

US intelligence warns Pakistan missile program could threaten homeland



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United States Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard warned on Thursday that Pakistan's long-range missile program could eventually pose a threat to the United States. Presenting the annual threat assessment, she said Pakistan may develop intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the American mainland. The warning comes amid broader concerns over rising global missile capabilities, with projections suggesting more than 16,000 missiles worldwide by 2035. Gabbard noted that countries including China, Russia, North Korea and Iran are also advancing delivery systems, including hypersonic weapons. While no timeline was provided, she emphasized that expanding missile programs are complicating deterrence strategies. The assessment highlighted growing risks from emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, which could further enhance targeting and military decision-making.

US Congress divided over rising Iran war costs as funding request crosses \$200 billion



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Rising costs linked to the Iran conflict have triggered sharp divisions in the United States Congress, with lawmakers questioning a potential funding request that could exceed \$200 billion. The White House is preparing to seek additional military funding even as skepticism grows across both parties over the lack of a defined strategy, timeline, and clear cost breakdown.

President Donald Trump defended the need for increased spending, saying it was necessary to keep the military fully prepared. However, several lawmakers from his own party have raised concerns about what they describe as an open-ended conflict. Some Republican members have rejected further funding outright, warning against what they call an "endless war," while others are demanding detailed mission objectives and financial transparency.

Military operations have intensified around the Strait of Hormuz, with reports of expanded US and allied action targeting Iranian naval assets, contributing to a spike in global oil prices and renewed concerns over energy supply disruptions.

Analysts warn that prolonged instability could further strain global markets. Lawmakers are also considering conditions such as audits and spending offsets before approving any additional funding, while opposition from Democrats is expected to complicate passage of the proposal.

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India treads carefully as US-Iran conflict strains energy security and strategic ties

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India is walking a delicate diplomatic and economic tightrope as the United States-Iran conflict intensifies, with immediate pressure on its energy security and long-term implications for foreign policy, former White House South Asia official Lisa Curtis said. She noted that India's heavy reliance on Middle Eastern oil makes it vulnerable to price spikes, which could weigh on economic stability.

Curtis also pointed to unease in New Delhi after a United States strike hit an Iranian vessel that had recently taken part in an India-hosted naval exercise, calling it diplomatically awkward. She said India expects Washington to uphold a rules-based order, but recent actions have raised concerns.

Balancing strong ties with both Tehran and Washington, India is maintaining a cautious, neutral stance. Curtis added that



several United States allies are similarly avoiding direct military involvement,

instead exploring ways to stabilize energy markets and limit escalation.

Iran vows zero restraint as attacks on South Pars and Gulf energy hubs intensify

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Iran has warned it will show "zero restraint" if its energy infrastructure is targeted again, as intensifying strikes on oil and gas facilities across the Middle East fuel fears of a wider regional war and a global energy shock. The warning came on Thursday from Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi following Israeli attacks on Iran's South Pars gas field, which it shares with Qatar, triggering a chain of retaliatory strikes across the Gulf.

The conflict, which began on February 28 after failed nuclear talks, has rapidly expanded. Israel has carried out more than 130 strikes in recent days, while Iran has responded with missile attacks targeting energy infrastructure, including Qatar's

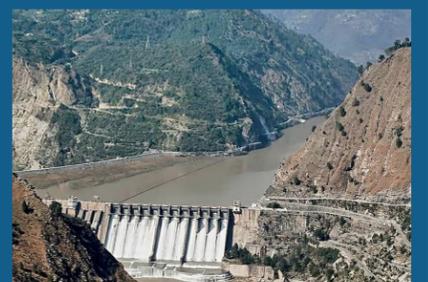
Ras Laffan liquefied natural gas facility. Qatar said nearly one-fifth of its export capacity has been damaged, with repairs expected to take years, raising concerns over long-term global supply disruptions.

Israeli officials confirmed damage to a refinery in Haifa following Iranian strikes. As tensions escalated, President Donald Trump said on Thursday he had urged Israel not to repeat strikes on Iranian natural gas infrastructure, warning against further escalation. He said there were no plans to deploy ground troops, though additional forces remain under consideration.

Global powers have expressed concern over rising energy prices and potential disruption to key shipping routes, urging urgent efforts to stabilize markets and prevent further escalation in the Gulf.



India ties Indus Waters Treaty suspension to terrorism, rejects Pakistan's claims at United Nations water meet



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India has reiterated that the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan will remain in abeyance until Islamabad takes credible and irreversible action against cross-border terrorism, asserting that commitments on water sharing cannot be separated from broader issues of security and trust. Speaking on Thursday at a United Nations event marking World Water Day, India's Permanent Representative P Harish said Pakistan must first "uphold the sanctity of human life" before questioning treaty obligations.

Harish said India had signed the treaty in good faith in 1960, but repeated wars and thousands of terror attacks emanating from Pakistan had fundamentally undermined its spirit. He referred to the Pahalgam attack last year as a turning point that led India to suspend the agreement.

India also highlighted its domestic water management efforts, including the Jal Jeevan Mission, which has extended piped drinking water to more than 158 million rural households since 2019, with strong community participation, especially by women-led village committees.

Trump's Pearl Harbor remark stuns Takaichi as he defends surprise Iran strikes

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Donald Trump drew criticism on Thursday after comparing United States strikes on Iran to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor during a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. Responding to questions about not informing allies, Trump referenced the element of surprise, invoking the 1941 attack that led the United States into World War II. The remark appeared to unsettle Takaichi, who reacted visibly during the exchange. Pearl Harbor resulted in the deaths of over 2,000 Americans and remains one of the most sensitive moments in United States history. Trump made the comments while defending his administration's military actions against Iran, as tensions in the Middle East continue to escalate following weeks of sustained air strikes.

Iraq urges Australia to repatriate suspected Islamic State fighters held in prisons

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Qatar strongly condemned Iran's strike on Ras Laffan Industrial City earlier in the week, warning on Thursday that the attack could have serious consequences for global energy supplies. Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said the strike on the major gas processing hub would impact millions worldwide and called the escalation unacceptable. He urged Iran to halt attacks and avoid widening the conflict. The warning came after regional foreign ministers met on Wednesday to denounce missile and drone strikes targeting civilian infrastructure, including energy facilities and airports. The United Kingdom also expressed concern during a call with Qatar's leadership. Officials emphasized the need for de-escalation and a return to diplomacy as tensions continue to rise across the Gulf region.

Iran strikes Kuwait refinery as Israel kills Revolutionary Guards spokesman amid widening conflict

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Iran targeted Kuwait's Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery with drone attacks on Friday, sparking fires, as Israel said it killed Ali Mohammad Naini, a spokesperson for Iran's Revolutionary Guards, in strikes on Tehran. Iran also launched missiles toward Israel, triggering air raid sirens in Tel Aviv. The conflict has disrupted global energy markets, with Brent crude holding near \$110 and oil flows dropping by about 12 percent of global demand due to halted Gulf exports and restricted movement through the Strait of Hormuz.

On Thursday, President Donald Trump urged allies to help secure shipping routes, while European leaders called for de-escalation. Despite ongoing holidays including Eid al-Fitr and Nowruz on Friday, the war shows no sign of ending, with rising casualties and growing concerns over long-term global economic fallout.

EU warns of migration risks from Middle East conflict, calls for stronger border readiness

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European Union leaders have warned that escalating conflicts in the Middle East could still trigger future migratory pressure on Europe, urging continued vigilance and preparedness even though no immediate inflows have been observed so far. Meeting at a European Council summit this week, leaders stressed the importance of maintaining strong external border control systems and drawing lessons from the 2015 migration crisis, when over one million refugees entered Europe from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

The EU said it stands ready to fully deploy diplomatic, legal, operational, and financial tools to prevent destabilising migration flows. Leaders also called for de-escalation in the Middle East and urged all parties to respect international law, including a pause on attacks against critical energy and water infrastructure.

The bloc also highlighted the need to strengthen maritime security operations in the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Gulf regions, reinforcing missions aimed at



safeguarding global shipping routes. United Nations Secretary General António Guterres, addressing the summit, urged an immediate end to the Iran-related conflict and called for renewed diplomatic engagement over military escalation.

Ukraine peace negotiations pause as Russia signals delay while Kyiv pushes for renewed talks

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Talks involving Russia, Ukraine, and the United States aimed at ending the war have stalled, with Moscow describing the process as being in a situational pause following heightened tensions linked to the Middle East conflict. The Kremlin said discussions could resume once Washington is able to refocus on the Ukraine issue.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the pause should end and confirmed that a Ukrainian delegation was traveling to the United States for further discussions over the weekend. Both sides remain sharply divided, particularly over territorial control, with Russia demanding Ukrainian withdrawal from disputed regions and Kyiv rejecting any concessions of land. Ukrainian and Western officials continue to argue that



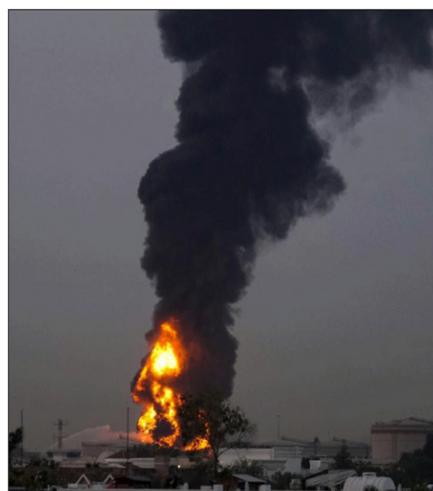
Russia retains battlefield advantages, while Moscow maintains it is open to negotiations but only under conditions it has repeatedly outlined for a settlement.

India calls Gulf energy attacks deeply disturbing and urges de-escalation

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India on Thursday condemned recent attacks on energy infrastructure across the Gulf, calling them deeply disturbing and warning of wider global consequences. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said such strikes risk destabilizing an already fragile energy environment and must stop immediately. The statement followed escalating tensions earlier in the week after Iran targeted facilities linked to regional energy supply. India reiterated its long-standing position against attacks on civilian infrastructure. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also held discussions with leaders from Kuwait and France, emphasizing the need for de-escalation and diplomacy. Officials stressed that ensuring safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz remains critical. The region's latest developments

have raised concerns about disruptions to global oil and gas supplies. Prime minister's standing, though they come amid more pressing international concerns dominating public attention.



Pakistan shells Afghan border despite Eid ceasefire, raising fresh tensions



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Pakistan fired more than 70 artillery shells into Afghanistan's Kunar province, officials said on Thursday, despite a temporary ceasefire announced for Eid earlier in the week. Shelling targeted multiple areas across Narai and Manogai districts, with no casualties reported so far. Afghan authorities said some rounds landed near civilians returning home and urged residents to seek safety. The incident follows a fragile pause in hostilities agreed on Wednesday through mediation by regional countries. Tensions have escalated along the border since February, with Kabul accusing Islamabad of targeting civilians. Afghan officials warned that forces will respond to any further aggression while maintaining that they prefer a diplomatic resolution.

Activists raise alarm over Balochistan abuses at UN rights council

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Activists highlighted alleged human rights violations in Balochistan during a United Nations Human Rights Council session in Geneva on Wednesday, calling for urgent international action. Speakers cited enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, claiming more than 1,300 people were missing and over 200 killed last year. They said repression has intensified alongside major infrastructure projects, with civilians, journalists and activists targeted. Campaigners also pointed to internet shutdowns and restrictions on dissent. Calls were made for an independent investigation and accountability for those responsible. Activists urged global pressure on Pakistan, warning that continued abuses threaten fundamental rights and regional stability.

Jaish-e-Mohammed leadership crisis deepens as muted Eid message signals Masood Azhar's declining control

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A muted Eid audio message from Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar has raised concerns among Indian security agencies about internal instability within the Pakistan-based terror group. Unlike previous years, Azhar's tone was subdued and lacked his usual anti-India rhetoric, prompting speculation that poor health and weakened authority are driving a leadership vacuum. Intelligence officials believe the group is facing internal disputes over succession, with no clear consensus on a replacement. Possible contenders include senior commander Abdul Jabbar and family-linked figures, though divisions persist between choosing a capable operational leader or a family successor to maintain cohesion.

North Korea set to formalize leadership changes and economic agenda in new parliamentary session



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North Korea will convene its Supreme People's Assembly on Sunday to approve leadership appointments, constitutional revisions, and key economic policies, state media reported. The session is expected to confirm senior state positions, review a five-year development plan, and finalize the national budget for 2026. It may also formalize constitutional language on inter-Korean relations and reinforce the country's political direction following recent party decisions. The assembly follows elections in which most deputies were replaced, signaling a significant reshuffle in state institutions. The body, widely regarded as a rubber-stamp parliament, is expected to endorse decisions already made by the ruling leadership.

Tajikistan sends large humanitarian convoy to Iran amid escalating displacement crisis

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Tajikistan dispatched a 110-truck convoy carrying 3,610 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Iran on Wednesday, according to the Foreign Ministry. The shipment includes medicines, food supplies, hygiene products, tents, bedding, clothing, and construction materials aimed at supporting civilians affected by ongoing instability. The assistance comes as humanitarian agencies report large-scale internal displacement in Iran, with millions of people forced to leave major cities for safer regions. Conditions are increasingly strained for both local residents and refugee communities already hosted in the country. The aid delivery underscores growing regional concern over worsening humanitarian needs linked to the prolonged crisis.

United States expands visa bond program to fifty countries to reduce overstays

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The United States will expand its visa bond program to fifty countries beginning April 2, requiring applicants for short-term business and tourism visas to post a 15,000 United States dollar bond. The State Department said the deposit will be refunded if travelers comply with visa conditions and depart on time. Officials said the program targets visa overstays, citing improved compliance rates among participants and high overstay figures from affected countries. Twelve new countries will join the existing list of thirty eight. Authorities said the program may be expanded further based on immigration risk assessments and overstay data trends.

Canada pushes coordinated global approach to de-escalate Iran conflict and protect regional stability

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Canada is seeking a coordinated approach among Group of Seven nations and Middle Eastern partners to reduce tensions in the ongoing Iran conflict, Foreign Minister Anita Anand said in an interview on Wednesday. She said she has prepared a set of guiding principles aimed at preventing regional spillover, limiting harm to civilians and non-involved countries, and reducing economic disruption caused by escalating hostilities. Anand said she is engaging with all Group of Seven members and regional stakeholders to encourage discussion on possible diplomatic "off ramps" that could help end the conflict.

Her comments come as Iran continues missile and drone attacks on Gulf states in response to a United States and Israel bombing campaign, raising concerns over maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant share of global oil shipments passes. Anand said Canada was not involved in offensive operations



but is deeply concerned about regional escalation and its impact on energy and food supply chains. She emphasized the importance of collective diplomacy and noted that Canada is also working to expand trade and security partnerships beyond the United States. She added that stronger cooperation among middle powers could improve global crisis response and stability.

Russia warns nuclear non proliferation system under strain as Middle East tensions escalate

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Russia on Monday warned that the global nuclear non proliferation framework is facing serious strain amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said recent military strikes by Israel and the United States against Iran, including attacks on facilities operating under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, have significantly damaged trust in the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

He said such actions weaken the credibility of diplomatic solutions and could push some countries to consider nuclear weapons as a security guarantee. Lavrov stressed that preserving the treaty is essential for maintaining global strategic stability and urged nuclear armed states to fully comply



with their obligations.

He also raised concerns about the growing militarization of outer space, accusing the United States and its allies of advancing destabilizing missile defense systems, including plans for space based interception capabilities that could undermine long term international security balance.

Five candidates enter race for United Nations secretary general as selection process begins next month

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Five candidates have been nominated so far for the next United Nations secretary general, with the selection process set to begin next month, according to General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock. She said the process will be transparent, neutral, and fair, with each candidate receiving equal opportunity. Starting April 20, candidates will take part in three-hour interactive sessions presenting their vision and answering questions, including input from civil society, with proceedings broadcast online.

Three women and two men are currently in the race, including former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, Costa Rica's Rebecca Grynspan, and Argentine diplomat Virginia Gamba. The male candidates include International



Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi and former Senegalese President Macky Sall. Nominations close on April 1, and additional candidates may still emerge.

Hundreds of Indians return home from Iran as evacuation routes expand through neighboring countries



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At least 882 Indian nationals, including students, professionals, and pilgrims, are returning from Iran through evacuation routes via Azerbaijan and Armenia, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday. Officials said most pilgrims have already returned, while others are still in transit. Around 772 people crossed into Armenia by land, and about 110 traveled through Azerbaijan, with some still awaiting onward flights. The government said approximately 9,000 Indians were initially believed to be in Iran, though many had already left before recent hostilities. Authorities continue to coordinate safe passage and assist remaining citizens seeking return to India.

Deadly armed attack in Johannesburg township raises concerns over recurring violence

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Two people were killed and six others injured on Saturday night after armed men opened fire during a gathering in Eldorado Park, south of Johannesburg, police said on Sunday. Authorities reported that multiple suspects entered a yard and fired randomly before fleeing on foot. The injured were taken to hospital, and a search for the attackers is ongoing, with no arrests made. Police said the motive remains unclear. The township has experienced repeated violent incidents in recent years, prompting increased security operations as authorities attempt to address gang-related crime and improve public safety in affected communities.

