 5.1% in 2024—the highest increase in three decades.

The BOJ now sees wage-driven inflation persisting despite slow economic growth. With inflation above target for nearly three years, the BOJ has raised rates to 0.5% and may go beyond the previously expected 1% peak.

Rising bond yields and a stronger yen reflect growing market expectations for further hikes.

Trump meets U.S. Steel CEO as Nippon Steel takeover remains uncertain

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Donald Trump met with U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt at the White House amid ongoing discussions about the company's proposed \$14.9 billion acquisition by Japan's Nippon Steel. The deal was blocked last month by former President Joe Biden, and Trump has also expressed opposition to foreign ownership of U.S. Steel. While details of the meeting remain unclear, Trump has previously stated his firm stance against the sale, calling U.S. Steel a "once great and powerful" American company that should not be sold to a foreign entity. However, Nippon Steel argues that its acquisition aligns with Trump's vision of strengthening the U.S. economy. Nippon Steel Vice Chairman Takahiro Mori expressed hope that an upcoming meeting between Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba would help advance the deal.



Also at the White House for meetings were Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and FedEx founder Frederick Smith. While it was unclear if they met with Trump, Meta confirmed that Zuckerberg was there to discuss advancing U.S. technological leadership abroad.

India and UK strengthen collaboration on green hydrogen standardization

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), in partnership with the British Standards Institution (BSI) and the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), hosted a two-day workshop to enhance India-UK cooperation on green hydrogen standardization.

The event, part of the UK's Standards Partnership program, aimed to promote safe, scalable, and globally harmonized regulations, codes, and standards (RCS) for green hydrogen production. Discussions also focused on accelerating the adoption of fast-track Publicly Available Specification (PAS) standards and global hydrogen certification.

Abbey Dorian, BSI Energy Sector Lead, highlighted the shared ambition of India and the UK to lead in green hydrogen, supporting their net-zero goals.

The workshop aligned with India's National Green Hydrogen Mission, identifying gaps in standards and leveraging global best practices to enhance certification, testing, and standardization.

Policymakers, technical experts, and industry leaders from both nations participated, with key speakers including BIS Deputy Director General (Standardization-I) Rajiv Sharma, British High Commission's Head of Climate and Energy Laura Aylett, and BSI's Abbey Dorian. The initiative is expected to drive innovation and sustainability in India's green hydrogen sector.

Amazon set to surpass Walmart in revenue for the first time

Amazon is on track to surpass Walmart in revenue for the first time, marking a significant shift in the retail landscape. While Walmart has long been the top revenue generator, Amazon's rapid growth, fueled by its cloud business and e-commerce expansion, is closing the gap. Analysts expect Amazon to report \$187 billion in revenue for the latest quarter, while Walmart, which will announce its earnings later this month, is projected to report \$180 billion. Despite this shift, Walmart remains the leader in annual sales, with projected revenue of nearly \$681 billion for the latest fiscal year, compared to Amazon's estimated \$638 billion.

Amazon Web Services (AWS) has been a key driver of Amazon's revenue surge, more than doubling its earnings since 2020 and now contributing 17% of total sales. The pandemic also accelerated the shift to online shopping, helping Amazon's North American sales more than double since 2019. Few companies have ever reached \$100 billion in quarterly revenue, with Walmart, Amazon, Apple, and UnitedHealth among the select few. CVS Health and McKesson are the closest contenders to joining this exclusive group.

Gautam Adani pledges Rs 10,000 crore for social causes at son's wedding

Gautam Adani, the billionaire industrialist, surprised many by keeping his son Jeet Adani's wedding simple. In a move that has drawn widespread attention, Adani announced a Rs 10,000 crore donation to support social initiatives, primarily in healthcare, education, and skill development. This donation, inspired by Adani's personal philosophy of service, will focus on building accessible healthcare infrastructure, top-tier education facilities, and advanced skill academies to improve employability across all social sectors. The move highlights Adani's shift toward impactful philanthropy over public displays of wealth.

Samsung hopeful but cautious after chairman Lee's acquittal



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Samsung Electronics expressed cautious optimism after Chairman Lee Jae-yong's acquittal in an accounting fraud case. The Seoul High Court upheld his not-guilty verdict, removing a major uncertainty for the company.

While an appeal remains possible, legal experts believe the ruling stabilizes Samsung's leadership after years of legal battles. A company official said they are monitoring the prosecution's response but hope Lee can now focus on his role.

Lee's legal troubles had delayed key investment decisions, particularly in AI chips. With the case behind him, Samsung aims to regain momentum and tackle ongoing challenges.

Samsung and Naver executives to attend AI Action Summit in Paris

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Top executives from South Korea's leading tech firms, including Samsung Electronics and Naver, will participate in the upcoming AI Action Summit in Paris, where global leaders will discuss strategies for the safe development of artificial intelligence (AI).

Naver CEO Choi Soo-yeon and Samsung Electronics President and CTO Cheun Kyung-hoon will attend the two-day event, alongside Bae Kyung-hoon, President of LG AI Research. South Korea's delegation will be led by Minister of Science and ICT Yoo

Sang-im, with Personal Information Protection Commission Chair Ko Hak-soo also in attendance.

The summit will bring together policymakers, tech leaders, and academic experts to address AI challenges and opportunities. Key discussions will include the impact of DeepSeek, an emerging AI model that has sparked global debate.

High-profile attendees include U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, and executives from Alphabet and Microsoft. Last year's AI summit, co-hosted by South



Korea and Britain, resulted in a declaration promoting safe, inclusive, and innovative AI development. The upcoming Paris summit will build on these efforts, continuing discussions on AI safety and global collaboration.

Japan pledges continued support for India's steel sector advancements

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Japan has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting India in adopting advanced steel technologies during the 3rd India-Japan Steel Dialogue held in New Delhi. India, in turn, assured efforts to enhance ease of doing business for Japanese companies investing in the sector.

The discussions focused on strengthening collaboration in technology, skill development, and research, highlighting India's growing steel demand and investment opportunities. Both nations reviewed progress on existing capacity-building initiatives and explored ways to expand strategic ties in steel production, product diversification, and workplace safety.

A key topic was the impact of the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (EU CBAM) on global steel trade. The dialogue,



established under a 2020 Memorandum of Cooperation, serves as a platform for both countries to share insights on economic developments and steel industry trends.

Co-chaired by India's Ministry of Steel and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), the meeting emphasized innovation, sustainable growth, and deeper cooperation in the evolving global steel market.

RBI delays implementation of LCR norms, offering relief to banks



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

In a key decision, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has postponed the implementation of its Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) and project financing norms by one year. Initially set to take effect in April 2025, the new deadline is now March 2026. This extension comes after banks raised concerns that the original timeline would create liquidity challenges, potentially affecting credit flow to businesses and individuals.

The delay is seen as a win for both public and private sector banks, which had expressed fears of a liquidity squeeze, as the LCR guidelines would require substantial capital to be diverted into government bonds, reducing funds available for lending. Implementing the norms could have led to over Rs 4 lakh crore being locked into government securities, limiting banks' ability to boost credit demand and support economic growth.

The RBI's decision to ease the deadline will provide banks with more time to adjust to the new regulations, which aim to bolster the resilience of the banking sector by ensuring sufficient liquidity buffers in the event of a financial crisis. The guidelines were initially designed to increase banks' ability to manage sudden withdrawals and unexpected liquidity shocks.

Despite the concerns, the RBI has emphasized the need for banks to strengthen their liquidity management as part of an evolving banking landscape that includes greater use of digital banking and mobile platforms. The delay in LCR implementation gives financial institutions more time to adapt while maintaining regulatory objectives focused on long-term stability.

India is a key AI market and can be a global leader, says Sam Altman

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has emphasized India's significance in the artificial intelligence (AI) landscape, calling it OpenAI's second-largest market globally and a potential leader in AI development.

Speaking at an event alongside Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Altman clarified that his past comments on India's ability to develop large language models (LLMs) were taken out of context. He expressed confidence in India's AI potential, especially as the country advances its indigenous AI model.

Minister Vaishnaw announced that India's homegrown AI model will be launched within six months at an affordable cost. The initiative aims to create ethical, domestically relevant AI solutions, leveraging a high-end computing facility with 10,000 GPUs, soon to expand to nearly 17,000.



The government plans to subsidize 40% of GPU usage costs, making AI services available for less than Rs100 per hour—significantly cheaper than global

alternatives like ChatGPT. India's model will offer robust computational capacity, positioning it as a major player in the AI industry.

U.S. seizes \$39.5 million in counterfeit Super Bowl gear



Ahead of Super Bowl LIX, U.S. authorities seized \$39.5 million worth of counterfeit sports merchandise, including jerseys, hats, and memorabilia. The operation, led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and in partnership with the NFL, aimed to protect fans from fraudulent goods ahead of the Super Bowl. More than 214,000 fake items were confiscated as part of "Operation Team Player."

The initiative has been running for over a decade and has resulted in the seizure of more than \$455 million in counterfeit merchandise since its inception. Officials urge fans to buy from reputable sources to ensure authenticity.

Glasgow 2026 to host record-setting para sports, cycling, and swimming events

The Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games will feature the largest-ever para sports, track cycling, and swimming programs in its history. Over the course of the Games, which will run from July 23 to August 2, more than 200 gold medals will be up for grabs across 10 sports. The para sports section will see a record 47 medal events, while track cycling will host its biggest program ever, with 26 medal events. Swimming will introduce the men's 800m and women's 1500m freestyle events for the first time, alongside a total of 56 medal events. Athletics will feature the return of the Commonwealth Mile, which has not been held since 1966. Additionally, para athletics will include new events, such as jumping, throwing, and track events. Due to the success of 3x3 basketball and wheelchair basketball, these formats will also be expanded. Phil Batty, CEO of Glasgow 2026, described the event as a "world-class sporting celebration," with praise for the inclusivity and innovation that the Games will bring.

Barcelona dominates Valencia 5-0 to reach Copa del Rey semifinals

FC Barcelona delivered a scintillating 5-0 victory over Valencia, securing their place in the Copa del Rey semifinals. The performance was highlighted by Ferran Torres, who scored a first-half hat-trick in just 30 minutes of play. Barcelona wasted no time, with Torres opening the scoring in the 3rd minute after receiving a precise pass from Alejandro Balde. He quickly doubled the lead, tapping in a rebound off Lamine Yamal's shot, which was saved by the goalkeeper but hit the post. Fermin Lopez made it 3-0 in the 23rd minute with a composed finish as Valencia's defense faltered.