United Arab Emirates intercepts missiles and drones in latest escalation with Iran

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The United Arab Emirates said on Wednesday that its air defenses intercepted 13 ballistic missiles and 27 drones launched from Iran, according to the Ministry of Defense. Officials said the country has faced hundreds of missile and drone attacks since the escalation began, resulting in both military and civilian casualties involving multiple nationalities. Dozens of people have been injured, and fatalities among armed forces personnel were also reported. The government said it remains fully prepared to respond to threats and protect national security. Authorities emphasized continued efforts to safeguard regional stability amid rising cross-border tensions.



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A world on edge

The expanding fallout of the U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict



Dr. Avi Verma

The escalating confrontation involving the United States, Israel, and Iran has moved far beyond a regional flashpoint. It is now a defining geopolitical crisis with global economic consequences, testing alliances, redrawing strategic priorities, and exposing the fragility of the international order. What is unfolding is not merely a war of weapons—but a conflict of influence, endurance, and global positioning.

The Strait of Hormuz: A chokepoint that holds the world hostage

At the heart of the crisis lies the Strait of Hormuz—a narrow maritime passage through which nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supply flows. Any disruption here is not regional; it is global.

Recent hostilities and retaliatory actions have threatened shipping lanes, increased insurance premiums, and driven oil prices sharply upward. For countries dependent on imported energy, the consequences are immediate: rising fuel costs, inflationary pressures, and economic uncertainty.

In effect, the Strait has become a pressure point where geopolitical conflict directly translates into everyday economic hardship across continents.

Why the world is paying the price

A central question emerging from this conflict is why nations far removed from the battlefield are bearing its costs. The answer lies in the interconnected nature of global energy and trade.

Military actions led by the United States, in coordination with Israel, aimed at countering Iran's strategic and nuclear capabilities, have triggered a cycle of retaliation. Iran's ability to disrupt energy infrastructure and maritime routes ensures that the economic consequences ripple outward.

This is not a contained war. It is a conflict whose costs are distributed globally—impacting fuel prices in Asia, industrial output in Europe, and supply chains worldwide.

NATO's silence: A fractured alliance

One of the most striking features of this crisis has been the cautious stance of NATO allies. Despite longstanding transatlantic ties, key European nations have refrained from direct military involvement. Their hesitation reflects multiple realities:

- ▶ NATO's mandate is fundamentally defensive, and this conflict does not fall under collective defense obligations.
- ▶ European economies, already strained, are wary of deeper entanglement in a volatile Middle East war.



▶ There is a growing preference for diplomacy over escalation.

This reluctance signals a broader shift: traditional alliances are no longer automatic in their responses. Strategic interests are increasingly diverging, even among long-standing partners.

Washington's strategic objectives

From the perspective of the United States, the conflict appears driven by a combination of immediate and long-term goals:

- ▶ Neutralizing Iran's military and nuclear capabilities
- ▶ Securing critical global energy routes
- ▶ Reinforcing its strategic partnership with Israel
- ▶ Reasserting influence in a region where power dynamics are rapidly evolving

Yet, the absence of a clearly defined end-state raises difficult questions. Is the objective deterrence, regime pressure, or long-term containment? Without clarity, the risk of prolonged engagement grows.

A war of endurance: Who will blink first?

Unlike conventional wars with clear battle lines, this conflict is increasingly defined by endurance.

The United States and Israel possess overwhelming military superiority. Iran, however, has demonstrated its capacity for asymmetric warfare—targeting infrastructure, shipping routes, and regional assets.

This creates a strategic stalemate:

- ▶ One side dominates in conventional strength
- ▶ The other leverages disruption and resilience

History suggests that such conflicts rarely end in decisive victory. More often, they conclude through exhaustion, negotiation, or external pressure.

India's balancing act: Strategic autonomy in action

Amid the turbulence, India has adopted a measured and pragmatic approach.

As a major energy importer with deep ties across the region, India's priorities are clear:

- ▶ Ensuring uninterrupted energy supplies
- ▶ Safeguarding maritime trade routes
- ▶ Maintaining diplomatic relations with all sides

Rather than aligning militarily, India continues to engage through dialogue, reflecting its long-standing doctrine of strategic autonomy. This approach allows New Delhi to protect its interests without being drawn into direct conflict.

The risk of a wider war

Perhaps the most concerning scenario is the potential involvement of other major powers such as China, Russia, or North Korea.

Each has its own strategic calculations:

- ▶ China seeks stability to secure energy flows
- ▶ Russia may view the conflict through the lens of broader geopolitical competition
- ▶ North Korea could exploit the situation to deepen military alignments

Direct involvement by any of these actors would transform a regional conflict into a multi-front global crisis—dramatically raising the stakes.

A changing global order

This conflict is also revealing deeper structural shifts in global politics:

- ▶ The United States remains a dominant military power, but faces increasing diplomatic hesitation from allies
- ▶ Emerging powers are asserting independent foreign policies
- ▶ Global institutions appear limited in their ability to prevent escalation

The result is a more fragmented and multipolar world, where consensus is harder to achieve and conflicts are more complex to resolve.

Conclusion: A war without clear winners

The unfolding crisis underscores a sobering reality: in today's interconnected world, no conflict remains isolated.

Rising oil prices, strained alliances, and mounting human and economic costs suggest that the consequences of this war extend far beyond the Middle East. Even nations not directly involved find themselves affected.

Ultimately, the question is not only who will prevail—but whether any side truly can. Because in conflicts of this scale, victory is often elusive, and the costs are shared by all.

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

Czech Republic investigates suspected arson at industrial site amid claims of pro-Palestinian attack



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Czech authorities said on Friday they are investigating an overnight fire at an industrial complex in Pardubice, about 120 kilometers east of Prague, as a possible deliberate attack. Firefighters reported that the blaze broke out in a storage hall and spread to another building, though no injuries were reported. Local media said a protest group claimed responsibility, alleging it targeted a key manufacturing site linked to Israeli defense production and citing opposition to operations in Gaza. Czech defense firm LPP Holding confirmed one of its facilities was affected and said it is cooperating with investigators, declining to speculate on the cause. The company has previously worked with Israel's Elbit Systems on drone production. Police later said the case is being examined under terrorism-related provisions, with Interior Minister Lubomir Metnar calling it a potential terrorist incident.

Israel claims killing of Iranian security council chief amid escalating regional strikes



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Israel on Tuesday claimed it had killed Ali Larijani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, calling him a senior figure in the Iranian leadership and a close aide to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. The Israeli military said he had overseen crackdowns during recent protests. Shortly after the claim, Iranian social media accounts posted a handwritten note attributed to Larijani referencing a naval funeral ceremony, raising questions over the announcement. The Israeli military also said it had killed Basij commander Gholamreza Soleimani and struck multiple Iranian military sites, including command centers and missile storage facilities in Tehran, Shiraz, and Tabriz.

Argentina formally exits World Health Organization citing sovereignty concerns

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Argentina has formally withdrawn from the World Health Organization, according to Foreign Minister Pablo Quirno, who said the decision was communicated to the United Nations Secretary-General earlier in the week. The withdrawal will take effect one year after notification under international treaty rules. The government had previously announced the move, arguing

it would allow Argentina greater flexibility in shaping its health policies and improve resource allocation. Officials said the country does not rely on World Health Organization funding, and therefore would not face service disruptions. President Javier Milei's administration said the decision reflects a broader push for national sovereignty and reduced reliance on international institutions, reinforcing its policy shift toward independent health governance.



India rejects United States religious freedom report, cites bias and urges scrutiny of attacks on Hindu temples

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India on Monday strongly rejected the latest annual report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, calling its assessment of the country biased, selective, and driven by ideological narratives rather than objective facts. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the commission has for years relied on questionable sources to present a distorted picture of India's religious landscape and that such repeated misrepresentation undermines its credibility. He said India, home to 1.4 billion people of all major faiths, remains a pluralistic society with a long tradition of coexistence. The spokesperson also urged the commission to acknowledge incidents of vandalism and attacks on Hindu temples in the United States and



concerns about the safety and treatment of members of the Indian diaspora. India said such issues deserve serious attention instead of selective criticism.

United States blames Cuba leadership after nationwide blackout deepens crisis

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United States has sharply criticized Cuba's leadership following a nationwide power blackout, calling the country's economic system nonfunctional and blaming governance failures for the crisis. President Donald Trump said the United States is closely monitoring the situation and hinted at possible action, while Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Cuba's political and economic structure is incapable of reform without major change. Officials argued that decades of dependence on external subsidies have left the economy unstable after support from former allies declined. The Cuban government's



limited response to the blackout has been dismissed by Washington as insufficient, with officials describing the crisis as a long-term failure of state management rather than a technical breakdown.

Switzerland suspends weapons exports to United States over Iran conflict, citing neutrality

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Switzerland said on Friday it will not approve licenses for weapons exports to the United States because of the ongoing conflict involving Iran, citing its neutrality laws. The government said exports of war materiel to countries engaged in the international armed conflict with Iran cannot be authorized for the duration of the war. Officials added that no new export licenses for such shipments to the United States have been issued since strikes on Iran earlier this year. Switzerland also noted it recently rejected some United States requests for overflight permissions linked to military operations. The government said a panel of experts will continue reviewing export decisions as the situation develops, while stressing that its policy applies consistently under neutrality rules.

Greece and Germany reject military role in Strait of Hormuz security plan

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Greece and Germany have ruled out participating in any military operation in the Strait of Hormuz, distancing themselves from United States calls for broader coalition support in the region. Greek officials said their involvement remains limited to European Union maritime missions in the Red Sea and does not extend to the Gulf. German officials also said they would not engage in military action, stressing diplomatic support instead. Both countries emphasized that they do not seek involvement in conflict escalation. The comments follow renewed tensions in the Middle East and warnings over disruptions to global shipping routes and energy supplies through the strategic waterway.

Middle East conflict disrupts China exports as shipping costs surge and inventories rise



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The ongoing Middle East conflict is disrupting China's export supply chains, with shipping costs rising sharply and goods piling up in warehouses, according to media reports. In Yiwu, a major export hub supplying global retailers, importers are reportedly avoiding shipments due to security risks and higher freight charges. Costs have reportedly increased from 1,200 to 6,000 dollars per container. The region accounts for nearly 30 percent of Yiwu's exports. Rising tensions and attacks on commercial vessels in the Persian Gulf have further heightened concerns. The disruption has also affected China's energy imports, including oil from Iran and liquefied natural gas from Qatar.

India and Sri Lanka explore tech-driven cooperation to boost agricultural productivity



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India and Sri Lanka on Thursday discussed expanding cooperation in agriculture, livestock and land management, with a focus on using cost-effective technology to improve farmer incomes. Indian High Commissioner Santosh Jha met Sri Lanka's Agriculture Minister K D Lal Kantha to explore ways to enhance productivity and strengthen bilateral collaboration in the sector. Both sides also reviewed broader regional and global developments and reaffirmed the importance of close partnership between the two neighboring countries. The discussions build on ongoing Indian support for Sri Lanka's infrastructure and development initiatives. Earlier this week, India inaugurated a major Bailey bridge in Sri Lanka's coastal region, improving connectivity and supporting local livelihoods. The meeting reflects continued efforts to deepen economic and technical cooperation between the two nations.

Canada expands India academic partnerships to boost talent mobility and innovation links



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Canada is strengthening education ties with India through new scholarships, internships, and university partnerships aimed at boosting talent exchange and research collaboration. A report highlighted initiatives including 100 million Canadian dollars in scholarships, 300 annual research internships, and multiple joint degree programs. Recent agreements signed during a Canada-India visit include 24 education-focused memorandums covering artificial intelligence, clean technology, and skills development. Universities such as Toronto, Fraser Valley, and Algoma are partnering with Indian institutions for hybrid campuses and student exchange programs. Officials say the initiative will support nearly 200 fully funded positions for Indian students while creating pathways for Canadian students in India. A joint working group will oversee implementation through 2026.

India intensifies diplomatic outreach as West Asia tensions escalate, pushes for de-escalation

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India stepped up its diplomatic engagement across West Asia and key global partners this week as tensions in the region continued to rise, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar holding a series of telephonic conversations aimed at de-escalation, protection of civilians, and restoration of regional stability.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron, Jordan's King Abdullah II, and Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, expressing concern over the evolving situation and stressing the urgent need for dialogue and diplomacy. The leaders reiterated support for peace, security, and continued coordination.

Earlier in the week, PM Modi held calls with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Kuwait's Crown Prince, and the President of the United Arab Emirates, underlining India's condemnation of attacks on sovereignty, while also focusing on safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and the safety of Indian nationals in the region.



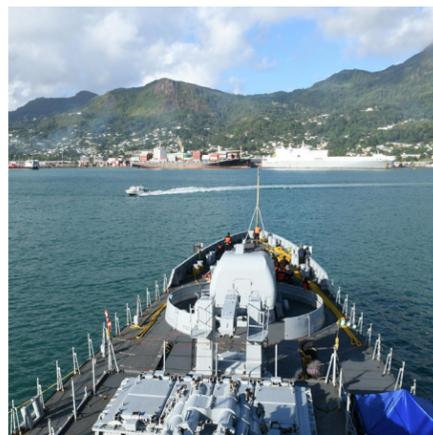
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also engaged with his Israeli counterpart Gideon Saar and UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation Reem Al Hashimy, exchanging views on the conflict and appreciating support for the Indian community abroad.

The discussions come amid escalating regional tensions, with India maintaining close contact with multiple stakeholders to encourage restraint, dialogue, and long-term stability across West Asia and beyond.

India donates naval equipment to Seychelles as part of expanding maritime security cooperation

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India on Wednesday donated naval ship spares to the Seychelles Defence Forces during the ongoing joint military exercise Lamitye 2026, reinforcing defence cooperation under its MAHASAGAR vision for regional security and growth. The equipment was handed over by the commanding officer of an Indian naval vessel visiting Port Victoria. Indian and Seychellois forces are currently participating in the eleventh edition of the exercise, which began earlier this month and will continue until March 20. The drills involve personnel from the army, navy, and air force, focusing on semi urban operations, peacekeeping coordination, and counter threat responses. The exercise



also includes tactical training, field operations, and joint validation drills aimed at improving interoperability and strengthening bilateral defence ties.

India and Nordic countries explore deeper cooperation across technology, trade and energy

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India and Nordic countries discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral ties during a meeting in New Delhi on Monday between Secretary West Sibi George and ambassadors from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The talks focused on expanding cooperation in trade and investment, digital technologies, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, renewable energy, clean technologies, the Arctic region and space.

The envoys also highlighted opportunities created by ongoing trade frameworks such as the India European Union free trade agreement and the India European Free Trade Association trade pact. Officials noted strong interest in expanding economic engagement, especially in emerging technologies and sustainable development. Earlier this month, Finland's President Alexander Stubb visited India, during which both countries elevated ties to a strategic



partnership in digitalisation and sustainability, underscoring growing momentum in India Nordic relations.

India and European Union deepen strategic partnership with focus on free trade agreement and technology cooperation



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

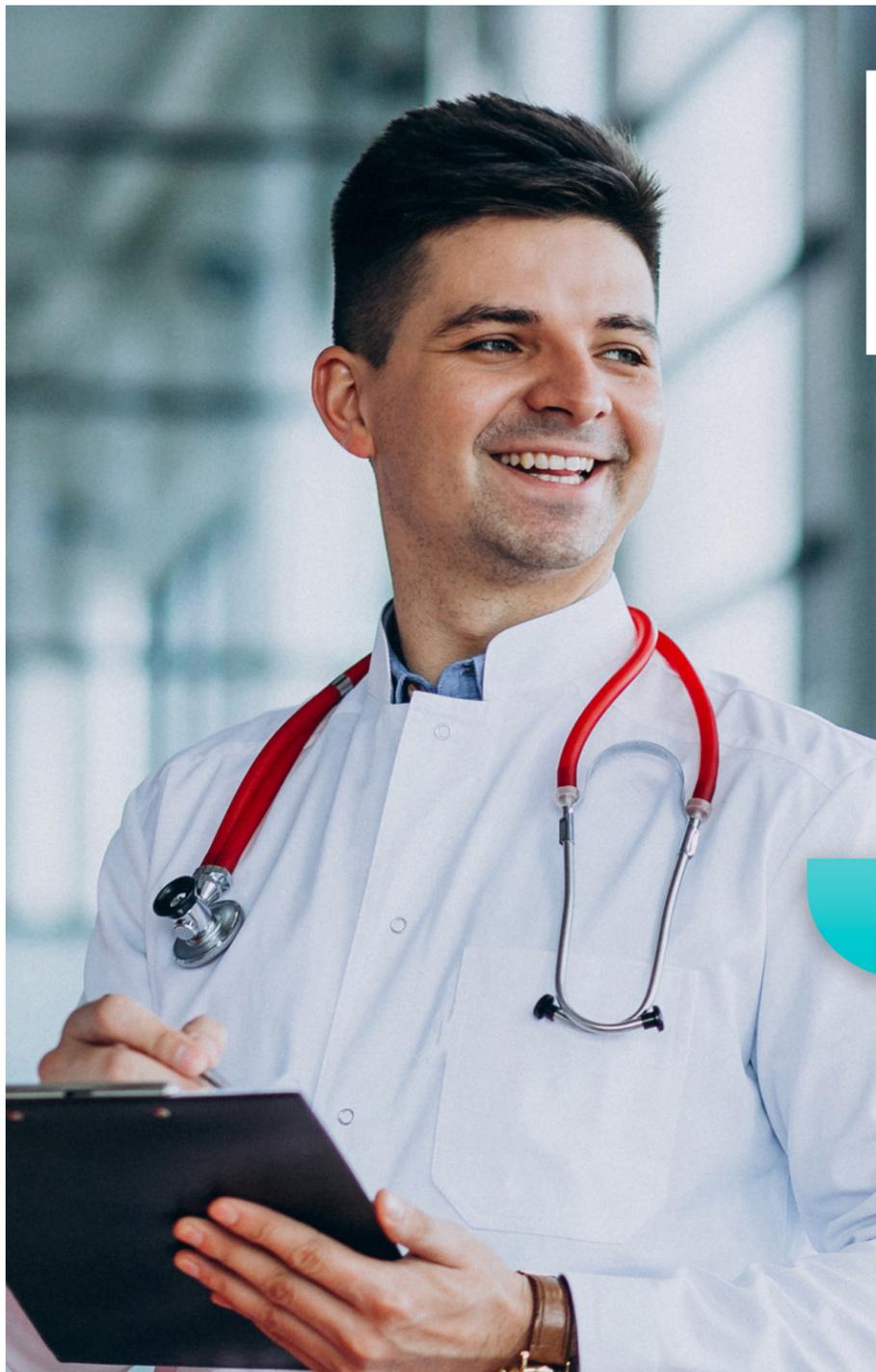
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar concluded a visit to Brussels after discussions with European Union leaders on strengthening cooperation across trade, technology, security, and connectivity under the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement. He met senior officials including European Council President Antonio Costa, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas. Jaishankar said the agreement marks a turning point in bilateral ties, unlocking major economic potential and reinforcing strategic engagement. He highlighted plans to upgrade the Trade and Technology Council, enhance supply chain resilience, and promote talent mobility. He also stressed expanding defence cooperation, advancing connectivity initiatives such as the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor, and strengthening multilateral coordination in an uncertain global environment.