Torres completed his hat-trick shortly after halftime with a superb strike from outside the box, assisted by Raphinha. Yamal, who had earlier hit the post, rounded off the victory in the 59th minute with a low shot that slipped past Valencia's goalkeeper. Barcelona maintained possession dominance, finishing the game with 78% of the ball, leaving Valencia with only 22%. In other Copa del Rey action, Real Sociedad beat Osasuna 2-0, Atletico



Madrid defeated Getafe 5-0, and Real Madrid triumphed over Leganes 3-2 with a dramatic injury-time goal. The semifinal draw will take place in Madrid.

Liverpool overcomes Tottenham 4-0 to reach Carabao Cup final



Liverpool secured a dominant 4-0 victory over Tottenham Hotspur at Anfield to book their place in the 2024 Carabao Cup final. After losing 1-0 in the first leg, Liverpool produced a clinical performance, with Mohamed Salah playing a key role. The first goal came in the 34th minute, when Yves Bissouma's giveaway in midfield allowed Salah to assist Darwin Núñez, whose shot was deflected by Spurs' goalkeeper Antonín Kinský, setting up Cody Gakpo for the opener.

In the second half, Salah converted from the penalty spot in the 50th minute after Núñez was fouled by Kinský. Tottenham, hoping to end a 17-year trophy drought, struggled to find a response. Dominik Szoboszlai made it 3-0, finishing from a Conor Bradley cross, and Virgil van Dijk sealed the 4-0 victory with a towering header from a corner. With this performance, Liverpool secured their spot in the final against Newcastle United at Wembley, where they will look to defend the title they won last season.

England to play Afghanistan in Champions Trophy despite boycott calls

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has confirmed that England will face Afghanistan in the 2025 ICC Men's Champions Trophy on February 26 in Lahore, despite calls from various politicians and human rights activists to boycott the match due to the Taliban's restrictions on women's rights in Afghanistan. While acknowledging the concerns raised, ECB Chair Richard Thompson emphasized the importance of a coordinated international response rather than unilateral action. Nearly 200 UK politicians, along with human rights groups, had urged the ECB to refuse to play against Afghanistan as

a protest against the Taliban's ban on women's cricket.

The ECB, however, rejected the idea of a boycott, highlighting their support for Afghan female cricketers. The organization has donated £100,000 to the Global Refugee Cricket Fund and urged the International Cricket Council (ICC) to take stronger action. UK officials, including Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, are engaging with international partners to address the issue. Thompson reiterated that, while cricket cannot solve Afghanistan's broader challenges, the sport must continue to support Afghan women and girls.



Marcelo retires from football after glittering career

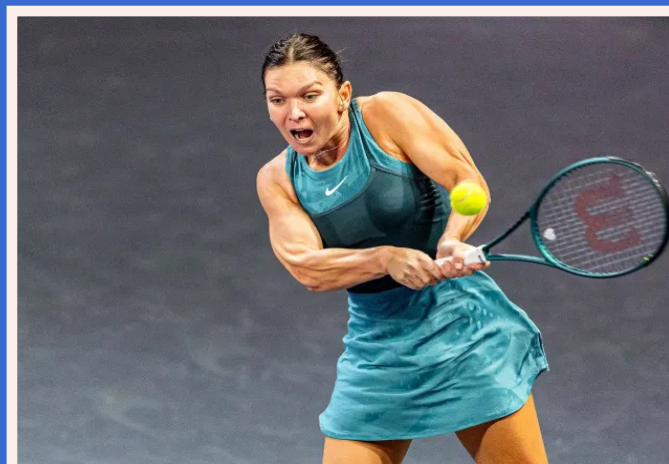
Former Real Madrid and Brazil left-back Marcelo has announced his retirement from professional football at the age of 36, bringing to a close a legendary career that spanned nearly two decades. Marcelo spent 15 years at Real Madrid, winning 25 major trophies, including five UEFA Champions League titles and six La Liga titles. He captained Madrid to their record-extending 14th Champions League victory in 2022 and made 546 appearances for the club, earning a place as one of the greatest players in its history.

On the international stage, Marcelo earned 58 caps for Brazil and was part of the squad that won the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, as well as Olympic medals in 2008 and 2012. After leaving Real Madrid, Marcelo played briefly for Olympiacos and returned to Brazil with Fluminense, where he won the 2023 Copa Libertadores. His playing career concluded in 2024 following a dispute with Fluminense's coach. In his farewell statement, Marcelo expressed gratitude to his fans and hinted at his potential future involvement in football.



Alphonso Davies extends Bayern Munich contract until 2030

Canada captain Alphonso Davies has signed a five-year extension with Bayern Munich, ending transfer speculation. The 24-year-old left-back, who joined from Vancouver Whitecaps in 2018, has made 220 appearances, winning five Bundesliga titles and the Champions League. Davies has 56 caps and 15 goals for Canada, leading them at the 2022 FIFA World Cup.



Ravindra Jadeja joins elite list of Indian bowlers with 600 international wickets



Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has become the fifth Indian cricketer to take 600 international wickets. Jadeja reached the milestone during India's first One-Day International (ODI) against England in Nagpur, finishing with figures of 3-26 as India bowled out England for 248. He joined an elite list of Indian bowlers that includes Anil Kumble (953 wickets), Ravichandran Ashwin (765 wickets), Harbhajan Singh (707 wickets), and Kapil Dev (687 wickets). Since making his debut in 2009, Jadeja has been a key figure in India's bowling attack across formats, with 323 wickets in Tests and 223 in ODIs.

Jadeja, who retired from T20 Internationals following India's 2024 World Cup victory, has cemented his legacy as one of India's finest cricketers. His impressive all-round skills and consistency with the ball make him a vital asset for India in all formats of the game.

Pakistan coach Aaqib Javed says India should worry about Bumrah's fitness

Pakistan's interim head coach Aaqib Javed believes India should be concerned about Jasprit Bumrah's fitness ahead of their Champions Trophy clash on February 23 in Dubai.

Bumrah has been out since the Sydney Test due to back spasms and is undergoing assessment in Bengaluru, with his participation pending further scans. "A bowler like him is a big plus, but we won't plan everything around him," Aaqib said.

Defending the selection of Faheem Ashraf and Khushdil Shah despite criticism, Aaqib emphasized their suitability for subcontinent conditions. He also set a target of 325-350 runs for Pakistan in the Champions Trophy and the upcoming tri-series against New Zealand and South Africa.

LeBron James goes No. 1 as NBA All-Star Game adopts new tournament format

LeBron James was selected as the No. 1 overall pick in the NBA All-Star draft, marking his 21st appearance in the prestigious event. The 2024 NBA All-Star Game introduced a fresh twist with a new four-team tournament format. Three of the teams are drafted, while the winner of the Rising Stars competition fills the fourth spot.

Charles Barkley, known for his playful banter, embraced an international theme, picking stars like Nikola Jokic, Giannis Antetokounmpo, and others from around the globe. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver had entertained the idea of a U.S. vs. World format, but concerns over roster balance were a challenge.



The draft results are as follows:

- **Team Shaq:** LeBron James, Stephen Curry, Anthony Davis, Jayson Tatum, Kevin Durant, Damian Lillard, James Harden, Jaylen Brown
- **Team Kenny:** Anthony Edwards, Jalen Brunson, Jaren Jackson Jr., Jalen Williams, Darius Garland, Evan Mobley, Cade Cunningham, Tyler Herro
- **Team Charles:** Nikola Jokic, Giannis Antetokounmpo, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Victor Wembanyama, Pascal Siakam, Alperen Sengun, Karl-Anthony Towns, Donovan Mitchell

With hopes of creating a more competitive event, this new format aims to avoid the one-sided outcome of last year's 211-186 scoreline.

Antonio Gates, Eric Allen, Jared Allen, and Sterling Sharpe elected to Pro Football Hall of Fame

The Pro Football Hall of Fame announced its Class of 2025, featuring Antonio Gates, Eric Allen, Jared Allen, and Sterling Sharpe as the newest inductees. This year's class is the smallest since 2005, due to recent changes in the voting process.

Sharpe, elected as the sole senior candidate, made history by becoming the first Hall of Famer alongside his brother, Shannon Sharpe, marking a special family achievement. Allen, Allen, and Gates were selected from the modern-era candidates, following a competitive process from a pool of 167 nominees.

Among those who did not make the cut were Mike Holmgren and Eli Manning. However, Willie Anderson, Torry Holt, Luke Kuechly, and Adam Vinatieri made it to the final round for the Class of 2026.

In a unique twist, the new inductees learned of their honor in memorable



ways. Eric Allen and Jared Allen were surprised at home by Hall of Famers, while Gates and Sharpe had the announcement made to them at various locations.

The Class of 2025 will be officially enshrined on August 2 at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton.

Washington Commanders' Jayden Daniels wins offensive rookie of the year



Washington Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels has been named the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year after a stellar 2024 season. The former LSU star, selected as the No. 2 overall pick in the NFL Draft, helped the Commanders make a dramatic turnaround, going from a four-win team in 2023 to 12 wins and an NFC Championship appearance in 2024. Daniels threw for 3,568 yards, 25 touchdowns, and nine interceptions, also adding 891 rushing yards and six touchdowns on the ground. His 14 wins (including playoffs) tied him with Ben Roethlisberger for the most wins by a rookie quarterback in NFL history. His remarkable debut season has raised expectations for his future in the league.