India and Russia hold United Nations consultations on counter-terrorism and security council reform



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India and Russia held their seventh United Nations consultations in New Delhi on Tuesday, focusing on counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, and reforms of the United Nations Security Council. The meeting was co-chaired by Secretary West Sibi George and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Alimov, with participation from Russian Ambassador Denis Alipov. Both sides exchanged views on global priorities and reaffirmed support for expanding the Security Council to better reflect contemporary geopolitical realities, including greater representation for India and other developing nations. The discussions followed earlier high-level engagements between the two countries, where leaders emphasized cooperation against terrorism and called for reforms to strengthen the effectiveness, transparency, and inclusiveness of United Nations institutions in addressing global security challenges.



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Trump administration advances gold coin design featuring president for 250th anniversary minting



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A federal arts commission on Thursday approved the final design for a 24-karat gold commemorative coin featuring President Donald Trump, clearing the way for production by the United States Mint. The coin is intended to mark America's 250th anniversary on Independence Day in 2026. Officials said Trump approved the design, which shows his portrait on the front and a bald eagle on the reverse. Although federal law restricts living presidents on currency, officials said Treasury authority allows the issuance. The coin's size, denomination, and limited production details are still being finalized.

UC Berkeley strengthens antisemitism policies to settle discrimination lawsuit

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The University of California, Berkeley agreed on Thursday to strengthen its antisemitism policies as part of a settlement resolving a 2023 lawsuit alleging harassment and discrimination against Jewish students and faculty. The case, filed by the Louis D. Brandeis Center and Jewish Americans for Fairness in Education, followed heightened campus tensions after the Israel Hamas conflict intensified. Under the agreement, Berkeley will bar student groups from excluding individuals based on support for Israel or Zionism. It will also introduce mandatory antisemitism and anti-discrimination training, improve its complaint process, and appoint a compliance officer. The university will pay one million dollars toward legal costs.

Record-breaking March heatwave grips western United States as temperatures surge across multiple states

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

An intense heatwave on Thursday pushed temperatures across California, Nevada, and Arizona to record-breaking levels, with some areas reaching up to 35 degrees Fahrenheit above normal. The National Weather Service issued widespread heat warnings, saying many March records are expected to fall through the weekend. Cities including Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Las Vegas reported unusually high daytime and nighttime temperatures. Officials warned of health risks and closed some hiking areas. Meteorologists said the heatwave is historic for March and is expected to ease next week as cooler air moves in.

United States investigates abortion coverage mandates across 13 states over federal compliance concerns

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Trump administration on Thursday opened formal investigations into 13 states that require state-regulated health insurance plans to cover abortion services. The states include California, New York, Illinois, Massachusetts, Washington, Oregon, New Jersey, and several others with Democratic leadership. Federal officials said the probes will examine whether these mandates violate the Weldon Amendment, a federal law included in annual spending bills that protects health care entities and insurers from being compelled to provide or fund abortion services if they have moral or religious objections.

The Department of Health and Human Services said it is sending information requests to the states as part of a compliance review process. The administration



argues the law may extend to employers and insurance providers, a broader interpretation than that used during the Biden administration. State officials have criticized the move as politically motivated and an intrusion into state-level health policy decisions.

House committee subpoenas attorney general Pam Bondi in Jeffrey Epstein investigation

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A United States House Oversight Committee on Tuesday issued a subpoena to Attorney General Pam Bondi, requiring her to give a closed-door sworn deposition on April 14 as part of an ongoing investigation into Jeffrey Epstein. Lawmakers are examining how the Justice Department handled the release of Epstein-related files and whether the agency withheld names of powerful associates linked to the convicted sex offender. The Justice Department called the subpoena unnecessary, saying lawmakers already had access to unredacted documents and that Bondi and her deputy were scheduled for a private briefing on



Wednesday. The department also said it continues to engage with Congress on transparency legislation related to Epstein files. Bondi has faced political scrutiny over accusations of a possible cover-up, which she denies.

Illinois governor JB Pritzker criticizes pro-Israel lobbying group after heavy spending in state primary

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker on Wednesday criticized outside political spending in the state's primary elections, including funding from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a pro-Israel lobbying group he once supported. Pritzker, a Democrat and potential future presidential candidate, said the group has shifted away from its bipartisan focus on Middle East peace and now backs candidates aligned with

President Donald Trump. He described the influx of outside money, estimated at about 70 million dollars across several races, as political interference.

Pritzker, who previously donated to the group more than a decade ago, said he no longer supports its direction. The comments came after competitive House and Senate primaries in Illinois shaped by major spending from outside political action committees and ideological disputes over United States foreign policy in the Middle East.

Lawmakers move to secure work rights for international students through bipartisan bill

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

United States lawmakers including Sam Liccardo and Raja Krishnamoorthi introduced a bipartisan bill on Thursday to codify the Optional Practical Training program, which allows international students to work in their field after graduation. The

proposal seeks to provide long-term certainty amid concerns about policy changes. Lawmakers said retaining global talent is critical as competition intensifies. International students contributed about \$42.9 billion to the economy in the 2024-2025 academic year, and the bill has broad support from industry and education groups.

FBI director Kash Patel defends surveillance and counterterrorism strategy during Senate scrutiny hearing



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

FBI Director Kash Patel on Wednesday defended the bureau's counterterrorism and surveillance practices during a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing in Washington. He said the agency has disrupted multiple terrorist plots and warned that extremist groups are increasingly using online platforms for recruitment. Patel rejected concerns over unlawful surveillance, stating all actions follow constitutional limits. He also highlighted expanded coordination through Homeland Security task forces and increased intelligence collection. Lawmakers questioned him on oversight and transparency, while Patel emphasized that evolving digital threats require a more proactive national security approach.

California moves toward renaming César Chávez Day amid renewed scrutiny of labor leader's legacy

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

California Governor Gavin Newsom on Thursday supported a proposal to rename César Chávez Day as Farmworkers Day following allegations of sexual abuse against the labor leader. The move comes as several states and cities reconsider how to honor Chávez, with some canceling commemorations or renaming events. Lawmakers in California are preparing legislation to change the holiday. The debate has sparked broader discussions about Chávez's legacy and the farmworker movement. Advocates say the issue highlights tensions between honoring historical achievements and addressing serious allegations raised decades after his death in 1993.

Senate committee advances Markwayne Mullin nomination for Homeland Security leadership post

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A Senate committee on Thursday advanced the nomination of Senator Markwayne Mullin to lead the Department of Homeland Security in an eight to seven vote. The Republican chairman of the committee opposed the nomination, while one Democrat joined Republicans in support. Mullin is expected to replace current leadership following a scheduled transition later this month. During his confirmation hearing on Wednesday, he defended immigration enforcement policies, called for stronger funding, and proposed closer coordination with local officials. Lawmakers also questioned him on agency structure and disaster response reforms.

White House waives Jones Act restrictions to ease fuel supply pressures during energy disruption

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

President Donald Trump on Wednesday waived a key shipping law for 60 days to reduce fuel and transport costs amid global energy disruptions. The waiver allows foreign vessels to move goods between United States ports, including oil, gas, and other commodities. Officials said the move is aimed at stabilizing prices after energy markets were disrupted by conflict-related tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. The Jones Act normally requires domestic shipping using U.S.-flagged vessels. Authorities said the temporary measure is intended to improve supply flow and ease pressure on fuel prices.

Federal judge blocks new CDC vaccine advisory appointments, triggering policy and oversight clash

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Members of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention vaccine advisory committee on Tuesday pushed back after a federal judge blocked recent appointments to the panel. The judge ruled that several members lacked sufficient expertise in immunization policy and vaccine science. Appointees, including medical professionals and researchers, defended their qualifications and said their work includes vaccine administration and clinical research. The Department of Health and Human Services criticized the ruling and signaled plans to appeal. The decision has intensified debate over vaccine policy oversight and the structure of federal advisory committees.

Trump administration shifts student loan management to Treasury in major Education Department overhaul



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

On Thursday, the Trump administration announced that the Education Department will transfer part of its federal student loan portfolio to the Treasury Department, marking an early step in restructuring the agency. The Treasury will initially take over loans in default, affecting about 180 billion dollars, or roughly 11 percent of the 1.7 trillion dollar federal loan portfolio. A second phase could eventually shift all student loans to Treasury, though no timeline has been set. Officials said borrowers do not need to take action and will continue working with existing loan servicers. The move is part of a broader effort to reduce the Education Department's role.

Federal judge blocks Trump administration declaration targeting gender affirming care for minors

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A federal judge in Oregon on Thursday ruled that the Trump administration overstepped its authority when it issued a declaration questioning the safety and effectiveness of gender affirming medical care for minors. The directive, issued in December by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., stated that treatments such as puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and surgeries for adolescents with gender dysphoria were unsafe and could lead to federal funding consequences for providers.

Judge Mustafa Kasubhai said the administration failed to follow required administrative procedures before issuing the policy and therefore could not enforce it. The ruling came in a lawsuit



filed by 19 states and the District of Columbia, which argued the declaration was unlawful, misleading, and intended to pressure medical providers to stop offering care. The court also rejected the government's attempt to dismiss the case, marking a significant legal setback and leaving the policy's future uncertain pending further litigation.

Vice President JD Vance signals new steps as rising gas prices test United States economy

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Vice President JD Vance said on Wednesday that the Trump administration will soon announce measures to address rising gas prices as global energy markets remain volatile during the Iran conflict. Speaking in Michigan, Vance acknowledged a "rough road ahead" but said the price surge would be temporary. Gasoline prices have risen sharply in recent weeks, driven by supply concerns after reported strikes on Iran's energy infrastructure and threats to shipping routes near the Strait of Hormuz. The administration has already moved to release oil from emergency reserves and ease shipping rules to improve fuel



distribution. Officials are also considering temporarily lifting seasonal fuel standards to reduce costs. Vance and Energy Secretary Chris Wright are set to meet the American Petroleum Institute on Thursday to discuss market conditions and longer-term energy stability.

Airport security absences ease slightly as shutdown strains United States travel system

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Absences among Transportation Security Administration officers declined slightly on Tuesday to 9.9 percent as a partial United States government shutdown entered its fifth week, according to officials on Wednesday. Around 50,000 airport security workers have been working without pay since funding lapsed, with about one in ten failing to report for duty daily since Sunday. Absences remained significantly

higher at major hubs, reaching about 30 percent at New York Kennedy, Pittsburgh, and Houston Bush, and about 40 percent at Houston Hobby. The Department of Homeland Security said typical absence rates are below 2 percent. Some airports have closed security checkpoints, while long lines stretched up to two hours. Officials warned smaller airports could face shutdowns if staffing shortages worsen. The disruption comes during peak spring travel, with airlines urging lawmakers to resolve the funding standoff quickly.



Federal safety regulators probe close call between Alaska Airlines and FedEx jets at Newark airport



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The National Transportation Safety Board on Thursday launched an investigation into a close call at Newark Liberty International Airport involving an Alaska Airlines jet and a FedEx cargo aircraft. The Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 was instructed to perform a go-around after a FedEx Boeing 777 was cleared for landing on a crossing runway. The Alaska flight briefly climbed after being redirected and passed over the intersecting runway before landing safely. Both aircraft operated without injuries. The Federal Aviation Administration is also investigating the incident. The event adds to ongoing concerns about air traffic control safety and staffing shortages.

States sue Trump administration over rollback of landmark climate pollution finding

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A coalition of 24 states and multiple local governments filed a lawsuit on Thursday challenging the Trump administration's decision to revoke a key Environmental Protection Agency climate determination. The suit, led by California, New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, seeks to reinstate the 2009 endangerment finding that established greenhouse gases as a threat to public health. That finding underpins major climate regulations on vehicles and power plants. Officials argue the repeal is illegal and undermines federal climate protections. The Environmental Protection Agency maintains it lacks authority to regulate emissions for global climate concerns, setting up a major legal battle.

United States escalates probe into 3.2 million Tesla vehicles over full self driving crash risks

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on Thursday escalated its investigation into 3.2 million Tesla vehicles equipped with Full Self Driving software, citing concerns that the system may fail to detect hazards in poor visibility. The probe, first opened in October 2024 covering 2.4 million vehicles, has now advanced to an engineering analysis, a key step before a potential recall. Regulators said the camera-based system may miss conditions such as glare, dust, or obstruction and may fail to alert drivers before crashes. The agency reported nine related incidents, including one fatal crash and two injury cases, and is reviewing additional crashes. Tesla's system requires driver supervision despite automated features.

US Senate pays tribute to Indian American philanthropist Sunil Puri, celebrates immigrant success story

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United States Senate paid tribute to Indian American businessman and philanthropist Sunil Puri, with Senator Dick Durbin honoring his life on the Senate floor and describing him as a symbol of the American dream. Durbin said Puri arrived from India in 1979 at age 18 with little money and worked multiple jobs while studying at Rockford College, now Rockford University. Over time, Puri built First Midwest Group, a real estate firm that transformed abandoned properties in Rockford, Illinois, into commercial spaces, creating jobs and supporting local growth. Durbin also highlighted Puri's major philanthropic contributions, including funding community projects such as the Keeling Puri Peace Plaza and the Salvation Army disaster services center. He also noted Puri's advocacy for stronger United States India relations and participation in diplomatic visits with former presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

London court fines two Indian-origin men over repeated paan spitting violations

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Two Indian-origin men in London have each been fined £1,391 after being convicted of repeatedly spitting paan on public streets in the borough of Brent. The cases were heard by the North West London Magistrates' Court after both individuals failed to pay earlier fixed penalty notices. Akshitkumar Bhadre Patel, 31, from Edgware, was originally issued a £100 fine for spitting paan on Kingsbury Road on June 11, 2025. After he failed to pay or attend his hearing, the case escalated, resulting in a much higher court-imposed penalty. In a separate case, Hitesh Patel, 32, from Ruislip, was fined for a similar offence on Wembley Hill Road on June 12, 2025. He also did not appear in court, leading to conviction in his absence. Brent Council has intensified enforcement against paan spitting, spending significant funds annually on cleaning stains and conducting daily patrols across affected areas.

Extortion threats targeting Punjabi builders spread to Vancouver amid rising safety fears

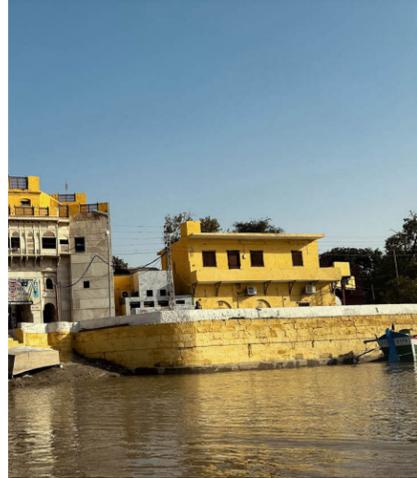
● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Extortion threats targeting Punjabi business owners have now spread to Vancouver, Canada, after earlier incidents in Surrey and Brampton. According to OMNI News, builders in Vancouver are removing site signage and erasing public contact details as fear grows that their information is being used to target them. Some developers say they are delaying or cancelling projects despite the city's housing shortage. Builders argue that publicly available records on city websites, including phone numbers and project details, are exposing them to criminals. They have urged authorities to restrict access to such information, but feel their concerns have not been addressed. The Vancouver Police Department has confirmed four active investigations into extortion cases. Officials believe the actual number of victims is higher. Police have urged victims to report threats immediately rather than comply with demands.

Inside Sadhu Bela the Indus river island shrine linking Hindu and Sikh traditions in Pakistan

● Staff Writer, IndoUS Tribune

A short boat ride from Sukkur in Pakistan's Sindh province leads to Sadhu Bela, an Udasi temple complex set on an island in the Indus River. The journey itself feels like a passage through layers of history, where geography, faith, and cultural memory come together in a single living space. The author travelled from Lahore to Sindh and visited the shrine during Ramadan, accompanied by Muslim friends observing the fast, reflecting the site's wider cultural resonance beyond religious boundaries. Sadhu Bela was once a forested island known as Menak Parbat before Udasi saint Baba Bankhandi Maharaj arrived in 1823 from Nepal. He settled here and renamed it Sadhu Bela, meaning the woods of the saint. Over time, it developed into an important spiritual centre tied to both Hindu devotional traditions and Sikh heritage linked to the Udasi order. After Baba Bankhandi's death in 1883, Sant Harnam Das expanded the complex, adding marble structures in 1899 that still define its architecture today.



Today, the island is managed by the Evacuee Trust Property Board of Pakistan. It houses multiple temples, a library, gardens, and residential spaces for visitors. The site remains active, especially during the three-day annual festival marking Baba Bankhandi's death anniversary, when prayers, scripture readings, and rituals draw devotees from across the region. Inside the complex,

religious traditions exist side by side. Sacred texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Guru Granth Sahib are placed together, reflecting the Udasi tradition's blended spiritual framework. This coexistence also reveals differing interpretations of shared terms and symbols across Hindu and Sikh readings of scripture.

The temple architecture includes white marble structures, carved balconies, murals, and shrines dedicated to figures such as Baba Bankhandi and Sri Chand. The island also features a historic library and carved wooden galleries that reflect early twentieth century craftsmanship. As the visit concludes, the surrounding river adds its own moment of significance. An Indus River dolphin, one of the world's rare freshwater species, was seen near the temple island, turning the journey into a striking encounter between nature and heritage. Sadhu Bela today stands as a layered sacred space where history, devotion, and the Indus River continue to shape a shared cultural landscape.

US homeland security hearing highlights rising threats and diaspora security concerns

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

United States Senate hearing for Homeland Security Secretary nominee Markwayne Mullin highlighted growing concerns over domestic security, cyber threats, and law enforcement capacity, with indirect implications for Indian American communities across the country. During the confirmation hearing on Wednesday, senators warned that national security risks are intensifying, citing recent attacks on religious institutions and cyber intrusions linked to foreign-backed groups. Lawmakers pointed to a recent synagogue attack in Michigan as part of a broader pattern of escalating threats.

The discussion also underscored vulnerabilities faced by places of worship, including Hindu temples and Sikh gurdwaras, which increasingly rely on federal security grant programmes and private protection measures. Mullin said the department must strengthen cooperation with communities and improve trust while ensuring stronger



protection for vulnerable institutions.

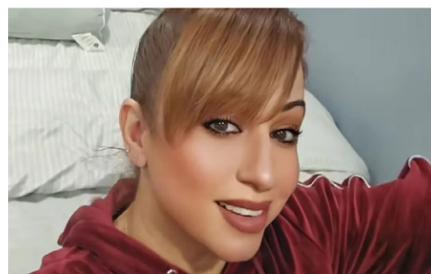
The hearing further raised concerns over cybersecurity workforce shortages and funding gaps, with lawmakers warning that reduced capacity could weaken national preparedness. Indian American professionals, who play a major role in the United States technology and cybersecurity sectors, were indirectly referenced through discussions on staffing and federal cyber resilience. The debate also reflected divisions over immigration enforcement and civil liberties, as senators weighed security priorities against community trust and operational accountability.

Khalistani critic's killing in Canada raises free speech and security concerns

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

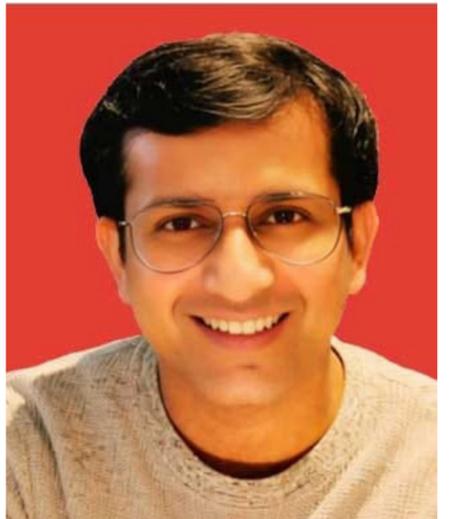
The killing of Nancy Grewal, a Canadian citizen known for opposing Khalistani extremism, has triggered concern over free speech protections and personal security in Canada. A report said the incident has renewed debate about whether critics of extremist networks face rising intimidation and violence. Columnist Sanjay Lazar, writing for Global Strat View, said commentators have called for stronger action against extremist groups and tighter controls over alleged criminal activity linked to places of worship.

Grewal was killed in Canada on March 3. According to the report, she had received around forty death threats and survived an



earlier arson attack on her home in November last year. Despite repeated complaints, she was allegedly not provided protection by local police or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Her family believes those behind the earlier attack may be linked to her killing. The report also alleged that she was targeted for opposing the misuse of religious spaces and exposing extremist influence networks.

Indian-origin executive Abhinav Rastogi named global marketing director for Youtube shopping



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Indian-origin executive Abhinav Rastogi has been appointed global marketing director for YouTube Shopping, marking a major leadership role within the platform's expanding commerce division. Based in Singapore, he will focus on scaling the service across new international markets and strengthening its position as a creator-led shopping ecosystem.

Rastogi, an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur and the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, began his career at consulting firms Boston Consulting Group and A T Kearney before joining Google more than a decade ago. At Google, he worked across consumer apps such as Search, Maps, and Assistant, and later contributed to YouTube initiatives including Music, Originals, and Shorts.

Most recently, he served as director of marketing for YouTube Asia Pacific, where he led regional expansion of creator commerce initiatives, including YouTube Shopping across multiple markets. He has also been an active angel investor in early-stage startups in India and Southeast Asia.

Indian-origin resident in Texas pushes back against misinformation on H-1B and Indian Americans



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

An Indian-origin resident in Frisco, Texas, has publicly spoken out against rising anti-immigrant rhetoric targeting H-1B visa holders and Indian-Americans during recent city council meetings. Neha Suratran, who has lived in Texas since 2016, addressed what she described as misinformation being circulated about the community and the visa program. Speaking at a Frisco council meeting, she said the city's safety is not separate from its diversity but strengthened by it. She also noted that there are no verified reports of H-1B fraud in Frisco and emphasized that the city council is not the authority responsible for investigating visa-related matters. Suratran explained that H-1B visas are highly regulated, requiring specialized job offers, advanced degrees, and employer proof of fair wages. She also warned against relying on viral posts and group chats for information. Another Indian-origin resident echoed concerns about misinformation and highlighted Frisco's low crime rate and strong community trust.

Indian-origin cab driver in Australia sues police over alleged racial abuse and wrongful arrest



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

An Indian-origin cab driver in Australia has filed a lawsuit against police, alleging racial abuse and wrongful charges stemming from a 2023 arrest. The case centers on an incident in which a local resident accused the driver of engaging in an indecent act inside his vehicle, leading to his immediate arrest. The driver strongly denies the allegation, arguing it was false and should never have resulted in charges. The lawsuit claims that body camera footage from the arrest captures a police officer making a racially offensive remark about Indians, which the driver says reflects discriminatory conduct. He contends that this alleged bias influenced how the situation was handled and worsened the treatment he received during the arrest. The driver is seeking damages for reputational harm and emotional distress, while also challenging the conduct of the officers involved. The case is now before the court and remains ongoing.

Minnesota resolution on Hinduphobia gains support amid concerns over anti-Hindu incidents

● Staff Writer, IndoUS Tribune

A proposed resolution in the Minnesota Senate condemning Hinduphobia and anti-Hindu bias is gaining momentum, with support from more than 400 community members and ongoing legislative discussions. Introduced on March 9, the measure seeks to formally recognize discrimination faced by Hindu Americans and reaffirm commitments to religious freedom and inclusivity.

Advocacy group Coalition of Hindus of North America has been leading efforts to highlight concerns, presenting testimonies before the Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee. Community members cited incidents including vandalism of Hindu temples, thefts at priests' residences, and online harassment targeting Hindu institutions.

Supporters argue that official recognition is essential to ensuring hate incidents are properly acknowledged and



addressed. Representatives from other faith communities, including Jewish organizations, also expressed support, emphasizing the importance of naming and confronting religious hatred.

The proposal has sparked broader discussion on religious bias, civil rights protections, and inclusion, particularly in states with growing Indian American populations such as Minnesota.

Punjabi academic from Bathinda appointed foreign expert at Chinese university for Punjabi studies

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Professor Zameerpal Kaur Sandhu Bajwa from Bathinda has been appointed as a foreign expert in South Asian studies and Punjabi language at Beijing Foreign Studies University in China for the 2026-27 academic session. She currently serves as a professor and former dean at the Central University of Punjab.

During her tenure, which will span two semesters, she will teach Punjabi language, literature, folklore, Punjab history and culture, Sanskrit poetics, and Urdu to Chinese students, diplomats, and professionals in international studies. She will also have the opportunity to learn Chinese through a dedicated language program for foreign experts.

Beijing Foreign Studies University offers 101 foreign languages and is known for training diplomats and global professionals.



The institution has produced hundreds of ambassadors and thousands of senior foreign service officers, according to the university.

Professor Bajwa holds a doctorate, multiple master's degrees, and extensive academic qualifications in languages and linguistics. She was earlier congratulated by the Central University of Punjab leadership for the international appointment.

Three Indian-origin men killed in Canada within a week amid rising community concerns

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Three Indian-origin men were killed in Canada within a single week, in separate incidents across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. Friends of the victims have raised concerns that the cases could involve racial motivation, though police investigations are ongoing.

On Saturday, Edmonton resident Birinder Singh, 22, was shot dead while driving on Highway 2 south of Leduc, Alberta. His friends said a pickup truck pulled alongside their vehicle before gunfire erupted. Police have confirmed a firearm was discharged and said the motive remains under investigation.

On Friday night, Gurkirat Singh Manocha, 25, originally from India, was fatally injured during an altercation at a boat ramp near Fort St John, British Columbia.



He was pronounced dead despite emergency efforts, and police are still determining what led to the confrontation.

On Thursday morning, Davinder Singh, 31, was killed in a workplace shooting in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. He was working as a cab driver when he was attacked at a motel. Two men have been charged in connection with the case.

Indian fugitive remains on FBI Ten Most Wanted list as cybercrime cases expand globally

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has increased its reward to up to one million dollars for information on fugitives listed in its Ten Most Wanted program, which includes Indian national Bhadrash Kumar Patel. He has been on the list since 2017 for allegedly killing his wife in Maryland in 2015 and was last seen in New Jersey. Officials said Patel is considered armed and extremely dangerous. The FBI also added new fugitives, including one linked to a large international cyber-enabled ATM jackpotting scheme, marking the first cybercriminal ever placed on the list. The FBI said 540 fugitives have been listed since 1950, with a 93 percent capture rate, many due to public tips. Officials emphasized growing international cooperation in tracking fugitives across borders and highlighted the expanding focus on cyber-related financial crimes.

Indian national charged in Singapore for allegedly molesting air stewardess on flight

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A thirty-five-year-old Indian national has been charged in Singapore for allegedly molesting and threatening an air stewardess on a Singapore Airlines flight from Bangkok on February 9 this year. According to police and court reports cited by The Straits Times, the man, identified as Akash Tiwari, is accused of using criminal force and causing distress through threatening behaviour. The alleged incident occurred while the stewardess was serving passengers. She reportedly warned him to stop before leaving the area. Authorities said he was arrested after the flight landed in Singapore. Tiwari has indicated he intends to plead not guilty. He is expected to return to court on March 26 for a pre-trial conference. Singapore police said offenders will be dealt with strictly, noting that such offences can lead to imprisonment, fines, caning, or a combination of penalties under local law.

Nirav Modi seeks to reopen United Kingdom extradition appeal claiming risk of torture in India

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Fugitive businessman Nirav Modi's legal team concluded hearings in London on Tuesday as he sought permission to reopen his extradition appeal, arguing that he faces a real risk of torture if sent back to India. The High Court at the Royal Courts of Justice reserved judgment after a day-long hearing. Modi, wanted in the Punjab National Bank fraud and money laundering case, appeared via video link from a London prison. His lawyers argued that assurances given by Indian authorities are not reliable and cited concerns over interrogation practices. The Crown Prosecution Service opposed the plea, saying the request was out of time and based on weak grounds. If permission is denied, extradition proceedings will move forward. Modi has faced multiple failed appeals since his extradition was ordered in April 2021 by then United Kingdom home secretary Priti Patel.



Friday, 20 March 2026

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Australian military deployed as Northern Territory flood recovery intensifies



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Australia has deployed military personnel to assist flood recovery operations in the Northern Territory, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Sunday. The Australian Defence Force will support communities around Katherine, where flooding has reached levels not seen in nearly three decades. Several remote areas have been evacuated, and widespread damage has affected homes, roads, and rural infrastructure. While no fatalities have been reported in the territory, separate flood-related deaths occurred in Queensland earlier in the week. Emergency teams continue rescue and recovery efforts as authorities work to restore access and essential services in impacted regions.

Iran confirms limited passage for Indian vessels through Strait of Hormuz amid regional tensions

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Iran's ambassador to India Mohammad Fathali said on Saturday that Tehran has allowed some Indian vessels to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, while declining to share operational details. He said the move reflects long-standing historical ties between the two countries and confirmed that there had been delays but arrangements were made. The remarks come amid reports that Indian-flagged oil and liquefied petroleum gas tankers have been granted safe passage through the strategic waterway, one of the world's most critical energy routes. The envoy also reiterated Iran's preference for negotiations despite ongoing regional tensions.

US watchdog urges action over alleged religious freedom violations in Turkey

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has recommended placing Turkey on the Special Watch List, citing what it described as systematic and ongoing violations of religious freedom. In its annual report, the body alleged restrictions on Christian clergy residency, prosecution of religious dissent under security laws, and pressure on secular expression in state institutions. It also pointed to monitoring of online speech and limits on religious training facilities. The commission urged Washington to link future security assistance and trade engagement with improvements in religious freedom and called for congressional hearings to examine conditions for religious minorities in Turkey.

India flags concern over rising minority violence in Bangladesh, calls for accountability

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

serious violations of international human

India has repeatedly raised concerns with Bangladesh over the safety of minority communities and expects thorough investigations and accountability, according to a report citing diplomatic sources. It emphasized that the primary responsibility for protecting all citizens lies with the Bangladeshi government. Rights groups cited in the report said preventing recurring violence requires more than reactive policing and called for sustained legal safeguards, swift prosecution of offenders, and stronger community reconciliation efforts.

The Morning Voice newspaper noted that, without independently verifiable data, the scale of incidents remains contested, but allegations of persistent insecurity raise broader concerns about pluralism and human rights.

The report also referred to disclosures made in India's parliament indicating nearly 3,100 incidents of violence targeting Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh between August 2024 and February 2026. These included reported attacks on homes, businesses, and places of worship, along with killings and arson. If verified, such incidents would represent



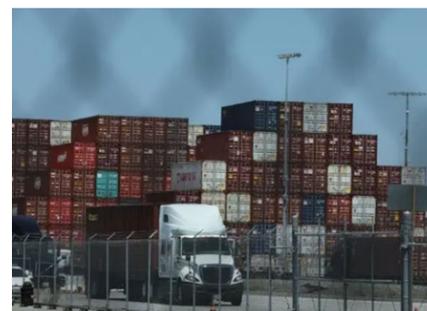
rights norms, including religious freedom and personal security. The issue is especially sensitive for India due to its long border, shared cultural ties, and potential spillover effects such as displacement and cross-border tensions. The report added that minority violence in Bangladesh has drawn increased concern during the eighteen-month tenure of the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus.

United States bill seeks to bar China-linked firms from transporting military cargo

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

A new United States Senate bill aims to prevent Chinese-linked companies and nationals from handling American military freight, citing national security risks. Introduced by Senator Tom Cotton, the Trucking Security and Chinese Communist Party Disclosure Act would require trucking firms transporting Department of War cargo to certify they have no ties to the Chinese Communist Party or Chinese military-linked entities. The proposal also calls for a secure federal registry of approved carriers cleared to move defense shipments.

Companies would be required to undergo screening, maintain records,



and avoid any significant business links with blacklisted entities. Violations could lead to contract suspension, penalties, or disqualification. A companion bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Elise Stefanik, who said the measure closes a critical loophole in defense contracting rules.

United Kingdom cuts overseas aid sharply as government redirects spending toward defense and security priorities

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United Kingdom has announced deep cuts to overseas development assistance as part of a broader shift toward increased defense spending, with bilateral aid to African countries set to fall by nearly fifty six percent by 2029.

The reductions are part of more than \$7.6 billion in total cuts aimed at reallocating resources toward national security priorities. Aid to several major economies, including India, Brazil, and South Africa, will be phased out entirely, while funding will be concentrated in conflict affected regions such as Ukraine, Sudan, and Palestine. Overall bilateral support to Africa is projected to decline from about \$1.04 billion in 2026 to roughly \$860 million by 2029.



The crisis reserve for humanitarian emergencies has also been reduced from about \$108 million to \$95 million. Officials said the changes are intended to strengthen security focused development, but aid groups warned the cuts could deepen global inequality and increase instability in vulnerable regions.