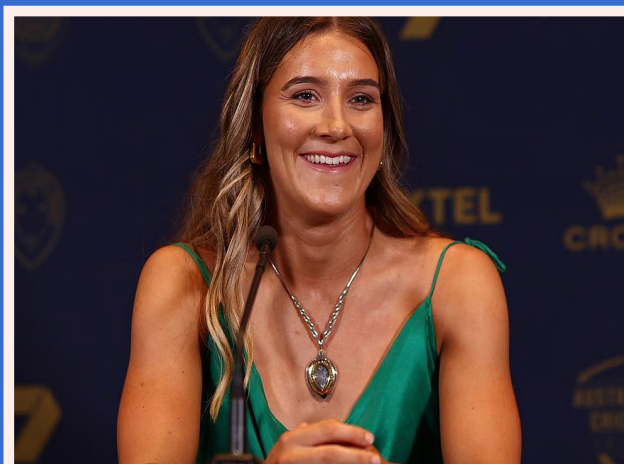
Josh Allen wins NFL MVP, beating Lamar Jackson and other finalists



Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen has won the 2024 NFL MVP award, edging out top contenders Lamar Jackson of the Baltimore Ravens, Saquon Barkley of the New York Giants, Joe Burrow of the Cincinnati Bengals, and Jared Goff of the Detroit Lions. Allen had an incredible season, accumulating 3,731 passing yards, 28 touchdowns, and just six interceptions. In addition to his impressive passing stats, he also rushed for 531 yards and 12 rushing touchdowns, showcasing his dual-threat ability. His performances helped the Buffalo Bills secure a 13-4 regular-season record and the No. 2 seed in the AFC. However, the Bills' playoff run was cut short in the AFC Championship Game, where they were eliminated by the Kansas City Chiefs.

Simona Halep announces retirement from tennis

Former world No. 1 and two-time Grand Slam champion Simona Halep has retired, saying her body can no longer endure the demands of competition. Halep won the 2018 French Open, 2019 Wimbledon, and spent 64 weeks as world No. 1, securing 22 WTA titles. Her 2024 comeback was cut short by injury and a doping suspension, later reduced to nine months.



Annabel Sutherland calls for more women's matches at major stadiums

Annabel Sutherland, winner of the Belinda Clark Award, has called for more women's cricket matches to be played at major stadiums, citing the record attendance at the Ashes Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) as evidence. The 23-year-old all-rounder, who made history with her century in an Ashes Test, emphasized that Australia's dominant women's team deserves a larger stage.

Anupam Kher launches International Actor Prepares Awards



Veteran actor Anupam Kher has unveiled the International Actor Prepares Awards, an exciting new initiative to honor excellence in acting. The awards, launched to commemorate the 20th anniversary of his renowned acting institute, Actor Prepares, are designed to recognize global talent and celebrate the craft of acting. Kher, who has seen tremendous success in both Bollywood and Hollywood, expressed his hope that the awards will continue to nurture aspiring actors from all corners of the world.

Actor Prepares has hosted numerous workshops and events with world-renowned filmmakers and actors, including The Wachowskis, Ang Lee, Danny Boyle, and Robert De Niro. Kher, who has starred in countless films, is deeply passionate about mentoring the next generation of talent, and this award is a testament to his dedication to the craft.

The announcement of the awards has garnered significant attention, and the first ceremony is expected to take place in 2025. With Kher's leadership and the institute's extensive network, the International Actor Prepares Awards is poised to become a prestigious platform for emerging actors globally.

Kangana Ranaut opens café 'The Mountain Story' in the Himalayas

Kangana Ranaut, known for her bold career moves both on and off the screen, has ventured into the hospitality industry with the opening of her café, 'The Mountain Story,' nestled in the breathtaking Himalayas. Describing the café as an "extension of herself," Ranaut said the space reflects her Himachali roots, offering a cozy, rustic ambiance with stunning views of the mountains.

The café, set to open on February 14, aims to bring a touch of Bollywood glamour to the serene hills while offering visitors a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle of urban life. It will feature a menu that celebrates local Himachali cuisine, and Ranaut envisions it as a destination for both tourists and locals to unwind and connect with nature.

Ranaut's decision to launch the café comes on the heels of her successful directorial venture, *Emergency*, which showcased her multifaceted talents. She is also currently shooting her next film with R. Madhavan, marking their reunion after *Tanu Weds Manu Returns*. The café's launch adds a new layer to Ranaut's expanding portfolio of ventures.

Elton John and Brandi Carlile collaborate on album 'Who Believes In Angels?'

Elton John and Brandi Carlile have teamed up to create 'Who Believes in Angels?,' an album set for release on April 4. This highly anticipated collaboration follows Elton's retirement from touring in 2023, and he has described the album as one of the most challenging yet rewarding projects of his career. "This feels like the start of my career, Mark 2," Elton shared, signaling the fresh musical direction he is taking in this new phase of his life.



Brandi Carlile, known for her raw, emotional songwriting, has praised Elton's

creative vision throughout the recording process. Together, they've crafted a

collection that celebrates joy, resilience, and the beauty of finding hope in uncertain times.

Carlile described the experience as "challenging and inspiring," and the album's tracks reflect the personal growth both artists have experienced in recent years.

Featuring 10 tracks, 'Who Believes in Angels?' marks a bold new musical chapter for both artists, bringing their unique voices and perspectives together in an album that promises to resonate deeply with listeners worldwide.

Jim Sarbh-starrer 'Next, Please' explores love and reality through virtual dating

Jim Sarbh stars in 'Next, Please,' a thought-provoking short film that delves into the complex dynamics of modern relationships in the age of virtual reality. Directed by Rishav Kapoor, the film is set in a prohibition-era Mumbai speakeasy, where Arpita (Shreya Dhanwanthary), a cynical woman disillusioned by love, participates in a virtual dating experience. However, when the VR headset is removed, she is confronted with the unsettling reality behind the digital experience she had just been part of.



Presented by Royal Stag Barrel Select Shorts and Chaitanya Tamhane, 'Next, Please' challenges societal perceptions of love and relationships, raising critical questions about the authenticity of digital interactions. With the unreleased song *Kadamon Mein Tere Ae Sanam* by legendary composer Madan Mohan featured in the film, 'Next, Please' is a groundbreaking production, as it marks

the first new song from the composer in over two decades.

The short film's exploration of the dissonance between virtual and real-world connections resonates deeply in today's digital age, where the boundaries between physical and online relationships often blur.

Rihanna stars as Smurfette in new 'Smurfs' trailer

Rihanna leads the cast of 'The Smurfs,' a musical animated film from Paramount Pictures. The trailer for the film, directed by Chris Miller, introduces a fresh take on the beloved franchise, with Rihanna voicing the iconic character of Smurfette. The story follows Smurfette and her companions as they journey into the human world to rescue Papa Smurf, voiced by John Goodman, from the evil Gargamel and his ally, Razamel.

The film features a star-studded cast, including James Corden, Nick Offerman, Daniel Levy, Sandra Oh, Octavia Spencer, and Kurt Russell. Rihanna also lends her voice to a rendition of *Heaven is a Place on Earth*, with additional contributions from Cardi B. Blending 2D and 3D animation styles, *The Smurfs* is set for release on July 18, 2025, in both English and Hindi.

Nick Jonas absent from Priyanka Chopra's brother's pre-wedding celebrations

Nick Jonas was noticeably absent from the pre-wedding celebrations for Priyanka Chopra's brother, Siddharth Chopra, which have been making headlines recently.

While Priyanka attended the festivities with her daughter Malti Marie and in-laws, sources close to the couple suggest that Jonas' busy professional commitments prevented him from being present.

Nonetheless, insiders are hopeful he will attend the main wedding ceremonies.

Priyanka shared glimpses of the Haldi ceremony on Instagram, where she was seen dancing joyfully in a bright yellow salwar suit. She later attended the Mehndi ceremony in a sparkling floral gown.

Meanwhile, Siddharth and his fiancée, Neelam Upadhyaya, who got engaged in August 2024, are planning an extravagant wedding after their intimate Roka ceremony in April.

The couple's growing fanbase has been eagerly awaiting updates on the upcoming celebrations, with fans hoping for more beautiful moments to be shared on social media.

Usher reveals why he missed out on starring in 'Dreamgirls' with Jennifer Hudson

Usher, the Grammy-winning artist, recently revealed that he was initially set to star alongside Jennifer Hudson in 'Dreamgirls' but had to drop out due to a scheduling conflict. In an interview on *The Jennifer Hudson Show*, Usher shared that he was originally cast as C.C. White, the supportive brother of Effie White (played by Jennifer Hudson), a role that was eventually taken on by Keith Robinson.

Though he missed the opportunity

to be part of the iconic musical, Usher expressed admiration for Hudson's contribution to the film. "I'm still part of the history because we all celebrate you and the incredible impact you've made," Usher said, acknowledging Hudson's powerful presence in the industry and her groundbreaking performance in the role.

This revelation has sparked discussions among fans, with many now curious to know what Usher's involvement could have added to *Dreamgirls* and how it would have shaped the film's legacy.



Sarah Michelle Gellar confirms 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' reboot in development



Sarah Michelle Gellar has confirmed that a 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' revival is in the works, 22 years after the original show ended. In an Instagram post, Gellar revealed she has been involved in discussions about the potential reboot for years, which began when producer Gail Berman connected her with Nomadland director Chloé Zhao. Their initial four-hour meeting sparked ongoing discussions with writers Nora and Lilla Zuckerman, resulting in an exciting new vision for the series.

Gellar assured fans that the reboot will only move forward if it can be done "right," promising the team is on the path to delivering a faithful and exciting continuation of the beloved show. Reports indicate that the reboot is close to securing a pilot order at Hulu, but official details remain under wraps. Gellar expressed her excitement about working with a passionate team who shares her love for Buffy.

Mumbai Police clears BookMyShow of wrongdoing in Coldplay ticket controversy



The Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has concluded its investigation into BookMyShow, clearing the company of any wrongdoing in the Coldplay ticketing controversy. After complaints surfaced that tickets for the band's concert were being resold at inflated prices—up to Rs. 3 lakh for tickets originally priced at Rs. 2,500—the police found no evidence of fraud or manipulation.

The investigation also explored allegations that ticket bots were used to block genuine buyers, but authorities found no illegal activities related to the ticketing process. BookMyShow reiterated that it does not partner with resellers or third-party sellers. Despite the controversy, Coldplay's Music of the Spheres World Tour, marking the band's return to India after eight years, continues to be celebrated by fans in Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

Karla Sofia Gascón faces backlash amid Oscar campaign for 'Emilia Pérez'

Karla Sofia Gascón, the star of 'Emilia Pérez,' a Netflix musical about a cartel boss transitioning into a woman, is under fire over past social media posts as she campaigns for an Oscar nomination. Despite receiving 13 Oscar nominations, including Gascón's historic recognition as the first openly transgender woman nominated for Best Actress, her past remarks about Muslims, George Floyd, and diversity at the Oscars have resurfaced, sparking controversy.