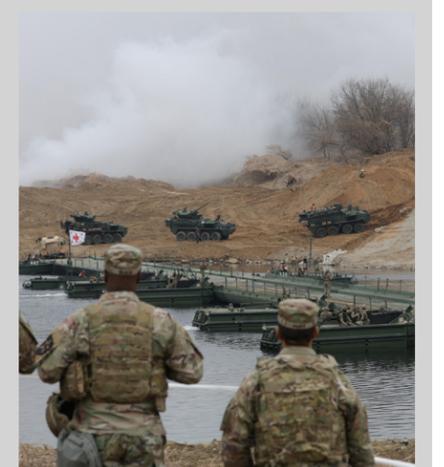
East Turkistan exile group accuses China of cultural suppression under new ethnic unity law



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The East Turkistan Government in Exile has condemned China's new law on promoting ethnic unity and progress, calling it a tool for cultural suppression and forced assimilation. The group said the legislation, passed by China's national legislature, expands Mandarin use across education and public life while restricting Uyghur, Tibetan, and Mongolian languages. It also alleged tighter control over religious institutions and cultural practices. The exiled leadership warned that vague provisions could criminalize peaceful expressions of identity and urged international sanctions against officials involved, saying the law threatens minority identity, cultural survival, and self-determination.

South Korea and United States stage river-crossing drills after North Korea missile launch



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

South Korean and United States forces held joint river-crossing drills in Yeoncheon on Saturday as part of the Freedom Shield exercise aimed at strengthening interoperability. Around 700 troops and 200 pieces of equipment, including amphibious bridging systems, took part in the training on the Imjin River. The exercise came hours after North Korea fired about ten ballistic missiles toward the East Sea, viewed as a protest against the drills.

The simulation included constructing a 180-meter bridge using combined assets for the first time, improving rapid maneuver capability.

Rodríguez tightens grip on Venezuela military after sweeping command overhaul

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Venezuela's interim president Delcy Rodríguez announced a sweeping overhaul of the country's military leadership on Thursday, replacing top commanders a day after firing the longtime defense minister who was closely aligned with former leader Nicolás Maduro. The move comes as Rodríguez works to consolidate control following Maduro's removal by United States forces earlier this year. The military, a powerful institution overseeing key sectors such as oil, mining, and food distribution, has pledged loyalty to Rodríguez. She is balancing pressure from President Donald Trump while managing domestic divisions, as Maduro faces trial in New York. The leadership changes signal an effort to stabilize governance amid economic crisis and political uncertainty.

Nepali Congress leader Gagan Thapa resigns after election defeat and party collapse

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Nepali Congress leader Gagan Thapa resigned on Tuesday after the party suffered a major defeat in recent parliamentary elections, where it won far fewer seats compared to the previous poll. Thapa, who also lost his own constituency battle, stepped down following mounting internal pressure within the party. Once seen as a new-generation leader who could revive the organisation, he had been elected president in January through a special convention. The party's poor performance has triggered calls for leadership change, with internal procedures now set to determine whether an interim head will take charge before a new convention is held.

Australia forms national fuel task force amid Middle East tensions and supply concerns



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Australia has established a national fuel security task force as the government moves to protect supply chains amid rising global uncertainty linked to conflict in the Middle East. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Thursday that fuel supplies remain stable but urged public restraint in purchasing. The task force will coordinate between federal, state, and territory governments to strengthen resilience in fuel distribution. The move follows concerns over global economic shocks and ongoing investigations into fuel supply practices. Officials said the initiative aims to ensure preparedness while maintaining stable access for regional and rural communities across the country.

Hegseth criticizes media coverage of Iran war effort

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

United States Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth sharply criticized sections of the American media on Thursday, accusing them of undermining the country's military campaign against Iran. Speaking at the Pentagon, he said some outlets were focused on discrediting President Donald Trump rather than reporting battlefield developments. Hegseth rejected comparisons to past

conflicts, insisting the current operation is limited and goal driven. He outlined objectives including dismantling Iran's missile systems, weakening its defense industry and preventing nuclear capability. The Pentagon claims more than 7,000 targets have been struck in recent weeks. Hegseth also alleged that Iranian sources were spreading artificial intelligence generated misinformation. His remarks reflect growing tensions between the administration and media over coverage of the conflict.

Norway crown princess says Epstein ties left her 'manipulated and deceived'

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit said on Thursday that she regrets ever meeting convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, speaking publicly for the first time in weeks after revelations about their relationship resurfaced. In a televised interview, she said she felt "manipulated and deceived" and admitted she should have checked his background more carefully. The remarks follow reports

that she exchanged hundreds of emails with Epstein between 2011 and 2014 and stayed at his Florida home during one visit. She reiterated that she did not know he was a predator at the time, despite public information about his conviction.

Sitting alongside Crown Prince Haakon, she said she ended contact after an "uneasy" incident during her stay and expressed regret for her "poor judgment," while stressing sympathy for Epstein's victims.

Arab nations unite against Iran strikes, warn against threat to regional security

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Arab nations strongly condemned Iran's missile and drone attacks on civilian and energy infrastructure during a consultative meeting in Riyadh on Wednesday, calling them unjustifiable. Foreign ministers from multiple countries reaffirmed support for Lebanon's sovereignty and stressed the right of states to defend themselves under international law.

They urged Iran to halt attacks immediately, respect humanitarian norms and avoid disrupting navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. The ministers warned that continued escalation threatens regional stability and global energy security. The statement came amid a wider conflict triggered in late February, with



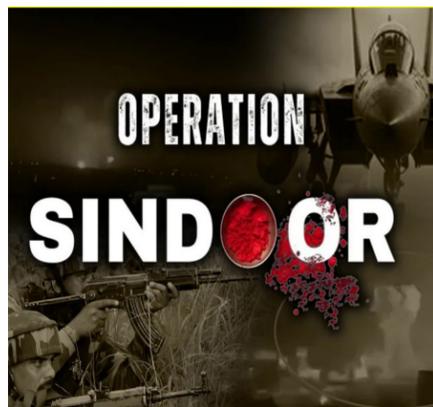
leaders emphasizing that future ties with Iran depend on non interference and respect for sovereignty.

Operation Sindoor fallout pushes Pakistan intelligence agency toward cash-driven recruitment shift

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Post Operation Sindoor, intelligence assessments indicate Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency is struggling with a sharp decline in recruitment for terror groups, with numbers falling by nearly 30 to 40 percent. Officials say the setback has forced a strategic shift away from ideology-based recruitment toward cash incentives.

Recruiters are reportedly offering payments ranging from 10,000 to 200,000 rupees to attract youth, including those motivated by lifestyle aspirations rather than ideology. Intelligence agencies warn that modules now include individuals from multiple backgrounds



to reduce detection risk. Officials also say the agency is expanding efforts to build a pan-India logistics and espionage network by recruiting youth for surveillance tasks, including filming sensitive locations.

EU leaders clash with Orbán over blocked Ukraine loan amid rising tensions

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

European Union leaders sharply criticized Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Thursday after he refused to support a €90 billion loan for Ukraine that Hungary had earlier backed. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz called the reversal a "gross act of disloyalty," while officials explored ways to move forward without Hungary.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the bloc would deliver support "one way or another." Orbán linked his opposition to a dispute over an oil pipeline from Ukraine. Leaders warned the deadlock threatens urgent aid to Kyiv, as Ukraine faces mounting financial pressure and the conflict with Russia continues.

Macron urges halt to strikes on civilian infrastructure as Gulf energy attacks escalate

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

French President Emmanuel Macron has called for an immediate end to strikes on civilian infrastructure, particularly energy and water facilities, as escalating attacks in the Middle East raise fears of wider global disruption. Speaking on Thursday after discussions with global leaders, Macron urged a moratorium on targeting essential infrastructure following strikes on gas facilities in Iran and Qatar. The attacks have triggered retaliatory actions across the region, heightening tensions between Iran and Israel. Macron warned that continued escalation could destabilise global energy supplies and urged diplomatic efforts to prevent further damage to civilian populations and critical infrastructure.

Denmark heads to parliamentary election overshadowed by Trump and Greenland tensions

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Denmark will vote next week in a parliamentary election clouded by United States President Donald Trump's repeated comments about taking control of Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish territory. The remarks briefly boosted Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, whose Social Democrats are now projected to face their weakest result in more than a century, though she remains favored to stay in power.

Polls suggest her left-leaning bloc may fall short of a majority in the 179-seat parliament, even as domestic issues like cost of living, taxes, and immigration dominate the campaign.

Frederiksen is seeking a third term, positioning herself as a steady leader during global crises, including wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Analysts say no clear majority is expected, with coalition talks likely to decide Denmark's next government.

Security push intensifies as India nears Maoist eradication deadline



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Security operations against Maoist insurgency have intensified across central India as the government nears the March 31 deadline set for eliminating Left Wing Extremism. Officials said the toughest resistance is now limited to four remaining strongholds in Chhattisgarh, including Bijapur, Sukma, Narayanpur and the Telangana border belt. Authorities claim major progress, with over 2,500 surrenders, 660 neutralised and 1,800 arrests since 2024. Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said most operational committees have been dismantled, though security forces remain active. Experts, however, warn that remaining pockets are deeply entrenched and may regroup if pressure eases after the deadline.

Rahul Gandhi urges national honor for Kanshi Ram ahead of Uttar Pradesh polls

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to award the Bharat Ratna to Bahujan Samaj Party founder Kanshi Ram, calling him a visionary who fought for social justice and dignity of marginalized communities. Gandhi said recognition would honour the Bahujan movement that emerged from Kanshi Ram's activism and organisations like BAMCEF and DS-4. The move comes ahead of Uttar Pradesh elections and is seen as an outreach to Dalit voters. Political analysts view it as a strategic effort to challenge the Bahujan Samaj Party's traditional support base, while also placing pressure on the ruling party to respond.

Delhi introduces rationing plan for liquefied petroleum gas amid West Asia supply crisis



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Delhi government has introduced a rationing system for liquefied petroleum gas due to supply shortages triggered by escalating tensions in West Asia. Under the new policy, commercial users will receive only 20 percent of their average consumption, while essential services such as hospitals, schools and airports will get priority allocation. Enforcement teams have been deployed to prevent hoarding, and authorities will issue daily supply updates. The plan follows directions from the petroleum ministry and coordination with oil marketing companies. Officials said the policy will be reviewed regularly depending on evolving supply conditions and market stability.

Sonam Wangchuk released as centre withdraws national security act detention amid Ladakh unrest debate

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was released from Jodhpur Central Jail on Saturday after the Union government revoked his detention under the National Security Act, ending nearly six months of incarceration linked to violence in Ladakh last year. The Ministry of Home Affairs said the decision was taken after "due consideration" and reiterated its commitment to peace, stability and dialogue in the region. Wangchuk was detained on September 26, 2025, following violent protests in Leh that left four people dead and more than 160 injured, after demonstrations demanding greater autonomy for Ladakh turned violent. The government had earlier accused him of instigating unrest, a charge he and his supporters have denied.

His release came amid an ongoing Supreme Court hearing on a habeas corpus petition filed by his wife, Geetanjali Angmo, which questioned the legality of his detention. The court had also sought original records related to his arrest and speeches cited by authorities.

Political reactions poured in after his release, with Samajwadi Party leader



Akhilesh Yadav, Congress leader Ashok Gehlot and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah criticising the detention and calling it unwarranted. Ladakh-based groups welcomed the move, calling it a victory for their ongoing statehood and Sixth Schedule demands, while the government maintained that engagement with stakeholders would continue to address regional concerns.

Shashi Tharoor defends India's silence on Iran conflict as strategic restraint, not moral surrender

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Shashi Tharoor on Thursday defended India's restrained response to the United States and Israeli military action against Iran, calling it "responsible statecraft" rather than moral failure. Writing in an opinion piece, he argued that while the conflict violates international law, foreign policy must balance principle with national interest, regional stability, and strategic ties.

His remarks followed criticism from Sonia Gandhi, who earlier said the government's silence amounted to an abdication of responsibility. Tharoor agreed India should have expressed condolences after the reported killing of Iran's leader Ali Khamenei, but cautioned against public condemnation that



could harm key relationships.

Invoking Jawaharlal Nehru's non-alignment doctrine, he said modern "multi-alignment" requires engaging competing powers while protecting national interests, including energy security, trade, and the welfare of millions of Indians in West Asia.

Pushkar Singh Dhami expands Uttarakhand cabinet to full strength ahead of elections

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Pushkar Singh Dhami expanded his cabinet on Friday by inducting five legislators, taking the total strength to the maximum of 12 ministers. Those sworn in include Bharat Singh Chaudhary, Khajan Dass, Madan Kaushik, Pradeep Batra and Ram Singh Kaira, with the oath administered by Governor Gurmit Singh in Dehradun.

Kaushik and Dass bring prior political experience, while the remaining three are first-time ministers. The chief minister said the new team would accelerate development and strengthen governance across the state.



The long-delayed expansion is widely seen as a strategic move by the Bharatiya Janata Party to consolidate its position ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections and improve regional representation.

Lt General Syed Ata Hasnain sworn in as governor of Bihar

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Retired Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain was sworn in as the governor of Bihar on Saturday at a ceremony held at Lok Bhavan in Patna. Chief Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo administered the oath in the presence of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, cabinet ministers and senior officials. Hasnain replaced Arif Mohammed Khan in the post. A former commander of the Indian Army's Fifteenth Corps in Jammu and Kashmir, he earlier served as Military Secretary and later joined national institutions after retirement, including the National Disaster Management Authority. He also served as chancellor of the Central University of Kashmir from 2018.



Government proposes weekend parliament sittings to clear pending legislative business

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The central government has proposed holding special weekend sittings of parliament on March 28 and 29 to compensate for lost time during the ongoing budget session. The move aims to ensure passage of key legislation, including a proposed women's reservation bill, before the session ends on April 2. Officials said disruptions, protests and multiple public holidays have reduced available working days. The proposal comes amid criticism from opposition parties over repeated adjournments. If approved, it would mark a rare instance of parliament functioning on a weekend, reflecting urgency to complete legislative work within the shortened schedule.

Army foils infiltration attempt in Uri sector, kills terrorist along line of control



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Indian Army foiled an infiltration attempt along the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir's Uri sector on Sunday, killing one terrorist during a joint operation with local police intelligence support. Troops spotted suspicious movement in forested terrain near Buchhar and challenged the infiltrator, leading to an exchange of fire. The army recovered weapons and ammunition, including an assault rifle and pistols. Officials said the operation is still ongoing. This follows a similar encounter earlier in the week in the Nowshera sector, where another infiltrator was neutralised, as security forces continue heightened vigilance along the border.

DGCA restricts flights across West Asia airspaces amid escalating regional conflict

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India's aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, on Friday directed airlines to avoid multiple West Asia airspaces due to heightened risks from the ongoing United States–Israel–Iran conflict.

Carriers have been instructed to stay away from Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates airspace, while operations over Oman and Saudi Arabia will be allowed under strict conditions. Airlines have also been advised not to fly below 32,000 feet in designated zones. The regulator cited rising threats from military strikes and retaliatory actions impacting civil aviation safety. The advisory, effective immediately until March 28, requires strict contingency planning and real-time monitoring of airspace alerts.

Mandatory gold hallmarking expanded to seven more districts across India

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The government on Friday expanded mandatory gold hallmarking to seven additional districts, taking coverage to 380 districts nationwide. The new districts include Rupnagar, Banda, Beed, Gomati, Katihar, Beawar and Neemuch. The Bureau of Indian Standards launched compulsory hallmarking in June 2021 to certify purity of gold jewellery and artefacts across multiple carat categories. The rollout has been implemented in phases, gradually expanding from 256 districts to the current coverage.

Officials said more than 600 million gold items have been hallmarked so far, strengthening consumer protection and reducing fraud linked to adulterated gold. The system ensures verified purity through authorised testing centres and aims to improve transparency in the jewellery market.

Left front releases second list of candidates for west Bengal assembly polls

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The CPI(M)-led Left Front on Thursday released its second list of 32 candidates for the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections, taking the total number of announced nominees to 224 out of 294 seats. The latest list includes 28 candidates from CPI(M), three from the Communist Party of India, and one from the Revolutionary Socialist Party. In its first list announced earlier, the alliance had named 192 candidates.

The CPI(M) has chosen not to field a candidate in Nandigram, where Bharatiya Janata Party leader Suwendu Adhikari is the sitting legislator and is also contesting from Bhabanipur against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Senior leaders including Md Salim, Sujan Chakraborty and Satarup Ghosh have again been kept out of the candidate lists, as they are expected to focus on campaigning instead of contesting. Seat-sharing discussions with other allies are still ongoing.

Security agencies flag rising drone threat to Northeast infrastructure amid insurgent activity

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Security agencies warned on Friday of an emerging drone threat targeting critical infrastructure across India's Northeast, with insurgent groups reportedly gaining advanced capabilities. Officials said outfits such as ULFA, NSCN and Kuki Zo-aligned groups are attempting to strike oil fields, dams, military posts and air force bases near the India–Myanmar border, with support from external elements operating out of Myanmar.

The National Investigation Agency is probing a suspected destabilization plot following the arrest of seven foreign nationals, including six Ukrainians and one American, accused of training armed groups. Investigators are also examining links to the 2024 Manipur violence, where drones were used in attacks.



Authorities say the growing use of sophisticated drone technology could disrupt development projects and pose serious economic and security risks if not contained.

BJP deploys top leadership for high stakes Kerala campaign push

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Narendra Modi and Amit Shah are set to lead an aggressive Bharatiya Janata Party campaign in Kerala as the Assembly elections approach, with polling scheduled for April. Party leaders plan extensive rallies across key districts including Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Palakkad.