Although Gascón issued an apology through Netflix in January, the backlash persists. Director Jacques Audiard called her posts "inexcusable," while Gascón expressed regret on Instagram and chose "silence" in hopes that the film would be judged for its artistic merits. The movie, which portrays a drug lord transitioning into 'Emilia Pérez,' has garnered both praise and criticism, particularly for its handling of trans identity and the lack of Mexican representation in lead roles.

The controversy has taken a toll on Gascón, with some of the posts linked



to death threats and her decision to step away from social media.

Experts suggest the scandal could affect her Academy Award chances, while co-star Zoe Saldaña called the situation "sad and disappointing." Gascón is expected to skip major award events as the rest of the cast continues to promote the film.

Jesse Eisenberg distances himself from Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg

Jesse Eisenberg, the actor who portrayed Mark Zuckerberg in The Social Network, has distanced himself from the Meta CEO a recent interview with BBC Radio 4's Today program. Eisenberg expressed concerns over Meta's decision to replace traditional fact-checking with its controversial "community notes" system, which he believes could contribute to the spread of misinformation.

During the interview, Eisenberg emphasized that his remarks are based on his personal views and not influenced by his portrayal of Zuckerberg. He shared his broader concerns about the growing influence of billionaires in politics, noting that this concentration of power could have far-reaching consequences for society. Eisenberg's candid reflections sparked new conversations about the ethical implications of social media giants and their role in shaping public discourse.

Despite his critical stance, Eisenberg's views remain grounded in his personal values, and he continues to advocate for responsible practices in the tech industry.

Robert De Niro to star in thriller 'The Whisper Man'

Robert De Niro has signed on for a leading role in 'The Whisper Man,' an adaptation of Alex North's bestselling crime thriller. Directed by James Ashcroft, the gripping film follows a widowed crime writer whose young son is abducted, forcing him to enlist the help of his estranged father, a retired police detective. As the investigation unfolds, the duo uncovers chilling connections to an old case involving a convicted serial killer known as The Whisper Man.

The film is produced by Anthony and Joe Russo's AGBO, marking the



company's sixth collaboration with Netflix. Known for their work on

'Avengers: Endgame' and 'Extraction,' the Russo brothers have produced yet another thrilling project that promises to captivate audiences. De Niro's character, a man grappling with loss and betrayal, will be a fascinating addition to his already storied career.

Production is slated to begin in spring 2025, and De Niro's involvement in this emotionally charged thriller has already raised excitement. AGBO's chief creative officer, Angela Russo-Otstot, describes the project as a "gripping thriller" with a strong father-son dynamic that will leave audiences on the edge of their seats.

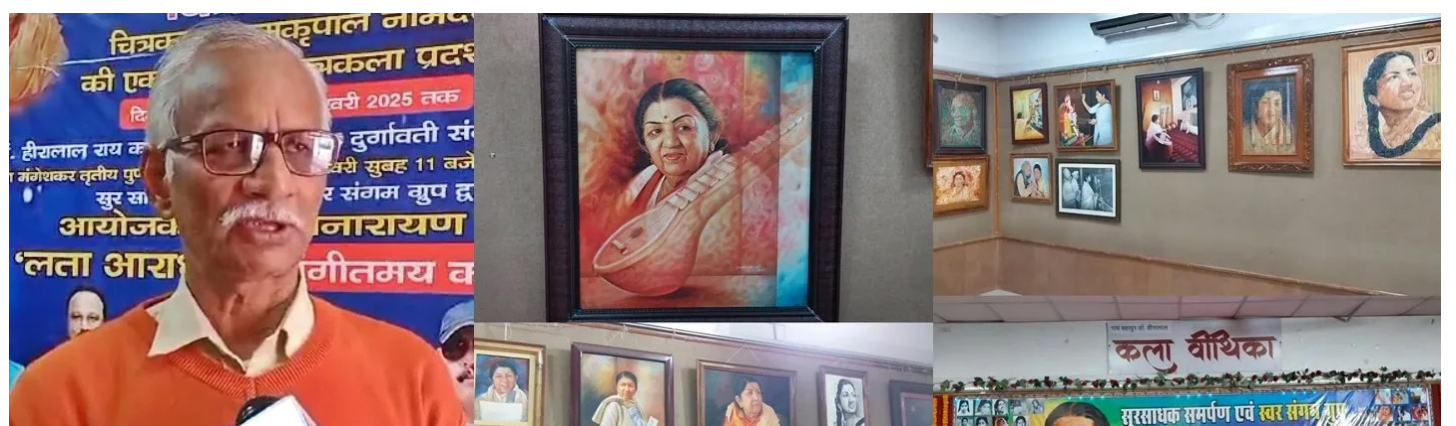
Artist Ramkripal Namdev's tribute to Lata Mangeshkar enters Limca Book of Records

Ramkripal Namdev, a self-taught artist from Jabalpur, has received recognition for his incredible tribute to legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, which has entered the Limca Book of Records, as well as the Asia and India Book of Records. The artwork, titled 'Chitra Latika,' is a breathtaking painting composed of 1,436 images of Mangeshkar. This remarkable feat showcases Namdev's

deep admiration for the iconic singer and her contribution to Indian music. Namdev, despite being an amateur artist, has created a lasting homage to Mangeshkar, whose voice transcended generations. His work has been displayed in major galleries across India, including Mumbai's Jehangir Art Gallery and Delhi's Lalit Kala Akademi. The recognition from prestigious record books adds to the significance of his artistic journey, cementing

Namdev's place in Indian art history.

Mangeshkar, known for her timeless melodies, once personally praised one of Namdev's earlier paintings, which she initially hesitated to sign, believing it would diminish the artwork's beauty. Namdev's tribute is a culmination of his love for the singer's voice, and this acknowledgment is the proudest achievement of his career.



राम रक्षा स्तोत्र-सुरक्षा का शक्तिशाली कवच

राम रक्षा स्तोत्र में ऋषि बुध कौशिक ने रामजी की आराधना एक अलग ढंग से की है। ऋषि कौशिक ने रामजी के सम्मुख पूर्ण समर्पण करते हुए, उनसे प्रार्थना की, कि प्रभु उनकी हर प्रकार से रक्षा करें।



Rajendra Kapil
Phone: 847-962-1291

इसी प्रार्थना के अन्तर्गत उन्होंने लगभग अठतीस श्लोकों में रामजी से विवध प्रकार का संरक्षण माँगा। यह सभी श्लोक एक छोटी सी पुस्तिका में संकलित हैं, जिसका नाम है, रामरक्षा स्तोत्र। सबसे पहले ऋषि कौशिक ने प्रभु की सुंदर छवि का ध्यान कर उन्हें प्रणाम किया।



ध्यायेदाजानुबाहुं धृतशरधनुषं बद्धपद्मासनस्थं ।
पीतं वासोवसानं नवकमलदलस्पर्धिनेत्रं प्रसन्नम् ॥
वामांकारूढसीता मुखकमलमिलल्लोचनं नीरदाभं ।
नानालंकारदीप्तं दधत्तमुज्ज्वलमण्डलं रामचंद्रम् ॥

धनुष बाण लिए रामजी पद्मासन मुद्रा में, पीतांबर वस्त्रों में शोभायमान हैं। मंद मुस्कान लिए उनका मुखारविंद, जिस पर नये नये खिले कमलों के समान उनके मधुर नेत्र, उनकी शोभा को बढ़ा रहे हैं। नाना अलंकारों से सुशोभित, उनका पीतांबर अति प्रिय लग रहा है। सिर पर कस कर बंधा, जटा मण्डल शोभायमान है। उनके बायें ओर माँ सीता जी विराजमान हैं। इस दिव्य छवि को प्रणाम करते हुए, ऋषि कौशिक ने राम रक्षा स्तोत्र का आरंभ किया।

उसके बाद ऋषि कौशिक ने प्रभु राम को अलग अलग विशेषणों से संबोधित करते हुए अपने विभिन्न अंगों की रक्षा करने की प्रार्थना की:

रामरक्षां पठेत्प्राज्ञः पापघ्नीं सर्वकामदाम ।
शिरो मे राघवः पातु भालं दशरथात्मजः ॥४॥
कौसल्येयो हृशौ पातु विश्वामित्रप्रियः श्रुती ।
प्राणं पातु मखत्राता मुखं सौमित्रिवत्सलः ॥५॥
जिह्वां विद्यानिधिः पातु कण्ठं भरतवदितः ।
स्कन्धौ दिव्यायुधः पातु भुजौ भग्नेशकामुकः ॥६॥
करो सीतपतिः पातु हृदयं जामदग्न्यजित ।
मध्यं पातु खरध्वंसी नाभिं जाम्बवदाश्रयः ॥७॥

सुग्रीवेशः कटी पातु सक्थिनी हनुमत्प्रभुः ।
ऊरू रघुत्तमः पातु रक्षःकुलविनाशकृत ॥८॥
जानुनी सेतुकृत्पातु जंघे दशमुखान्तकः ।
पादौ बिभीषणश्रीदः पातु रामोऽखिलं वपुः ॥९॥

इन श्लोकों में प्रार्थना है कि, राघव मेरे सिर की रक्षा करें। दशरथ के पुत्र श्री राम मेरे ललाट (मस्तक) की रक्षा करें। कौशल्य नंदन मेरे नेत्रों की रक्षा करें। विश्वामित्र के प्रिय शिष्य राम मेरे कानों की रक्षा करें। माँ सुमित्रा के पुत्र मेरे मुख की रक्षा करें। विद्यानिधि मेरी जिह्वा पर अपना आशीर्वाद बनायें रखें। भरतजी के प्रिय भ्राता मेरे कंठ की रक्षा करें। सीतापति राम मेरे हाथों की रक्षा करें। अर्थात् शरीर के हर अंग पर प्रभु राम की कृपा होती रहे।

एतां रामबलोपेतां रक्षां यः सुकृती पठेत् ।
स चिरायुः सुखी पुत्री विजयी विनयी भवेत् ॥१०॥

ऐसी सुरक्षा प्राप्त कर, जीवन में आए बल के प्रति कृतज्ञता प्रगट करते हुए, सभी भक्तों को कहते हैं कि, जो इस राम रक्षा स्तोत्र का नित्य पाठ करेगा, वो रामजी की कृपा से हमेशा सुखी, विजयी, विनीत एवं चिरायु बना रहेगा।