The push follows recent gains, including

actor-turned-politician Suresh Gopi's Lok Sabha win from Thrissur and the party's first control of the Thiruvananthapuram civic body. Despite modest vote share fluctuations, the party remains optimistic about securing its first Assembly seats.

Leaders acknowledge challenges from the state's diverse demographics but say expanded outreach and high visibility campaigning aim to convert recent momentum into a historic electoral breakthrough.



Leh rally, Kargil shutdown intensify Ladakh statehood and sixth schedule demand

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Scores of people joined a major rally in Leh on Monday, while Kargil and adjoining Drass observed a complete shutdown as protests intensified across Ladakh demanding statehood and extension of the Sixth Schedule. The mobilisation was called by the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance, both leading an ongoing agitation over the past five years. In Leh, protesters marched from Singay Namgyal Chowk to Polo Ground, with participants including women chanting slogans for constitutional safeguards. Security was tightened across the region, with senior police officials reviewing arrangements. The rally came days after climate activist Sonam



Wangchuk was released following revocation of his detention under the National Security Act. Organisers said the turnout reflected strong public backing for their demands despite restrictions. No untoward incident was reported from either Leh or Kargil during the protests.

Fertiliser subsidy bill may surge to 2.2 trillion dollars amid global energy shock

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India's fertiliser subsidy bill for financial year twenty twenty-seven could rise to about 2.2 trillion dollars, sharply higher than the budget estimate of 1.71 trillion dollars, a senior government official said. The increase is linked to rising global energy prices and supply disruptions driven by the ongoing Iran conflict, which have pushed up production and import costs of key fertilisers. The official said current supplies remain stable due to low seasonal demand, but warned that pressures could intensify in the next fiscal year if geopolitical tensions persist. India's heavy dependence on imported fertilisers makes domestic pricing highly vulnerable to global market fluctuations, freight disruptions and energy cost spikes, raising concerns over fiscal strain.

Centre pushes states to cut local levies to accelerate PNG rollout

IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Union government on Friday urged states and Union Territories to reduce local levies and procedural delays on City Gas Distribution projects to promote piped natural gas adoption. The Petroleum Ministry said high right-of-way charges, road cutting fees and lease rentals are discouraging investment in gas infrastructure. In a letter to chief secretaries, the ministry highlighted that only about 160 million of 1.263 billion sanctioned connections are currently functional. It also linked faster reform to easing liquefied petroleum gas shortages caused by global disruptions, urging a shift toward cleaner domestic gas use. States adopting reforms may receive higher commercial liquefied petroleum gas allocations, alongside incentives for faster approvals and single-window clearances.

Government considers expanding social media blocking powers beyond electronics ministry



IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The government is exploring a proposal to allow multiple ministries to issue orders blocking or removing harmful social media content, currently restricted to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The move aims to speed up action against deepfakes and misinformation by involving departments such as external affairs, finance and defence. Officials said the plan follows rising concerns over fake content targeting national security, economic stability and foreign relations. A recent deepfake video involving a former army chief triggered renewed urgency for faster response mechanisms. The proposal would be implemented through rule changes rather than amendments to the Information Technology Act, allowing quicker coordination and decentralised enforcement across ministries.

Federal Reserve moves toward easing capital requirements for large banks



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

United States regulators at the Federal Reserve are advancing plans to reduce capital requirements for major banks, including JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and regional institutions such as PNC Bank. The proposal would lower overall requirements by about 4.8 percent for the largest lenders, with additional reductions for smaller banks. Supporters say the changes would improve lending capacity, enhance efficiency, and better align rules with current risk conditions. Critics, including Senator Elizabeth Warren, argue the adjustments could weaken financial safeguards established after the 2008 crisis and increase systemic risk. The policy shift represents one of the most significant potential revisions to post-crisis banking regulation.

Paraguay finalizes Mercosur European Union trade deal ratification process

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Paraguay has completed ratification of the long negotiated trade agreement between Mercosur and the European Union, becoming the final founding South American member to approve the pact. The agreement will create one of the world's largest free trade zones, spanning hundreds of millions of people and a significant share of global economic output. The European Commission plans to move forward with provisional implementation while legal challenges continue in European courts. Supporters say the deal will strengthen trade flows, investment, and regional integration. Critics in Europe remain concerned about agricultural competition and regulatory standards. The agreement now advances toward partial implementation pending final legal review.

FAA advances Boeing 777-9 certification as long-delayed jet moves closer to service entry

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Federal Aviation Administration has approved Boeing to proceed to the fourth phase of certification testing for its 777-9 aircraft, a key step toward eventual commercial entry. Boeing said the approval follows earlier clearance for the third stage, with company executives indicating that two additional stages remain before certification is complete. The 777-9, part of the long-delayed 777X program, is already more than six years behind schedule and has resulted in about 15 billion dollars in charges. Boeing plans a production test flight of the 777X family in April, with first delivery targeted for next year. The widebody aircraft is intended to replace older long-haul models and compete in Boeing's long-distance commercial fleet alongside the Dreamliner family.

United States eases Venezuela oil sanctions to expand global crude supply amid energy market volatility

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United States has eased long-standing sanctions on Venezuela's state-owned oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela S.A., allowing limited transactions with U.S. firms under a new Treasury Department general license aimed at increasing global crude supply during ongoing geopolitical disruptions tied to the Iran conflict. The policy shift marks a significant departure from years of strict restrictions that largely barred engagement with Venezuela's oil sector. Officials say the measure is intended to boost production, attract foreign investment, and help stabilize global energy markets as oil prices remain elevated.

In a parallel move, the White House temporarily waived Jones Act shipping requirements to improve the efficiency of domestic fuel transportation between U.S. ports. Policymakers argue the combined actions will help ease supply bottlenecks



and reduce inflationary pressure driven by higher energy costs. However, industry analysts caution that any downward impact on gasoline prices is likely to be gradual, as Venezuela's production capacity remains constrained and global markets continue to face volatility from ongoing geopolitical tensions and uncertain supply recovery timelines.

United States backs ten-billion-dollar iron ore project to strengthen supply chains and deepen India partnership

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United States has announced support of up to ten billion dollars for a major iron ore mining and processing project, reinforcing strategic cooperation with India under a broader Indo-Pacific financing initiative worth around thirty billion dollars.

The funding, backed by the United States Export-Import Bank, was announced at an energy security and business forum in Tokyo on Wednesday.

The project, led by Mesabi Metallics in Minnesota, will produce high-grade iron ore pellets used in advanced steelmaking and is expected to create hundreds of jobs while boosting domestic industrial capacity.

Officials said the initiative will strengthen supply chain resilience, expand

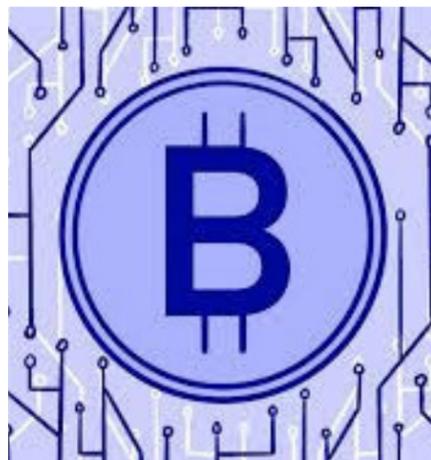


energy and mineral cooperation, and deepen economic ties between the United States and India as part of efforts to secure critical industrial inputs.

Crypto political spending falls short in competitive Illinois primary races

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Crypto-aligned political action committees, including Fairshake, invested more than ten million dollars across Illinois Democratic primary contests to support candidates viewed as favorable to digital asset regulation. Despite the significant spending, several backed candidates lost to opponents with stronger progressive support or broader establishment alignment. Artificial intelligence-related political groups also deployed substantial funding in competing directions, reducing overall impact in key races. Campaign messaging largely focused on governance and economic priorities rather than direct references to crypto policy. The results highlight limited electoral influence for the digital asset industry in tightly



contested primaries, even as firms prepare for heavier engagement in upcoming national election cycles.

Oil majors secure record Alaska drilling rights in \$163 million federal lease auction



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Major oil companies, including ConocoPhillips and Exxon Mobil, won drilling rights in northern Alaska after placing high bids in a federal lease auction totaling about 163 million dollars. The sale covered more than 1.3 million acres in the National Petroleum Reserve and marked the first auction in the region since 2019. The strong participation signals renewed industry interest after prior drilling restrictions were lifted in late 2025. The auction is part of a broader policy push requiring multiple lease sales in the area under recently enacted federal legislation. Companies submitted roughly 430 bids, reflecting expectations of long-term development potential in one of the United States' largest untapped oil-producing regions

United States mortgage rates rise to highest level in over three months

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Average long term mortgage rates in the United States have climbed to their highest level in more than three months, increasing pressure on prospective homebuyers during the spring housing season. The thirty year fixed rate rose to six point twenty two percent from six point eleven percent the previous week, according to mortgage data. Higher borrowing costs are significantly raising monthly payments and reducing affordability for many households. Analysts link the increase to rising Treasury yields driven by expectations of sustained inflation amid energy market disruptions tied to geopolitical tensions. Although rates remain below year ago levels, the upward trend is weighing on housing demand.

Global markets remain volatile as energy shock drives inflation and policy repricing

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Global equity markets posted modest gains but remained on track for weekly losses as investors assessed the inflationary impact of escalating energy prices linked to Middle East tensions. Bond markets stabilized after a sharp selloff that pushed yields to multi-month highs, reflecting growing expectations of tighter monetary policy. Traders are increasingly pricing fewer interest rate cuts and potential hikes in some major economies, driven by concerns that energy-driven inflation may persist longer than expected. Oil prices remain elevated and volatile, while currency markets reflect shifting rate expectations. Analysts said investor sentiment remains fragile as geopolitical risk, energy supply uncertainty, and central bank policy repricing continue to drive cross-asset volatility.

Friday, 20 March 2026

Federal Communications Commission approves Nexstar Tegna merger amid legal challenges

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The Federal Communications Commission has approved the merger between Nexstar Media Group and Tegna, creating a significantly larger television station operator with hundreds of local affiliates across the United States. The approval includes regulatory conditions and required divestments of several stations. The decision comes as multiple state attorneys general and DirecTV have filed lawsuits seeking to block the deal, citing concerns over reduced competition, higher distribution costs, and potential harm to local journalism. Supporters argue the combined company will improve financial stability and strengthen local broadcasting operations. Critics warn the consolidation could increase market concentration and reduce diversity in local media ownership.

WhatsApp moves toward username-based identity system and targeted business monetization model

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

WhatsApp is developing a username and unique handle system that would allow users to communicate without exposing phone numbers, marking a significant shift in its identity and privacy architecture. The feature is expected to launch globally by mid-2026 and will remain optional alongside phone-based accounts. Businesses and individuals will be able to reserve handles similar to other social platforms. WhatsApp also plans to test a dynamic pricing model for business messaging, where companies may bid in real time for promotional message delivery, with trials expected in late 2026 and potential rollout in 2027. The changes reflect Meta's broader strategy to strengthen engagement while expanding monetization in high-value business messaging markets like India.

Unilever and Kraft Heinz explore strategic food portfolio merger before talks collapse

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Unilever and Kraft Heinz recently held exploratory discussions on combining parts of their packaged food operations, specifically Unilever's food division and Kraft Heinz's condiments business, according to reports. The proposal would have created a major global branded foods platform spanning categories such as sauces, spreads, and packaged staples. However, the discussions were ultimately discontinued. The talks reflect broader strategic pressure across the consumer packaged goods sector as companies reassess portfolios amid slowing demand, inflation-driven cost pressures, and shifting consumer behavior. Both groups are separately reviewing their business structures, with Unilever evaluating food asset separation and Kraft Heinz continuing restructuring efforts following earlier plans to simplify its portfolio.

HDFC Bank chairman resigns after citing ethics concerns as stock and receipts fall sharply

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

HDFC Bank shares and its American Depository Receipts fell sharply on Thursday after part-time Chairman and Independent Director Atanu Chakraborty resigned, citing concerns over practices he said were not aligned with his personal values and ethics.

The stock declined as much as 8.66 percent in domestic trading, while American Depository Receipts fell about 8 percent in overseas markets. Chief Executive Officer Sashidhar Jagdishan said the board asked Chakraborty to reconsider his resignation and sought clarification on his concerns, but he declined to provide specific details.

The Reserve Bank of India approved the appointment of Keki Mistry as interim chairman for three months. While the resignation triggered investor concerns and



a sharp decline in market value, bank leadership said operations and governance remain stable and emphasized that no specific allegations of wrongdoing were presented.

Researchers uncover iPhone spyware campaign targeting vulnerable devices through malicious websites

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Cybersecurity researchers have identified a sophisticated spyware exploit targeting Apple iPhones that was deployed through dozens of compromised websites in Ukraine. The malware, named Darkword, is capable of stealing sensitive data and potentially affecting hundreds of millions of devices running outdated Apple operating systems. The exploit has been linked to

campaigns involving commercial surveillance vendors and suspected state-backed actors across multiple countries. Researchers said the spyware was observed on iPhones using software versions released between early and mid-2025, with an estimated 220 million to 270 million devices potentially still exposed. Apple said the vulnerabilities have been addressed through updates and emphasized that users running current software are protected, while malicious domains have been blocked in its browser security system.



United Kingdom launches regulatory probe into Adobe subscription cancellation and pricing transparency

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

The United Kingdom Competition and Markets Authority has opened an investigation into Adobe over concerns that its subscription cancellation fees and pricing disclosures may be unclear or potentially misleading. The regulator is assessing whether customers are adequately informed about early termination charges when subscribing to products such as Photoshop and related software tools. The probe follows prior enforcement actions in the United States, where Adobe agreed to a significant settlement over similar allegations. The authority said it has not reached any conclusions and is exercising new consumer enforcement powers to assess compliance. The investigation reflects growing regulatory scrutiny of



subscription-based software pricing models and cancellation friction in the digital services sector.

India launches incentive-backed rare earth magnet manufacturing program to build domestic supply chain

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

India's Ministry of Heavy Industries has opened bidding for integrated manufacturing facilities for sintered neodymium iron boron rare earth permanent magnets under a 7,280 crore rupee incentive scheme. The program targets a total production capacity of 6,000 metric tons annually and includes capital subsidies as well as sales-linked incentives for selected beneficiaries. Each approved participant will be allocated 600 to 1,200 metric tons of capacity. The scheme also provides limited raw material support through state-run Indian Rare Earths Limited. Officials said the initiative aims to reduce import dependence and establish a full domestic value chain for high-performance magnets used in electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, aerospace, defense, and advanced electronics.

South Korea sets up industry-backed task force to manage U.S. trade investigations risk



● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

South Korea has established a joint government-industry task force to coordinate its response to ongoing United States trade investigations under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. The inquiries cover alleged structural overcapacity and forced labor risks across multiple economies. The group will manage filings, hearings, and legal strategy while working with private sector stakeholders. Officials said they are preparing for potential expansion of investigations and possible additional trade actions. The move reflects rising trade policy uncertainty as Washington reviews practices across dozens of economies. South Korea aims to ensure regulatory alignment and avoid competitive disadvantage relative to other major trading partners in any resulting enforcement or tariff decisions.

Australia competition regulator probes fuel majors over rural supply and pricing conduct

● IndoUS Tribune Newsdesk

Australia's competition watchdog has launched an investigation into major fuel suppliers including Ampol, BP, Mobil, and Viva Energy over alleged anti-competitive conduct in regional diesel supply chains. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission said it is reviewing reports that independent wholesalers may be facing supply constraints amid heightened fuel price volatility. The regulator said it rarely publicizes active investigations but did so due to widespread concern among consumers, farmers, and businesses. Officials emphasized that the inquiry remains at an early stage with no findings made. The probe comes amid broader scrutiny of fuel pricing dynamics and supply resilience, particularly in rural and remote markets dependent on a small number of dominant wholesale suppliers.

Thai Grand Prix plans face uncertainty amid political changes



Alex Albon has said plans for a potential Formula 1 race in Bangkok are well advanced, though recent political changes in Thailand have created uncertainty around final approval. The Williams driver, who has been actively involved in discussions with government officials and the Sports Authority of Thailand, noted that much of the groundwork has already been completed. Earlier proposals under the previous administration included a budget of about \$1.23 billion, with a mix of public and private funding expected. Albon highlighted the strong tourism potential of a Bangkok race and said interest in motorsport has grown rapidly in Thailand since his debut in 2019. He described hosting a home Grand Prix as one of his key career ambitions.

Barcelona cruise past Newcastle to seal Champions League quarterfinal spot



FC Barcelona delivered a commanding performance to defeat Newcastle United 7-2 at Camp Nou, completing an 8-3 aggregate victory to reach the UEFA Champions League quarterfinals. After a balanced first leg, Barcelona took control with an explosive second-half display. Robert Lewandowski, Raphinha, and Fermin Lopez were central to the scoring, while Lamine Yamal also made a key impact. Newcastle twice leveled in an intense first half through Anthony Elanga, but could not match Barcelona's attacking depth after the break. Coach Hansi Flick rotated players late in the match, with the result already secured and attention turning to upcoming fixtures.

WADA delays decision on proposed ban affecting United States officials until after World Cup

The World Anti-Doping Agency has postponed a decision on whether government officials from countries that withhold funding could be barred from attending major sporting events. The move pushes any possible confrontation involving United States officials, including President Donald Trump, until after the 2026 World Cup, which the United States is co-hosting with Canada and Mexico.