आदिष्टवान्यथा स्वप्ने रामरक्षामिमां हरः ।
तथा लिखितवान् प्रातः प्रबुद्धो बुधकौशिकः ॥१५॥

ऋषि कौशिक ने इस श्लोक में इस रक्षा स्तोत्र की प्रेरणा के बारे एक रहस्य का उद्घाटन किया है। इसमें उन्होंने बतलाया कि, भगवान शंकर ने स्वप्न में इस रक्षास्तोत्र लिखने का आदेश दिया, उसीकी प्रेरणा, से अगली सुबह उठ कर, उन्होंने उसे उसी रूप में लिख प्रभु राम को समर्पित कर दिया,

फलमूलाशिनौ दान्तौ तापसौ ब्रह्मचारिणौ ।
पुत्रौ दशरथस्यैतौ भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ॥१८॥

इस श्लोक में, रामजी की तपस्वी छवि को सामने रखते हुए, और उनकी सादी जीवनचर्या को ध्यान कर ऋषि कौशिक लिखते हैं कि, वह रामजी जो कंद मूल और फलों का सेवन कर जीवन बिताते हैं। जो अत्यधिक सयमी, तपस्वी एवं ब्रह्मचारी है, ऐसे महाराज दशरथ के पुत्र राम और लक्ष्मण दोनों हमारी हमेशा रक्षा करें।

इत्येतानि जपेन्नित्यं मद्भक्तः श्रद्धयान्वितः ।
अश्वमेधाधिकं पुण्यं संप्राप्नोति न संशयः ॥२४॥

इस प्रकार जो भी भक्त बड़ी श्रद्धा से ऐसे रामजी का नित्य प्रति जप सुमिरन करते हैं, उन्हें बहुत ही पुण्य प्राप्त होगा, इस बात में रती भर संदेह नहीं है। ऋषि ने तो यहाँ तक कह दिया कि, यह पुण्य इतना होगा, जैसे मानो किसी ने अश्वमेध यज्ञ करके पुण्य अर्जित किया हो।

राजेन्द्रं सत्यसंधं दशरथतनयं श्यामलं शान्तमूर्तिम् ।
वन्दे लोकाभिरामं रघुकुलतिलकं राघवं रावणारिम् ॥२६॥

इस श्लोक में रामजी की एक और सुंदर छवि का चित्रण है। प्रभु राम राजेंद्र हैं, अर्थात् सब देवी देवताओं में सर्वोपरि हैं। हमेशा सत्य की खोज में लगे रहते हैं। श्यामल छवि वाले दशरथ पुत्र, हमेशा लोक कल्याण में लगे रहते हैं। और इसीलिए रावण जैसे दुष्ट असुरों का सहज वध करने वाले हैं। ऐसे लोक उपकारी रामजी को मेरी बारंबार वंदना।

श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ मनसा स्मरामि ।
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ वचसा गृणामि ।
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ शिरसा नमामि ।
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥२९॥

ऐसे लोक कल्याण के महा नायक प्रभु राम को मैं हृदय से स्मरण करता हूँ।
ऐसे भक्तों के परम प्रिय रामजी के गुणगान मैं सदा करना चाहता हूँ।
ऐसे परम दयालु श्री राम के चरणों में, मैं सादर प्रणाम करता हूँ।
ऐसे परम कृपालु प्रभु की शरण में, मैं अपने आप को समर्पित करता हूँ।

माता रामो मतिपता रामचन्द्रः ।
स्वामी रामो मत्सखा रामचंद्रः ।
सर्वस्वं मे रामचन्द्रो दयालुः ।
नान्यं जाने नैव जाने न जाने ॥३०॥

इस श्लोक में ऋषि कौशिक ने रामजी को अपना सब कुछ मान लिया है। प्रभु ही मेरे माता पिता हैं। प्रभु ही मेरे स्वामी एवं परम मित्र हैं। बिना कारण, परम दयालु प्रभु राम मेरे सर्वस्व हैं। इनके सिवा मैं किसी दूसरे को नहीं जानता।

आपदामपहतारं दातारं सर्वसंपदाम ।
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम् ॥३५॥
कृपा के साथ साथ प्रभु और क्या क्या करते हैं? इस बात का उत्तर ऋषि ने इस श्लोक में दिया। प्रभु राम हमारी हर आपदा अर्थात् मुसीबतों को सहज ही हर लेते हैं। हर मुश्किल घड़ी में हमारे साथ खड़े रहते हैं। और अच्छे समय में हमें ढेरों संपदा प्रदान कर, जीवन आनंद से भर देते हैं। ऐसे लोक कल्याण नायक प्रभु को, मैं हृदय से बारंबार नमन करता हूँ।

मनोजवं मारुततुल्यवेगं जितेन्द्रियं बुद्धिमतां वरिष्ठम् ।
वातात्मजं वानरवृथमुख्यं श्रीरामदूतं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥३३॥
रामजी के साथ साथ ऋषि कौशिक ने रामजी के परम भक्त श्री हनुमान को भी याद किया। हनुमान के बिना राम अधूरे हैं। और रामजी के बिना हनुमानजी के अस्तित्व की कल्पना असंभव है।

हनुमान जी के गुणों की चर्चा इस श्लोक में है। हनुमान जी जितेन्द्रिय हैं, उन्होंने इंद्रियों के प्रलोभन को जीता हुआ है। बुद्धिमानों में बजरंगी सबसे वरिष्ठ हैं, सबसे ऊपर हैं। वायु पुत्र हनुमान की गति अतुलनीय है। वानरों की सेना के अधिनायक प्रमुख श्री हनुमान जी के चरणों में मेरा सादर प्रणाम।

रामो राजमणिः सदा विजयते रामं रमेशं भजे ।
रामेणाभिहता निशाचरचमू रामाय तस्मै नमः ।
रामान्नास्ति परायणं परतरं रामस्य दासोऽस्म्यहम् ।
रामे चित्तलयः सदा भवतु मे भो राम मामुद्धर ॥३७॥

राम रामेति रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे ।
सहस्रनाम ततुल्यं रामनाम वरानने ॥३८॥

रामजी राज मणि हैं। राजाओं में सर्वश्रेष्ठ, हर युद्ध में विजय पाने वाले, प्रभु राम को मेरा सादर नमन। संपूर्ण राक्षस कुल को समाप्त करने वाले लक्ष्मीपति प्रभु राम को, मैं नमस्कार करता हूँ।

रामजी के समान कोई और आश्रयदाता नहीं है। इसीलिए मैं उन्हीं शरणवत्सल प्रभु के चरणों में समर्पित हूँ। मैं ऐसी प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि, मैं सदा राम नाम में लीन रहूँ। कृपालु राम, मेरा इस संसार सागर से उद्धार करें।

अंत में ऋषि कौशिक ने इस महामंत्र की तुलना विष्णु सहस्रनाम से कर इसे सदा सदा के लिए राम भक्तों की अतुल धरोहर बना दिया, और रामजी से आशीर्वाद माँगा कि, मैं सदा इस राम भक्ति में लीन रहूँ और राम नाम में रमण करता हूँ। ऋषि बुधकौशिक द्वारा रचित इस महामंत्र राम रक्षा स्तोत्र के लिए राम प्रेमी भक्त समाज उनका हमेशा ऋणी रहेगा। मेरा ऋषि कौशिक के चरणों में शत शत प्रणाम!!

भारतीय हिंदू समुदाय में उल्लास के साथ मनाया गया बसंत पंचमी पर्व



बसंत पंचमी का पर्व हिंदू समुदाय के लिए विशेष आध्यात्मिक और सांस्कृतिक महत्व रखता है। माघ मास के शुक्ल पक्ष की पंचमी को मनाया जाने वाला यह उत्सव ज्ञान, कला, और वाणी की देवी माता सरस्वती को समर्पित है। इस दिन लोग विशेष रूप से पीले वस्त्र धारण करते हैं, मां सरस्वती की आराधना करते हैं और विद्या, बुद्धि तथा संगीत में उन्नति की प्रार्थना करते हैं।

बसंत पंचमी और माता सरस्वती की उत्पत्ति की कथा
बसंत पंचमी को देवी सरस्वती का प्राकट्य दिवस माना जाता है। इस दिन उनकी कथा पढ़ने और सुनने से विशेष आध्यात्मिक लाभ प्राप्त होता है।

ब्रह्मवैवर्त पुराण और मत्स्य पुराण के अनुसार देवी सरस्वती का प्राकट्य
सृष्टि के आरंभ में जब ब्रह्मा जी ने संसार का अवलोकन किया, तो उन्होंने देखा कि सभी जीव मौन और नीरस थे। यह देखकर उन्होंने भगवान विष्णु और भगवान शिव से अनुमति लेकर अपने कमंडल का जल वेद मंत्रों के साथ पृथ्वी पर छिड़का। तभी एक दिव्य शक्ति प्रकट हुई, जिनके चार हाथों में वीणा, पुस्तक, माला और वर मुद्रा थी।

ब्रह्मा जी ने उन्हें सरस्वती नाम दिया और उनसे संसार में ज्ञान, संगीत और वाणी का संचार करने का अनुरोध किया। माता सरस्वती ने वीणा का मधुर नाद किया, जिससे संपूर्ण ब्रह्मांड में जीवन का संचार हुआ। इस प्रकार, देवी सरस्वती को विद्या, बुद्धि और संगीत की अधिष्ठात्री देवी माना गया।

श्रीकृष्ण का वरदान (पौराणिक कथा)

एक अन्य कथा के अनुसार, माता सरस्वती भगवान श्रीकृष्ण को पति रूप में पाना चाहती थीं। लेकिन श्रीकृष्ण ने स्पष्ट किया कि वे केवल राधारानी के प्रति समर्पित हैं। फिर भी, माता सरस्वती को प्रसन्न करने के लिए उन्होंने वरदान दिया कि माघ शुक्ल पंचमी को समस्त संसार उनकी पूजा

करेगा और वे विद्या एवं ज्ञान की देवी के रूप में पूजी जाएंगी। इसी दिन से बसंत पंचमी पर सरस्वती माता की आराधना की जाने लगी।

देवी भागवत पुराण के अनुसार माता सरस्वती की उत्पत्ति
त्रिदेव—ब्रह्मा, विष्णु और महेश—ने जब सृष्टि की रचना की, तो उन्होंने पाया कि संसार में शांति है, लेकिन उत्साह और आनंद की कमी है। तब ब्रह्मा जी ने अपने कमंडल से जल छिड़का और वेद मंत्रों का उच्चारण किया। जल छिड़कते ही एक दिव्य देवी प्रकट हुई, जिनके हाथों में वीणा, पुस्तक, माला और तथास्तु मुद्रा थी।

त्रिदेवों ने माता सरस्वती का अभिवादन किया और उनसे वीणा बजाने का अनुरोध किया। जैसे ही माता सरस्वती ने वीणा बजाई, पूरे ब्रह्मांड में मधुर ध्वनि गूंज उठी। नदियां कलकल बहने लगीं, पक्षी चहकने लगे, और सम्पूर्ण सृष्टि में आनंद छा गया।

बसंत पंचमी का धार्मिक और सांस्कृतिक महत्व

विद्या और ज्ञान का पर्व: इस दिन विशेष रूप से छात्र और शिक्षक मां सरस्वती की पूजा करते हैं, ताकि वे बुद्धि और ज्ञान के आशीर्वाद से समृद्ध हों।

संगीत और कला का महोत्सव: संगीतकार, कवि, लेखक और कलाकार इस दिन देवी सरस्वती का आह्वान करते हैं और अपनी कला में सिद्धि के लिए प्रार्थना करते हैं।

वसंत ऋतु का आरंभ: इस दिन से ऋतुराज वसंत का आगमन होता है। धरती पर हरियाली बढ़ने लगती है, फूल खिलने लगते हैं और वातावरण आनंदमय हो जाता है।

पीले रंग का विशेष महत्व: बसंत पंचमी के दिन पीले वस्त्र पहनने की परंपरा है, क्योंकि यह रंग समृद्धि, ऊर्जा और सकारात्मकता का प्रतीक

है। साथ ही, देवी सरस्वती को भी पीला रंग प्रिय माना जाता है।

बसंत पंचमी के दिन प्रमुख अनुष्ठान और परंपराएं
मां सरस्वती की पूजा: इस दिन विशेष रूप से देवी सरस्वती की मूर्ति या चित्र की स्थापना कर विधिपूर्वक पूजा की जाती है।

हवन और यज्ञ: कई स्थानों पर हवन का आयोजन किया जाता है, जिसमें वेद मंत्रों के उच्चारण के साथ आहुति दी जाती है।

विद्यारंभ संस्कार: यह दिन छोटे बच्चों के लिए विद्या-अभ्यास शुरू करने के लिए विशेष शुभ माना जाता है। इसी दिन कई माता-पिता अपने बच्चों को पहली बार अक्षर लिखना सिखाते हैं।

मिष्ठान और प्रसाद वितरण: इस दिन मीठे पकवान बनाए जाते हैं, विशेष रूप से केसर मिश्रित मीठे चावल, हलवा और खीर का प्रसाद बांटा जाता है।

पतंगबाजी का आयोजन: भारत के कई हिस्सों, विशेष रूप से उत्तर भारत में, इस दिन पतंग उड़ाने की परंपरा है, जिससे आसमान रंग-बिरंगी पतंगों से भर जाता है।

उपसंहार

बसंत पंचमी का पर्व हमें ज्ञान, संगीत और कला के महत्व को समझने और माता सरस्वती की कृपा प्राप्त करने का सुअवसर देता है। यह उत्सव न केवल आध्यात्मिक चेतना को जागृत करता है, बल्कि जीवन में उल्लास, उत्साह और नई ऊर्जा का संचार करता है। भारतीय हिंदू समुदाय में इस पर्व को अत्यंत श्रद्धा और उमंग के साथ मनाया जाता है, जिससे समाज में विद्या, संस्कृति और आध्यात्मिकता की ज्योति प्रज्वलित होती रहती है।



CMAA's Lunar New Year event in Chicago to bring together culture, food, and community leaders

By: Dr. Avi Verma

The Chinese Mutual Aid Association (CMAA) will host its annual Lunar New Year Celebration on Saturday, February 8, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at St. Augustine College, located at 1345 W. Argyle St. in Chicago. The event, which leads up to the Argyle Lunar New Year Parade, will celebrate the Year of the Snake, symbolizing wisdom, intuition, and transformation in the Chinese zodiac.

This free, public event will feature live cultural performances by CMAA youth, raffle prizes, and complimentary food, creating a vibrant atmosphere to welcome the lunar new year.

The celebration is expected to attract about 500 attendees, including local, state, and federal officials, as well as foreign diplomats who support CMAA's mission of serving immigrants and refugees in the Chicagoland area.

Notable confirmed guests include:

- ▶ U.S. Senator Dick Durbin
- ▶ U.S. Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi
- ▶ Illinois Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton
- ▶ Illinois Supreme Court Justice Joy Cunningham
- ▶ Illinois State Comptroller Susana A. Mendoza
- ▶ Illinois State Treasurer Michael W. Frerichs
- ▶ Illinois State Senators Mike Simmons (7th District) and Ram Villivalam (8th District)
- ▶ Illinois State Representatives Hoan Huynh (13th District) and Lindsey LaPointe (19th District)
- ▶ Chicago City Treasurer Melissa Conyears-Ervin and Chicago Clerk Anna Valencia
- ▶ Several Chicago Aldermen and Cook County Circuit Court representatives

Additionally, representatives from the Consulate of Mongolia, the Consulate General of the Philippines, and the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office



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will join the festivities, highlighting the global significance of the celebration.

Lunar New Year, celebrated by communities around the world, represents renewal, reflection, and cultural pride. The Year of the Snake emphasizes qualities such as wisdom, adaptability, and transformation, mirroring the resilience of immigrant communities. CMAA's event is a reflection of Chicago's cultural diversity and the contributions of its immigrant and refugee populations.

Founded by refugees in 1981, CMAA has grown into a key social services agency that annually serves over 5,000 clients from more than 40 countries.

Its services include job preparation, youth programs, adult education,

elderly care, immigration assistance, and economic development resources aimed at empowering immigrant and refugee communities.

Event Details:

- Date:** Saturday, February 8, 2025
 - Time:** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
 - Location:** St. Augustine College, 1345 W. Argyle St., Chicago, IL 60640
 - Admission:** Free
- RSVP & More Info: www.chinesemutualaid.org

The public is invited to join in this cultural celebration, enjoy traditional performances, and connect with community leaders as Chicago ushers in the Year of the Snake. For more information on CMAA's programs, visit their website at www.chinesemutualaid.org.

Hindu Community in Chicagoland celebrates Basant Panchami with devotion and enthusiasm

By: Dr. Avi Verma

The Hindu community across Chicagoland came together to celebrate the auspicious festival of Basant Panchami with great enthusiasm and devotion. Various temples in the region hosted special events and pujas to honor Maa Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom, knowledge, and arts.

One of the key highlights of the celebrations was the Mata Ki Chowki held at Umiya Mata Mandir in West Chicago. Devotees gathered in large numbers, offering prayers and participating in devotional singing to seek the blessings of the divine mother.

The temple was beautifully decorated with yellow flowers, symbolizing the arrival of spring and renewal.

In addition to Umiya Mata Mandir, several other temples in the area conducted special Saraswati Poojas. These included elaborate rituals where devotees, especially students and artists, prayed for wisdom and success in their respective fields.

Young children were encouraged to participate in the tradition of 'Akshar Abhyas,' a sacred Hindu practice where a child's first letters are written under the guidance of elders, marking the beginning of their educational journey.

Throughout the community, an air of excitement and devotion was witnessed

as families and devotees came together to celebrate this vibrant occasion. Many temples organized bhajan sessions, havan ceremonies, and prasad distributions, fostering a sense of unity and cultural pride among attendees. The festival not only marked the worship of knowledge but also heralded the arrival of spring, renewal, and positivity in the Hindu calendar.

As the Basant Panchami celebrations concluded, the community expressed joy and gratitude for the opportunity to gather in reverence, reinforcing cultural traditions and spiritual values.

The event was a beautiful reminder of the richness of Hindu heritage and the significance of Saraswati Puja in the pursuit of wisdom and enlightenment.





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World Hindi Day celebrated in Chicago with performances, panels, and community engagement

By: Dr. Avi Verma

On February 1, 2025, the Consulate General of India in Chicago, in partnership with the Hindi Samanvay Samiti, hosted a special event marking World Hindi Day. The gathering brought together a diverse group of Hindi scholars, community organizations, educators, students, and families with a shared passion for promoting the Hindi language.

The program focused on ongoing efforts to spread the language in schools and universities across the Midwest, highlighting the importance of preserving and promoting Hindi in the region. In his inaugural address, Consul General Somnath Ghosh praised the tireless efforts of faculty members in various universities who are working to teach and spread Hindi. He also acknowledged the contributions of numerous organizations such as the Hindi Samanvay Samiti, International Hindi Committee-Indiana Chapter, Balodyan, Hindi Club of Illinois, and others for their dedicated work in advancing the language.

Furthermore, Ghosh emphasized the important role played by Mandi Theatre, Ekjut Theatre,



and Dramatech in using theatrical performances to promote Hindi and Indian culture.

The event featured an insightful panel of speakers, including Dr. Mithilesh Mishra, Director of Hindi and South Asian Studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, who delivered the keynote address on “Artificial Intelligence for Hindi Teachers: A Modern Medium to Effectively Promote

Hindi.” Dr. Syed Ekhteyar Ali from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, shared his experiences in promoting Hindi at universities in Michigan and Wisconsin, while Mr. Rakesh Malhotra, Nodal Officer of the Hindi Coordination Committee, discussed the opportunities and challenges involved in spreading the language in the United States.

One of the highlights of the event

was the enthusiastic participation of schoolchildren from Chicago, Indiana, and surrounding areas. The children performed Hindi songs, poems, and plays, celebrating Indian culture and literature, and leaving a lasting impression on the attendees.

This event underscored the strong commitment to nurturing the Hindi language and culture within the community.

Chicago Botanic Garden to showcase India's beauty at 2025 Orchid Show

By: Dr. Avi Verma

The Chicago Botanic Garden will officially open its 2025 Orchid Show, India Blooms, on February 8, 2025, offering visitors an immersive experience celebrating the vibrant and diverse beauty of India. Running through March 23, 2025, the exhibition will feature over 10,000 fresh orchids in stunning displays that reflect India's rich landscapes, cultures, and traditions.