The agency's executive committee will now review the proposal in September, two months after the tournament ends. If approved later, the rule could take effect ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. The United States has not paid its dues since 2023, withholding about 7.3 million dollars over disputes involving doping governance.

WADA said funding instability threatens global anti-doping efforts but clarified the



issue is not directed solely at the United States. The proposal still requires approval from its foundation board later in the year.

O'Sullivan and Trump progress as Higgins exits early in snooker open



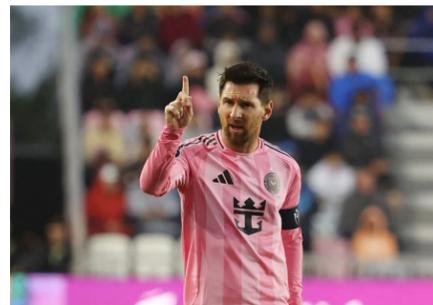
Ronnie O'Sullivan and Judd Trump advanced comfortably to the last 16 of the World Snooker Open with dominant victories. O'Sullivan produced a clinical 5-0 win over Matthew Selt, highlighted by a rapid 138 break, while Trump defeated Jackson Page 5-2. Reigning world champion Zhao Xintong also moved through with a 5-1 win. The tournament saw an early shock as defending champion John Higgins was knocked out in the first round by 19-year-old Stan Moody. Higgins had recovered from a 4-1 deficit to level the match but lost in the deciding frame, with Moody capitalizing on a late error to seal a memorable upset.

Lionel Messi becomes second footballer to reach 900 career goals in historic milestone

Lionel Messi has become only the second men's footballer to score 900 career goals, reaching the milestone during Inter Miami's 1-1 draw against Nashville SC in the CONCACAF Champions Cup. Despite his goal, Inter Miami were eliminated from the tournament on away goals.

Messi achieved the feat in 1,142 matches, joining Cristiano Ronaldo, who currently leads with 965 goals. The Portuguese forward reached the mark in 1,236 games and continues to pursue the 1,000-goal milestone. Brazilian legend Pele remains third on the all-time list with 765 goals.

The Argentine star has scored 672 goals for Barcelona, 32 for Paris Saint-Germain, and



81 for Inter Miami. For Argentina, he has added 115 international goals, underlining his long-standing consistency at club and international level.

Messi's record-breaking 2012 season, when he scored 91 goals, remains one of the most prolific years in football history.

Former Germany coach Joachim Low raises concerns over safety at upcoming World Cup

Former Germany coach Joachim Low has expressed concern over safety at the 2026 World Cup, which will be hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Speaking in Cologne, he said political tensions and global conflicts could overshadow the tournament and create security risks for teams and fans. Low referenced past debates around World Cups in Russia and Qatar, adding that current conditions feel more complicated due to ongoing international conflicts and violence in parts of the host region. Former

West Germany player Rainer Bonhof also questioned security, saying he would reconsider traveling to certain host countries depending on the situation.

The German football federation had previously ruled out a boycott earlier this year, but concerns have resurfaced amid rising geopolitical tensions. Low, who led Germany to the 2014 World Cup title, said the political situation is now inseparable from discussions about the tournament's future.

Rain disruption adds intrigue to Miami Open title race



Persistent rain delayed the start of matches at the Miami Open this week, pushing first-round action later and adding uncertainty to the schedule. The tournament remains a key battleground in the race for the world number one ranking between Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner. Alcaraz currently holds a lead of more than 2,000 ranking points, though Sinner has recently narrowed the gap following his Indian Wells triumph. Both players have minimal points to defend in Miami, creating an opportunity to gain ground. Alcaraz is set to open his campaign against either Joao Fonseca or Fabian Marozsan, while Sinner will begin against Damir Dzumhur or Ignacio Buse. A potential final meeting would mark another chapter in their growing rivalry.

Delhi Capitals appoint John Mooney as fielding coach for IPL season



Delhi Capitals have appointed former Ireland all-rounder John Mooney as fielding coach ahead of the Indian Premier League season starting later this month. He joins a support staff led by Hemang Badani, with Munaf Patel and Ian Bell, while Venugopal Rao is director. Mooney replaces Gnaneshwara Rao and Anton Roux after last season. The 43-year-old has coached Afghanistan and West Indies teams and worked with Ireland women. A former international with 91 matches, he adds experience as Delhi, led by Axar Patel, looks to improve after finishing fifth last season.

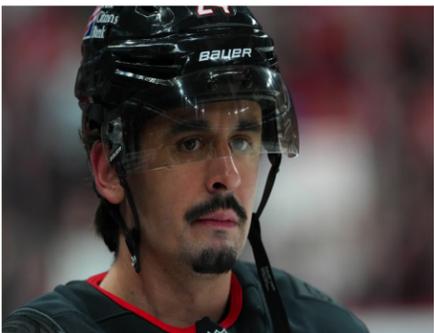


Japan outclass South Korea to book Women's Asian Cup final berth



Japan women's national football team produced a dominant display to defeat South Korea women's national football team 4-1 in the semifinal of the AFC Women's Asian Cup in Sydney. Japan controlled the contest with goals from Riko Ueki, Maika Hamano, Saki Kumagai, and Remina Chiba. South Korea briefly reduced the deficit through Kang Chae-rim, but Japan quickly reasserted dominance to seal a convincing win. The result sends Japan into their seventh final, where they will face hosts Australia in a repeat of the 2014 and 2018 finals. Japan had won both of those earlier encounters and will now aim to continue their strong record on the continental stage.

Jarvis fined after high-sticking incidents in Hurricanes loss



Seth Jarvis of the Carolina Hurricanes was fined \$5,000, the maximum allowed, by the National Hockey League Player Safety department following multiple high-sticking incidents against the Columbus Blue Jackets. The incidents occurred during Tuesday night's 5-1 loss in Columbus, including one in the third period involving Conor Garland. Earlier, Jarvis had struck defenseman Zach Werenski, leading to a power-play goal. The 24-year-old forward, who has 53 points in 59 games this season, had only 13 penalty minutes prior to Tuesday, but spent eight minutes in the penalty box during the game.

Iran sports minister says World Cup participation not possible amid escalating conflict with United States

Iran's sports and youth minister has said the country cannot participate in the 2026 World Cup due to the ongoing conflict with the United States and Israel. Ahmad Donyamali said Iranian players would not be safe traveling to the United States, where several group stage matches are scheduled.

Iran is set to play matches in California and Seattle during the tournament hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico. However, the minister said recent military strikes and escalating tensions have made participation impossible under current conditions.

Despite his remarks, FIFA has stated it expects Iran to be allowed entry into the United States for the competition. Football officials have also confirmed that athletes from affected countries remain exempt



from travel restrictions under existing United States policy.

Iran had previously expressed concern over security conditions, while FIFA president Gianni Infantino reiterated that discussions with United States leadership confirmed Iran's participation would be permitted.

NASCAR suspends Daniel Dye after livestream remarks about IndyCar driver David Malukas

NASCAR has suspended driver Daniel Dye after he made offensive comments about IndyCar driver David Malukas during a livestream. The video, which circulated on social media, showed Dye mocking Malukas using inappropriate language, leading to disciplinary action from both NASCAR and his team Kaulig Racing.



This is not Dye's first suspension. He was previously penalized during his early racing career after a legal incident in the ARCA series. Malukas, who drives for Team Penske in IndyCar, has not publicly commented on the incident.

MotoGP moves Qatar Grand Prix to November amid regional concerns

The MotoGP has rescheduled the Qatar Grand Prix from April to November 6 to 8, citing ongoing geopolitical concerns in the Middle East. The decision was made after consultations between championship organizers, the Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme, the promoter, and Qatari authorities, with safety and operational readiness cited as key priorities. The race will now take place at Lusail International Circuit later in the season.

As part of wider calendar adjustments, the Portuguese Grand Prix at Algarve International Circuit in Portimao has been shifted to November 22, while the Valencia Grand Prix will now close the season on



November 29. MotoGP chief executive Carmelo Ezpeleta said the revised schedule was finalized in coordination with all stakeholders to ensure safety, clarity for fans, and a smooth championship flow. The rest of the 2026 calendar remains unchanged.

Rights groups urge Olympic body to drop proposed gender testing rules



More than 80 rights and sports advocacy groups have called on the International Olympic Committee to abandon reported plans for universal genetic sex testing and a blanket ban on transgender and intersex athletes in women's events. In a joint statement released on Wednesday, organizations including the Sport and Rights Alliance warned the proposals could harm gender equity and violate privacy. The committee said no decision has been made and discussions are ongoing. The Olympic body previously ended universal sex testing after the 1996 Atlanta Games and currently allows federations to set their own eligibility rules, though several have already introduced stricter participation criteria.

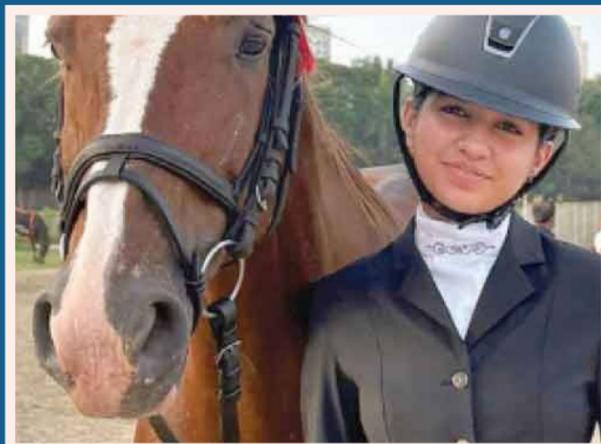
Neymar remains hopeful of Brazil World Cup return despite omission



Neymar said he remains determined to return to the national team after being left out of Brazil's squad for upcoming friendlies. The Santos forward recently marked his comeback from injury with an assist in a draw against Corinthians, but has not been selected by coach Carlo Ancelotti. Neymar, Brazil's all-time leading scorer, has not played internationally since suffering a serious knee injury in October 2023. He said he is focused on regaining form through consistent performances. Ancelotti indicated Neymar could still be considered for the World Cup if he maintains fitness and regular playing time in the coming months.

Senegal to challenge CAF ruling that overturned AFCON final result

Senegal's Football Federation this week called the Confederation of African Football decision on the Africa Cup of Nations final "unfair and unacceptable" and said it will appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Senegal had beaten Morocco 1-0 after extra time in a match marked by controversy, including a late penalty and stoppage. CAF's appeals committee later awarded Morocco a 3-0 forfeit win, citing procedural issues and rule breaches. Senegal said the ruling damages the credibility of African football.



Teen rider Inaara Mehta earns top global ranking in dressage challenge

India's 15-year-old equestrian Inaara Mehta on Tuesday impressed at the FEI World Dressage Challenge 2025, securing top rankings across categories. Riding Dasha Deluxe, she scored 69.875 percent in the youth section. She finished first in India and Zone 9, and sixth globally. Representing the Amateur Riders' Club in Mumbai, she also helped Team India secure first in Zone 9 and seventh worldwide. Her performance highlights the growing presence of Indian riders on the global dressage stage.



Oscars 2026 roundup

'One Battle After Another' tops the night as music, politics and surprises take over

The Oscars 2026 delivered a high-energy ceremony filled with major wins, live performances, political statements and unexpected moments, with 'One Battle After Another' emerging as the biggest winner of the night after taking home best picture along with multiple awards. The show opened with a musical tribute inspired by 'Sinners', featuring Miles Caton and cast members performing 'I Lied to You', alongside ballerina Misty Copeland. Later, the fictional girl group HUNTR/X from 'KPop Demon Hunters' performed 'Golden', which went on to win best original song and made history as the first K-pop track to win in the category.

A rare tie added to the surprises, with 'Two People Exchanging Saliva' and 'The Singers' sharing the award for best live-action short. Host Conan O'Brien joked that the result likely disrupted millions of Oscar prediction pools. One of the night's major acting honors went to Michael B. Jordan, who won best actor for 'Sinners' after a widely praised performance that anchored the film's success across multiple categories.

Politics also shaped the evening. Presenter Javier Bardem used his platform while announcing best

international film to say "No to war and Free Palestine". The award went to 'Sentimental Value', with filmmaker Joachim Trier urging greater political responsibility and attention to children in his acceptance speech. Best picture winner Paul Thomas Anderson said 'One Battle After Another' was made as a message to his children and a reflection on the world they are inheriting, while also expressing hope for future generations. Pavel Talankin, co-director of 'Mr Nobody Against Putin', called for an end to global conflict.

The ceremony also featured a long In Memoriam segment honoring figures such as Diane Keaton, Robert Redford and Catherine O'Hara. Barbra Streisand paid tribute to Robert Redford with a performance of 'The Way We Were', calling him an "intellectual cowboy" who shaped cinema both on and off screen. Adding a lighter tone, the broadcast included studio-driven promotional segments featuring 'The Mandalorian & Grogu', 'The Devil Wears Prada 2' and a Marvel reunion with Chris Evans and Robert Downey Jr.

Host Conan O'Brien kept the night moving with sharp humor, industry jabs and political references, balancing the ceremony's emotional moments with his trademark wit.



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Delhi high court extends interim relief to Rajpal Yadav in cheque bounce cases



The Delhi High Court on Wednesday extended interim relief granted to actor Rajpal Yadav in multiple cheque bounce cases, continuing the suspension of his sentence. The court noted that the actor has already made substantial payments to the complainant company, M/s Murli Projects Private Limited, and was not inclined to send him back to jail at this stage. His lawyer informed the court that about 4.25 crore rupees has already been paid, including a demand draft of 25 lakh rupees submitted on the day. The court also refused to cancel the earlier relief despite a plea from the complainant. The matter has been listed for further hearing on April 1 with no adjournment allowed.

Paul McCartney announces two intimate Los Angeles shows

Beatles legend Paul McCartney has announced two intimate performances at the Fonda Theatre in Los Angeles, scheduled for March 26 and March 27. The shows mark his first live appearances since completing an arena tour in November. Attendance will be limited, with selected fans receiving ticket purchase invitations. McCartney has recently been working on new material with producer Andrew Watt and has hinted at a possible new album expected in 2026. His last studio album, 'McCartney III', was released in 2020 during the pandemic. The announcement has sparked speculation among fans about whether the concerts are linked to upcoming music or special appearances, though no additional tour plans have been confirmed.

Zendaya sparks speculation after appearing with ring stack at Oscars

Actor Zendaya sparked speculation about a possible secret marriage with Tom Holland after appearing at the Academy Awards with a noticeable ring stack. She attended the event at the Dolby Theatre while presenting alongside Robert Pattinson. Her diamond jewelry, including rings that resembled a wedding band, drew attention amid ongoing rumors about her engagement. Her stylist, Law Roach, has previously made comments suggesting the couple may have already married, though neither Zendaya nor Holland has confirmed any such development. Holland was seen without a wedding band during a recent public outing, while Zendaya has appeared with similar rings in promotional appearances for her film 'The Drama'. The couple has not publicly addressed the speculation.

'Boong' makes history as Australia's Indian film festival opens with star-studded premiere

The second edition of the National Indian Film Festival of Australia opened with the red carpet premiere of 'Boong', the first Indian film to win a BAFTA. The festival began with a launch event hosted in collaboration with the City of Greater Geelong and the Geelong Waterfront Film Foundation. The film follows a young boy named Boong on a journey to find his father with his best friend. The festival will run from March to July, covering major Australian cities including Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth, as well as regional centres. Veteran actor Anupam Kher will receive the International Indian Cinema Icon Award, recognizing his work in films such as 'The Big Sick' and 'Silver Linings Playbook'.



Nora Fatehi distances herself from controversy around 'KD: The Devil' song

Actor Nora Fatehi has addressed the controversy surrounding her song 'Sarke Chunar Teri Sarke' from 'KD: The Devil', saying she had no control over how the final versions were created or released. In a video posted on social media, she said she shot the song three years ago in Kannada and was unaware of issues in later versions, including a Hindi adaptation. Fatehi said she was not shown or consulted on certain promotional materials and expressed concern over the use of her images without approval. She also said an artificial intelligence generated visual featuring her was used without consent. The actor added that she had flagged concerns earlier and has now disassociated herself from the project.



Sara Ali Khan told to submit affidavit to visit Badrinath and Kedarnath temples

Actor Sara Ali Khan has been asked to submit an affidavit if she wishes to offer prayers at the Badrinath and Kedarnath temples, according to the Badri-Kedar Temple Committee. The committee chairperson stated that non-Hindus will be required to provide written confirmation of their faith in Sanatan Dharma before entering the temples. Sara has frequently visited Kedarnath since filming her debut movie 'Kedarnath' in 2017 and continues to make annual visits during the temple's open season between April and November. Her visits are usually private and include participation



in standard rituals. The new requirement applies broadly to all non-Hindu devotees seeking darshan at the Himalayan shrines.

Badshah faces arrest order after missing hearing over controversial song

Rapper Badshah has been directed to be arrested after failing to appear before the Haryana State Commission for Women in a case related to his song 'Tareefan'. The commission chairperson ordered police to take action and consider seizing his passport if necessary to prevent him from leaving the country. The complaint alleges that the song and its video contain objectionable content involving schoolgirls and inappropriate gestures. Badshah's legal team said he had already submitted an apology and expressed willingness to cooperate. The commission rejected his lawyer's request to appear on his



behalf. Authorities have also warned that his shows in Haryana may be restricted unless he appears personally before the panel.