The show blends modern design with traditional elements to create a breathtaking visual journey. Highlights include a magnificent floor-to-ceiling peacock, its sweeping tail made from hundreds of colorful orchid blooms. Visitors will also be able to marvel at a towering banyan tree, its intricate roots and branches enveloped in vibrant orchids. Another striking feature of the show will be the bursts

of vivid pigmented powders, capturing the spirit and hues of Holi, the famous festival of colors.

The Orchid Show will be set in the Garden's indoor galleries, offering a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of India's flora through the intricate and stunning art of orchid displays. The exhibits are designed to transport visitors to the heart of India, showcasing the country's lush greenery and cultural diversity.

Ticket Information:

Adult: \$12 member / \$22 nonmember

Children (ages 3 – 12): \$8 member / \$15 nonmember

Children 2 & under: Free

*For more information, visit:
www.chicagobotanic.org/orchid*

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From cozy to glam, Valentine's Day outfits for every style

Valentine's Day is the perfect occasion to get dressed up, whether you're headed out for a romantic dinner, a cozy brunch, or a fun night out. With so many options to choose from, dressing for love this season has never been easier. From chic evening wear to casual date-night outfits, here are the latest fashion trends to help you look your best and feel confident on this special day.

Elegant Evening Wear

For a fancy dinner or cocktail event, a romantic slip dress is a timeless and flattering option. This year's top trends include soft, flowy silhouettes in deep reds, blush pinks, or classic black. A slip dress pairs beautifully with delicate jewelry, strappy heels, and a sleek clutch. Add a cozy, tailored jacket or faux fur stole for extra elegance if needed.

Another romantic option is the ruffled or tiered dress. Perfect for adding movement and texture, a tiered midi dress in soft pastels or floral prints exudes femininity while maintaining a playful vibe. It's versatile enough to transition from a dinner date to dancing.

If you prefer something other than a dress, consider a satin or velvet jumpsuit. These fabrics add a touch of luxury and sophistication. Opt for one with a plunging neckline or off-the-shoulder design for a modern and chic look, ideal for those looking for something comfortable yet stylish.

Casual Yet Chic Date Night Outfits

For more relaxed or daytime celebrations, opt for romantic sweaters in soft hues like pink, lavender, or red. Pair a cozy cashmere sweater with tailored pants or a high-waisted skirt for a chic yet laid-back look. Choose sweaters with unique details



like puffed sleeves or lace accents to add a romantic touch.

A high-waisted pant and blouse combo is another stylish and comfortable option. Pair a flowy blouse with wide-leg trousers or tailored jeans. This look is easy to wear and can be dressed up with statement jewelry or heels, or dressed down with flats or sneakers. For added flair, choose silk or chiffon fabrics for a soft, feminine vibe.

For a playful, casual look, denim with a twist remains a great choice. Pair an embroidered or embellished top with your favorite denim—whether it's a wide-leg cut or a classic skirt. Add a pair of white sneakers or ankle boots for comfort while maintaining style.

Versatile Pieces for Every Date

A wrap dress is perfect for any date,

offering a flattering and adjustable fit that works for both casual and fancy settings. Go for a rich red or floral print to keep it romantic, and pair it with sandals for the day or heels for an evening date. You can even add a leather jacket or cardigan to complete the look.

The maxi skirt and blouse combo is another versatile option. Pair a high-waisted maxi skirt with a tucked-in blouse for a chic and feminine style. Add ankle boots or ballet flats, and this outfit can easily take you from a casual brunch to an elegant dinner with just a few tweaks.

Accessorize for Impact

Accessories can elevate any outfit. Consider adding heart-shaped earrings, delicate gold jewelry, and a sparkling handbag for a touch of glamour. A bold red lipstick or soft pink gloss will also

complement your look, enhancing your overall date-ready vibe.



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The end of **USAID**? What its shutdown means for India and the world

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

For decades, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been a powerful instrument of American foreign policy, operating under the guise of humanitarian aid. With an annual budget exceeding \$40 billion, USAID has funded development projects, health initiatives, and governance programs worldwide. However, behind its noble mission lies a more complex and controversial reality—one that has often placed India in its crosshairs.

Now, with the Trump administration pushing for its dismantling, questions arise: What happens if USAID is shut down or significantly weakened? Is this a shift toward a more self-contained America, or does it mark a turning point in global power dynamics? For India, the agency's potential downfall is both a relief and a warning.

USAID's Troubling Past in India

On paper, USAID has contributed to India's economic and social development, with millions of dollars flowing into education, health, and disaster relief programs. However, its track record suggests that the agency has been more than just a benevolent donor—it has also been a vehicle for political influence and covert operations.

Take, for example, USAID's funding of NGOs that have repeatedly interfered in India's internal affairs. The Joshua Project, which maps religious demographics in India with a focus on conversion efforts, has been linked to organizations receiving

USAID grants. Similarly, investigative groups like the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), which received USAID support, have aggressively targeted Indian business leaders like Gautam Adani, raising suspicions about whether their motives are truly about transparency or part of a broader geopolitical game.

Moreover, Freedom House—another USAID-backed institution—has consistently downgraded India's democratic rankings, painting a misleading picture of the world's largest democracy. The irony is evident: an agency claiming to promote democracy often ends up discrediting democratically elected governments that do not align with Washington's interests.

Funding Terror by Mistake—or by Design?

The most alarming revelation about USAID is its indirect role in financing organizations linked to terror networks. In the years before the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, USAID provided \$110,000 to Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), a Michigan-based charity with ties to Pakistan's Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). This is the same terrorist outfit responsible for the brutal attacks that left over 170 dead and over 300 injured in India's financial capital.

While it is possible that this funding was an oversight, the fact that U.S. taxpayers' money ended up in the hands of a terror-linked group raises serious concerns. If an organization like USAID cannot prevent its funds from

being misused, should it even exist?

The Bigger Picture: America's Changing Foreign Policy

The push to dismantle USAID is not just about cutting wasteful spending—it signals a broader shift in American foreign policy. For years, USAID has been accused of acting as a front for the CIA, using humanitarian aid as a cover for regime change operations. From funding "color revolutions" in Ukraine and Mongolia to its involvement in destabilizing governments in Latin America, USAID's mission has often extended far beyond humanitarian assistance.

Under Donald Trump, the agency has come under heavy scrutiny, with the former president calling it a "criminal organization" run by "radical lunatics." Elon Musk, now heading the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), has echoed similar sentiments, advocating for either dismantling USAID or absorbing it into the State Department.

If USAID is shut down, it would mark the end of an era where the U.S. projected its influence under the banner of foreign aid. But does this mean Washington will stop meddling in global affairs? Hardly. Instead, we may see American influence shift to new institutions, corporate entities, and intelligence operations that are even less accountable.

What This Means for India

For India, the potential end of USAID presents both opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, it could mean reduced foreign interference in

domestic affairs, fewer NGO-driven disruptions, and a greater focus on self-reliant development. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push for "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India) aligns well with a world where American aid agencies play a diminished role.

However, India must also remain vigilant. The U.S. is not withdrawing from global politics—it is merely recalibrating. While USAID's closure may seem like a victory for national sovereignty, the underlying power structures that seek to influence India's trajectory will find new ways to operate. Whether through think tanks, private foundations, or digital propaganda campaigns, the goal of shaping narratives and policies in India is unlikely to disappear.

The End of an Empire?

The potential dismantling of USAID is a symptom of a larger phenomenon—the decline of unchallenged American global dominance. As the world moves toward a multipolar order, the U.S. is struggling to redefine its role. Whether USAID survives or not, its legacy serves as a reminder that foreign aid is rarely just about charity; it is a tool of influence, power, and, at times, manipulation.

For India, the lesson is clear: self-reliance is the best defense against foreign intervention, no matter what form it takes. The end of USAID may be a milestone, but the real challenge lies ahead—ensuring that India's growth and governance remain free from external control.



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Fund Indexing

● Dr. K C Gupta, YBB Personal Finance

From a shaky start in the 1970s, indexing has grown tremendously so that 48% of US funds (consisting of 21% mutual funds/OEFs & 27% ETFs) are indexed now. The meaning of indexing has also evolved. One definition considers market-cap based indexing as the only pure indexing.

Nonmarket-cap-based indexing may be price-weighted, equal-weighted, factor-based (single or multiple factors), direct/ in-house, customized. These may be considered semi-active/ passive. The defined indexes may be rebalanced &/or reconstituted on preannounced schedules.

Active funds may have benchmarks that they hope to outperform, but don't follow the benchmark or any index closely. Active funds have higher ERs, while benchmarks have no ERs, so most active funds underperform their benchmarks. Confusion in the media arises when only active & passive categories are used & semi-active/passive funds are forced into those two.

Market-cap based indexing is the simplest, cheapest, tax-efficient & most common: SP500, Nasdaq Comp, Nasdaq 100, Russell 1000/ 2000/ 3000, & many indexes from SPGI, MSCI, Russell, Wilshire, FTSE, TSX (Japan TOPIX), BSE (India), Nifty (India), etc. These

may use sampling or full replication; full market-cap or free-float; futures to manage cash flows; proceeds from securities-lending to reduce or eliminate expense ratios (ERs; e.g. Fidelity ZERO funds); may be uncapped or capped by stocks &/ or sectors; may change index & rebalance all at once (Russell indexes) or gradually (CRSP indexes); may reinvest dividends daily or at month/ quarter-end.

So, the index funds from different firms that follow the same index may perform differently for these reasons besides their different ERs.

All indexes start at base values but then develop divisors to ensure continuity when index components change, or stock-splits occur. The market-cap based indexing flows more money into large & rising stocks, so big stocks get bigger.

Early indexes were price-weighted indexes (DJIA, 5/26/1896-) or simple averages of prices. These were useful in the days before computers, but they still exist for marketing & business reasons; some copycats also exist (Nikkei 225). Interestingly, DJIA (30 stocks) & SP500 (500 stocks) have an average correlation of 95%.

Factor-based index may use single or multiple factors. It's accepted practice to name factor(s) when only 1-2 factors are involved: Size - SC/ MC/

LC; value, growth, quality, low-volatility, dividend (current or growth or blend), ESG, currency-hedging, bond credit-quality (investment-grade, HY), bond maturity/ duration, etc. Fundamental-indexing involves 3 or more factors (e.g. RAFI).

Most fund firms license indexes from indexing firms. But a recent trend is to use internal/ custom/ direct- indexing for limited use by individuals or groups but that may grow to replace some broad indexes.

There are concerns about conflicts of interest in that firms' securities holdings may influence their internal indexing decisions, or the firms may trade ahead of making internal indexing decisions public (front-running).

Completion indexes complement major market-cap-based indexes. For example, the total stock market index can be thought of as a combination of a reference index such as SP500 & the remainder as the completion index.

So, the completion index then is the total market index without reference SP500 index. Sometimes the term extended-market index is also used.

A criticism of the completion/ extended-market indexes is that they may have lot of bad stocks as there is no selectivity; 30-40% of

companies in these indexes may not have any profits. Many active small/ mid-cap funds like to use completion/ extended-market indexes as benchmarks because they are easy to beat.

Vanguard mutual fund/ ETF pair VEXAX/ VXF is a completion (extended-market) index fund whose holdings include the S&P total market index (VTSAX/ VTI) minus the SP500 index (VFIAX/ VOO). It's 5% large-cap (LC), 31% mid-cap (MC), 63% small-cap (SC); in the Morningstar Style Box, it sits at/near the border of SC & MC, & blend & growth. Currently, the US total stock market-cap is split 80-20 between the SP500 & the completion index.

Fidelity FSMAX uses a different total market index, so it holds the DJ total market index minus the SP500 index. Wilshire W4500/ USMIX is the completion index fund for Wilshire total market index W5000. Russell has R1000/IWB, R2000/IWM (a completion index, although it's called a small-cap index) & R3000/IWV (Russell total market).

Types of indexed funds (or wrappers) include mutual funds/ OEFs, funds of index funds, target-date funds (TDFs), CITs (collective investment trusts), ETFs, etc. Special indexes can be created at will for ETFs, so there are now more ETFs (& indexes) than stocks.

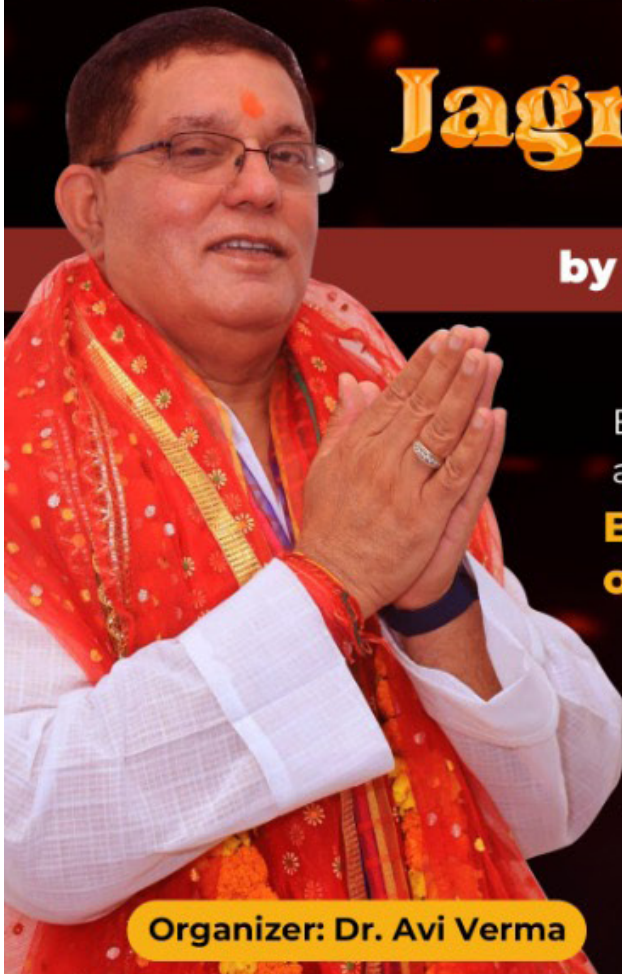




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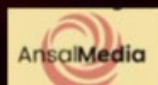
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Organizer: **Dr. Avi Verma**



Lakhbir Singh Lakha

The hidden risks of grapefruit: How it affects medications

By: Dr Avi Verma

A Health Advisory from the International University of Health Sciences (IUHS)

Grapefruit is widely known for its health benefits—it's packed with fiber, vitamins A and C, potassium, and antioxidants. However, this seemingly nutritious fruit can have dangerous interactions with certain medications, altering how the body processes them. At IUHS, we believe that awareness is the first step toward prevention. Understanding drug interactions, like those caused by grapefruit, helps future healthcare professionals diagnose, treat, and educate their communities about these and other health concerns.

How Grapefruit Affects Medications

Grapefruit contains furanocoumarins, natural compounds that interfere with enzymes and transporters responsible for metabolizing certain drugs in the small intestine. One of the most affected enzymes is cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4), which plays a key role in breaking down many medications.

When grapefruit blocks CYP3A4, medications that rely on this enzyme stay in the body longer than intended, leading to higher drug concentrations in the bloodstream. This can intensify side effects or even lead to toxicity.



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On the other hand, grapefruit can also reduce the absorption of some drugs, making them less effective.

Common medications that interact with grapefruit

▶ Blood Pressure Medications

Example: Nifedipine (Procardia, Adalat CC)

Effect: Can cause dangerously low blood pressure and slow heart rate (bradycardia).

▶ Cholesterol-Lowering Statins

Examples: Simvastatin (Zocor), Atorvastatin (Lipitor)

Effect: Increased risk of muscle pain, weakness, and potential muscle damage (rhabdomyolysis).

▶ Immunosuppressants (Used for transplants and autoimmune diseases)

Example: Cyclosporine (Neoral)

Effect: Can cause kidney damage due to elevated drug levels.

▶ Anxiety Medications (Benzodiazepines)

Example: Diazepam (Valium)

Effect: Increased drowsiness, confusion, and in severe cases, respiratory depression.

▶ Allergy Medications

Example: Fexofenadine (Allegra)

Effect: Grapefruit blocks transport proteins, preventing the drug from entering the bloodstream effectively, making it less effective.

▶ Corticosteroids (Used for inflammatory conditions like Crohn's disease)

Effect: Higher drug levels in the body may lead to increased side effects, including high blood sugar, weight gain, and weakened immune response.

The importance of consulting a physician

The interaction between grapefruit and medications can be unpredictable, depending on:

- ▶ The amount of grapefruit consumed
- ▶ The specific medication taken
- ▶ Individual differences in metabolism

Even one grapefruit or a small glass of grapefruit juice can significantly alter how the body processes certain medications. Patients taking long-term medications should consult their doctor or pharmacist to determine whether they should avoid grapefruit.

What you can do

- ▶ **Read Prescription Labels:** Many medications include warnings about grapefruit interactions.
- ▶ **Talk to Your Doctor or Pharmacist:** Ask if your medications are affected by grapefruit.
- ▶ **Consider Alternative Medications:** Some drugs do not

interact with grapefruit and may be safer.

▶ Watch for Other Citrus

Fruits: Seville oranges, tangelos, and pomelos also contain furanocoumarins and should be treated with caution.

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As a pioneer in medical education, IUHS provides innovative, flexible, and accessible programs for aspiring healthcare professionals. Located in St. Kitts, our integrated MD program combines global health perspectives with cutting-edge technology, preparing students for a dynamic healthcare landscape.

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Understanding uterine fibroids

Causes, symptoms, and treatment



● By: Dr Avi Verma

Uterine fibroids are a common cause of pelvic pain and discomfort. These benign (noncancerous) growths in the uterus affect many women, though they often go unnoticed.

While fibroids rarely develop into cancer, they can lead to significant health concerns, including heavy menstrual bleeding, prolonged periods, and even fertility issues.

This article explores the different types of uterine fibroids, potential causes, symptoms, and available treatment options.

What are uterine fibroids?

Uterine fibroids are smooth, muscular tumors that develop in or around the uterus. Many women develop fibroids at some point in their lives, though most do not experience symptoms. Fibroids can vary in size, from microscopic to large masses that cause noticeable swelling in the abdomen.

Types of uterine fibroids

Fibroids are classified based on their

location in the uterus:

- ▶ Intramural fibroids: Found within the muscular wall of the uterus.
- ▶ Subserosal fibroids: Develop on the outer surface of the uterus (serosa).
- ▶ Submucosal fibroids: Grow in the middle muscle layer (myometrium).

Causes and risk factors

The exact cause of uterine fibroids remains unclear, but several factors contribute to their development:

- ▶ **Hormonal Influence:** Estrogen and progesterone, which regulate the menstrual cycle, promote fibroid growth.
- ▶ **Genetics:** A family history of fibroids increases the likelihood of developing them.
- ▶ **Lifestyle Factors:** Obesity, vitamin D deficiency, alcohol consumption, and a diet high in red meat may contribute to fibroid growth.
- ▶ **Pregnancy:** Increased hormone levels during pregnancy can cause fibroids to grow, though some shrink after childbirth.

Symptoms of uterine fibroids

While many women with fibroids experience no symptoms, others may develop:

- ▶ Heavy menstrual bleeding
- ▶ Prolonged periods lasting more than a week
- ▶ Pelvic pain or pressure
- ▶ Bloating and constipation
- ▶ Cramps, backaches, or leg pain
- ▶ Painful intercourse

In some cases, fibroids can contribute to infertility or complications during pregnancy. Women experiencing difficulty conceiving may consider a medical evaluation to determine if fibroids are a factor.

Treatment options

Treatment depends on the size, number, and severity of symptoms. Options may include:

- ▶ **Watchful Waiting:** Small, asymptomatic fibroids may not require immediate treatment.
- ▶ **Medications:** Hormonal contraceptives, intrauterine devices (IUDs), and other medications can help manage symptoms.
- ▶ **Minimally Invasive Surgery:** Robotic-assisted fibroid removal allows for precise excision with a shorter recovery time.
- ▶ **Other Procedures:** Uterine artery embolization and MRI-guided

focused ultrasound can shrink fibroids.

Diagnosis and next steps

Women experiencing persistent pelvic pain, heavy bleeding, or fertility concerns should consult a healthcare provider for an accurate diagnosis. A routine pelvic exam, ultrasound, or MRI can help determine the presence and severity of fibroids.

Raising awareness about uterine fibroids empowers women to make informed health decisions. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment can significantly improve quality of life.

Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and should not replace professional medical advice. Consult a healthcare provider for diagnosis and treatment options..

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