Bruno Mars clarifies he is not throwing shade at Taylor Swift



Singer Bruno Mars has denied any negative intent toward Taylor Swift after social media users claimed he had liked a post criticizing the pop star. The post contained offensive remarks about Swift and was widely circulated after being falsely linked to another account. Mars later clarified on social media that he has no issues with Swift and described her as supportive and kind. He urged fans to spread positivity online. The incident came shortly after Mars' track 'I Just Might' reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100, ending Swift's 15-week run with 'The Fate of Ophelia' from 'The Life of a Showgirl'. Swift has not commented on the situation.

Kanye West postpones New Delhi concert to May 2026 citing geopolitical tensions



Rapper Kanye West has postponed his New Delhi concert to May 23, 2026, citing geopolitical tensions and regional instability. The announcement was made on social media, where he assured fans that previously purchased tickets will remain valid for the new date. The organizers stated that the decision was taken to ensure the safety of fans, the artist, and production staff. West is currently preparing for the release of his upcoming album 'Bully', expected in 2026. He also has major performances planned in Los Angeles and Italy next year. No additional changes to his global tour schedule have been announced.

Mariah Carey says Rock and Roll Hall of Fame recognition is overdue

Singer Mariah Carey has said her chart record proves she deserves a place in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as she continues her nomination run. She expressed excitement about being shortlisted for the third consecutive year and pointed to her 19 number one hits on the Billboard Hot 100. Carey said she has always wanted to showcase her rock influences but was often told to stay within her genre. She also spoke about her unreleased project 'Someone's Ugly Daughter', which she hopes fans will eventually hear. Carey recently received tributes from Foo Fighters and Taylor Momsen during a MusiCares event and said she is currently working on new music.



MAA SHAILPUTRI



MAA BRAHMACHARINI



MAA CHANDRAGHANTA



MAA KUSHMANDA



MAA SIDDHIDATRI

Chaitra Navratri

Nine nights of divine energy, devotion, and inner transfo

Chaitra Navratri is one of the most sacred Hindu festivals, marking the beginning of the Hindu lunar new year. It is dedicated to Goddess Durga and her nine divine forms, collectively known as Navadurga. Observed across India and by the global Hindu diaspora, the festival represents the victory of good over evil and the awakening of inner spiritual strength.

There are four Navratris observed each year. Chaitra Navratri (spring) and Sharad Navratri (autumn) are the most widely celebrated, while the two Gupt Navratris are observed more privately by spiritual practitioners.

Devotees observe fasting (vrat), daily prayers, Mata Ki Chowki, Jagran, and temple visits, seeking blessings from Maa Durga in her various forms.

Each of the nine days is dedicated to a different form of the Goddess, symbolizing stages of human spiritual evolution from innocence to enlightenment.

The nine divine forms of Maa Durga (Navadurga)

Day 1: Maa Shailaputri — the beginning of divine strength

Maa Shailaputri, daughter of the Himalayas, represents purity and foundational strength. Riding a bull and holding a trident and lotus, she symbolizes balance between power and calmness. She is associated with the Muladhara chakra.

Life lesson: Every journey begins with stability, innocence, and faith.

Day 2: Maa Brahmacharini — devotion and discipline

Maa Brahmacharini represents penance, simplicity, and unwavering devotion. Holding a rosary and water pot, she embodies focus and spiritual discipline. She is linked to emotional balance and self-control.

Life lesson: Growth comes through patience, sacrifice, and dedication.

Day 3: Maa Chandraghanta — courage and grace

With a crescent moon on her forehead and ten arms carrying weapons, Maa Chandraghanta symbolizes bravery and protection. She rides a tiger and represents



fearlessness guided by grace.

Life lesson: Courage must be balanced with calmness and dignity.

Day 4: Maa Kushmanda — creator of the universe

Maa Kushmanda is believed to have created the universe with her divine smile. She represents cosmic energy, vitality, and creation, holding a pot of nectar that symbolizes life.

Life lesson: Positivity is the foundation of creation and growth.

Day 5: Maa Skandamata — nurturing mother

Maa Skandamata, mother of Lord Kartikeya, represents compassion, protection, and unconditional love. She embodies the nurturing power of motherhood.

Life lesson: True strength lies in selfless care and emotional generosity.

Day 6: Maa Katyayani — fierce protector

Maa Katyayani is the warrior form who destroyed the demon Mahishasura. She symbolizes justice, courage, and the destruction of evil forces.

Life lesson: Stand firmly for truth and justice.

Day 7: Maa Kaalratri — destroyer of darkness

Maa Kaalratri is the fiercest form of Durga, representing the destruction of fear, ignorance, and negativity. Despite her terrifying form, she offers ultimate protection.

Life lesson: Transformation requires confronting and overcoming fear.

Day 8: Maa Mahagauri — purity and peace

Maa Mahagauri symbolizes serenity, forgiveness, and spiritual cleansing. She represents calmness after struggle and the purification of the soul.

Life lesson: Peace follows hardship; forgiveness brings liberation.

Day 9: Maa Siddhidatri — giver of wisdom

Maa Siddhidatri grants knowledge, spiritual powers, and enlightenment. She represents the culmination of spiritual evolution and divine completion.

Life lesson: True fulfillment lies in wisdom and selfless sharing.

Spiritual and cultural significance

Navratri is both a cultural celebration and a spiritual discipline. Traditionally:
► First three days: dedicated to Maa Durga (strength)

► Next three days: dedicated to Maa Lakshmi (prosperity)
► Last three days: dedicated to Maa Saraswati (knowledge)

Devotees observe fasting, follow a sattvic diet, and participate in cultural practices such as:

- Garba and Dandiya in Gujarat
- Durga Puja in West Bengal
- Kanya Puja, where young girls are worshipped as manifestations of the Goddess

Each day is also associated with specific colors representing different energies of the divine feminine.

A festival of faith and inner awakening

Navratri is not only a religious celebration but also a symbolic journey of transformation. The nine forms of Maa Durga reflect the human path from innocence to wisdom, struggle to strength, and darkness to enlightenment. As devotees chant "Jai Mata Di," the festival becomes more than ritual—it becomes inner purification, strengthening of the spirit, and reconnection with divine energy.

In essence, Chaitra Navratri celebrates Shakti—the power within every individual—guiding life toward balance, purpose, and spiritual fulfillment.

ri
ormation



MAA SKANDAMATA



MAA KATYAYANI



MAA KALARATRI



MAA MAHAGAURI



The shadow of a sacred tradition

India's 'fake khusra' dilemma

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

India has long taken pride in preserving ancient traditions. Yet today, one of its most distinctive and historically significant communities—the Hijras—is facing a troubling transformation from reverence to suspicion. What was once considered sacred is increasingly viewed through discomfort, distrust, and public resentment.

This shift is no longer subtle. It is visible, widespread, and accelerating.

A cultural contract under strain

For centuries, the Hijra community has held a unique place in India's social and spiritual fabric. Their presence at births and weddings was not merely accepted but regarded as auspicious. The badhai tradition—marked by clapping, singing, and blessings—was deeply rooted in faith and cultural meaning.

Families often offered money, gifts, and respect as part of this exchange. Today, that cultural understanding is breaking down.

Across cities, reports have grown of individuals dressed as Hijras approaching people at traffic signals, markets, and residential areas, sometimes demanding money aggressively. What was once seen as a blessing is, for many, becoming an uncomfortable or avoidable encounter. This is not evolution. It is erosion.

A sacred legacy rooted in the Ramayana

Understanding what is being lost requires understanding what once defined it.

A widely told narrative from the Ramayana describes Lord Rama's exile. As he left Ayodhya, he asked all men and women to return to the city. Hijras, identifying beyond the gender binary, are believed to have stayed in devotion, awaiting his return.

When Lord Rama returned after fourteen years, he is said to have blessed them with the power to bestow *shubh aashirwad*—auspicious blessings—on occasions such as childbirth and marriage.

This belief shaped centuries of cultural practice, reinforcing their role in rituals and household celebrations. Today, that legacy is increasingly diluted.

When identity becomes a tool for exploitation

The growing concern in urban India is not directed at the Hijra community itself, but at individuals misusing its identity.

Law enforcement reports suggest cases of impersonation, where groups pose as Hijras to extract money. Many of these operate outside traditional *deras*, which historically maintained structure and discipline within the community.

Unlike genuine groups who appear during specific cultural occasions, impersonators often act opportunistically in public spaces, relying on pressure and social hesitation.

The result is confusion, frustration, and growing mistrust. Most citizens cannot distinguish authenticity from impersonation. When that distinction collapses, an entire

community is affected.

The real victims of the crisis

The harsh reality is that the greatest victims are not the public. They are genuine members of the Hijra community.

A historically marginalized group that once commanded cultural respect is now increasingly viewed with suspicion. Their traditional role in society is being questioned, and their presence is no longer automatically associated with blessings but uncertainty. This erosion of trust is deeply unjust, as the actions of a few are damaging the dignity of many.

From colonial disruption to modern neglect

This crisis cannot be separated from history. The marginalization of Hijras was intensified under British colonial rule, particularly through the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, which labeled entire communities as criminal by nature. This entrenched stigma pushed them further to the margins of society.

Even after legal recognition through the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, lived realities remain difficult. Discrimination in employment, housing, and healthcare continues to restrict opportunities.

However, exclusion does not justify exploitation. One reflects systemic failure. The other is abuse of identity.

Why silence is no longer an option

India's response so far has been largely passive. That is no longer adequate. A meaningful response requires two parallel actions:

First, stronger enforcement against impersonation and extortion, with mechanisms that protect dignity while ensuring accountability.

Second, genuine pathways for economic inclusion through education, skill development, and employment opportunities for transgender individuals. Cultural dignity cannot survive without economic dignity.

Reject misinformation, protect clarity

Public discourse must also remain responsible. Unverified narratives linking this issue to specific migrant or external groups are circulating, but they are misleading and harmful. They distract from the real issue and risk deepening social divides. This is not about identity politics. It is about safeguarding a tradition from misuse.

Restoring what is sacred

India now faces a defining choice. It can allow a sacred tradition to erode under misuse and public mistrust, or it can act decisively to restore its integrity. The answer is not rejection. The answer is protection.

Because the image of a Hijra blessing a newborn or a wedding is not merely cultural—it is deeply civilizational. It reflects an India where identity, spirituality, and society coexist in layered harmony.

But that image cannot survive in an atmosphere of fear and confusion. If India truly values its traditions, it must defend their authenticity. Not later. Now.



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India's textbook racket

How schools turn classrooms into profit centers

By: Dr. Avi Verma

Every academic year in India begins with a familiar ritual: parents lining up to buy textbooks. What should be a routine purchase has evolved into a deeply flawed system marked by inflated pricing, restricted access, and institutional profiteering. Behind neatly packaged book bundles lies an ecosystem increasingly shaped by control rather than choice. Let's call it what it is: a structure that extracts money from parents under the guise of education.

From commissions to coercion

For years, publishers operated in a gray zone, offering schools commissions in exchange for textbook prescriptions. These once ranged between 10 to 25 percent.

Today, publishers report pressure to offer discounts as high as 60 to 70 percent of the printed price. To absorb this burden, many inflate the maximum retail price, passing the cost directly to families. The result is predictable: parents often pay two to three times the actual production cost of textbooks.

A broken supply chain

Traditionally, textbooks moved through a simple pipeline: publisher to distributor to bookseller to parent. That model allowed competition and pricing variation.

In many private schools, that structure has now been replaced by a closed chain:

Publisher - School administration - Authorized seller - Parent

Schools increasingly act as gatekeepers, prescribing "mandatory" books and directing where they must be purchased. In some cases, vendors operate directly on or near school premises. The consequences are clear: no comparison, no competition, and no

meaningful consumer choice.

Silence driven by dependence

Publishers privately acknowledge that current demands are unsustainable and margins artificially distorted. Yet most remain silent. The reason is structural dependency.

Schools control access to large student populations. Refusal to comply often means removal from official book lists and loss of entire markets. What emerges is not a free market, but a controlled system shaped by institutional leverage.

The burden on families

The financial impact on parents is significant:

- ▶ Rs.3,000–Rs.7,000 for kindergarten
- ▶ Rs.5,000–Rs.10,000 for primary classes
- ▶ Rs.8,000–Rs.15,000 for higher grades

These costs often exclude workbooks and "customized editions" available only through designated channels, further limiting access and increasing dependency.

The NCERT contradiction

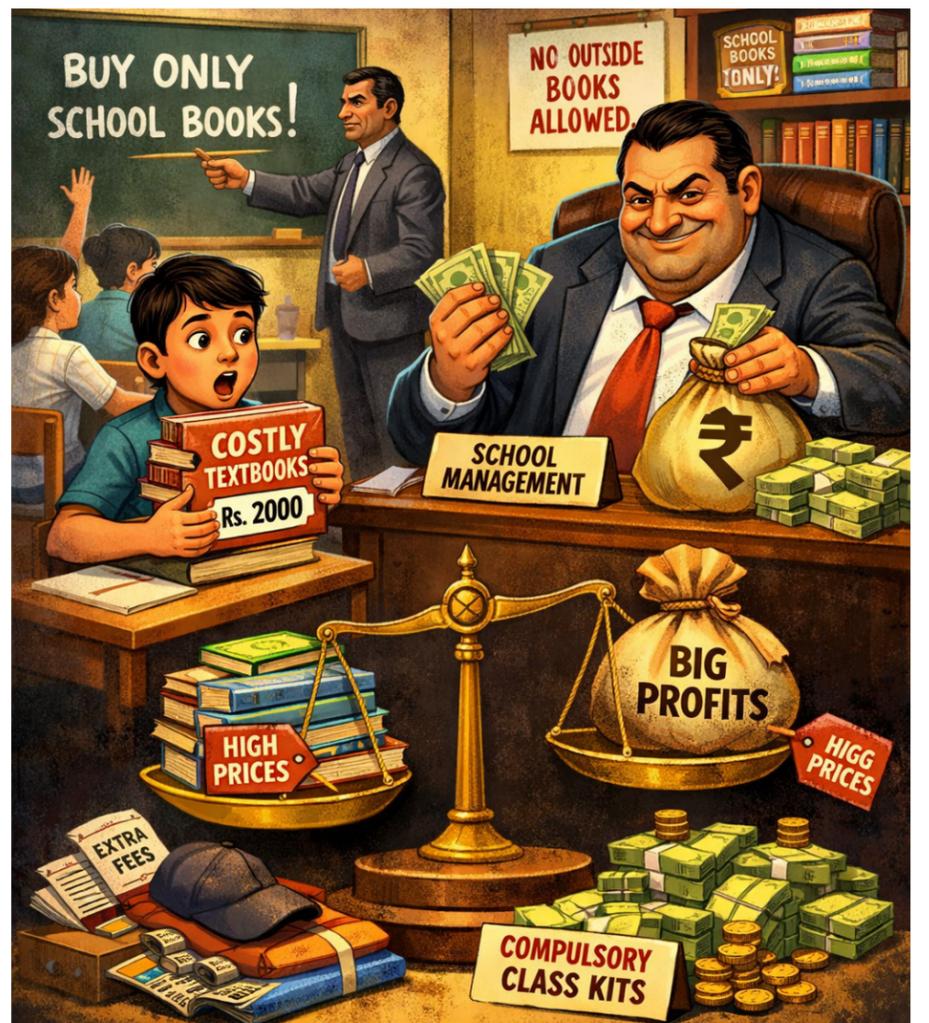
India's public education system promotes affordable NCERT textbooks, widely regarded as academically strong and low-cost. Yet many private institutions avoid them. The reason is not academic preference, but financial incentive. NCERT books do not generate commercial margins for intermediaries.

Regulation without enforcement

While guidelines discourage forced purchasing from specific vendors, enforcement remains weak. As a result, the system operates with minimal accountability. Without oversight, regulatory intent loses practical meaning.

What reform requires

Meaningful change would require:



- ▶ Ending exclusive vendor arrangements
- ▶ Ensuring price and procurement transparency in schools
- ▶ Strengthening oversight of essential educational materials
- ▶ Expanding mandatory adoption of NCERT textbooks where feasible

Education or exploitation?

At its core, this is not only a pricing issue but a question of institutional trust. Schools

are not retail spaces. Parents are not captive consumers. Yet each academic year reinforces a system where choice is limited and costs are controlled by intermediaries. The consequences go beyond economics. They reflect a deeper erosion of fairness within education itself.

If education is to remain a public good in principle as well as practice, this system demands urgent correction.

In memory of Dr. Dipak Shah, 'Dhadkan' strikes a chord for Parkinson's awareness and research

By: Dr. Avi Verma

The Chicago community is invited to an evening of music and philanthropy as Sheela Shah presents "Dhadkan," a benefit concert in support of the Parkinson's Foundation. Scheduled for Saturday, April 11, 2026, at the Avery Coonley School Auditorium, the event is being held in loving memory of the late Dr. Dipak Shah. More than a musical performance, it is envisioned as a heartfelt tribute combining art, remembrance, and social impact.

Turning grief into action

With Parkinson's cases rising globally, the concert aims to raise funds for critical research focused on treatment, prevention, and ultimately a cure. Organizer and lead singer Sheela Shah said, "We all have an urge in our hearts to make a better, safer future for our younger generation. This evening is a way for us to come together, support the cause, and celebrate a life well-lived through the universal language of music."

A star-studded musical lineup

The evening will feature a performance led by acclaimed music director Hitesh Master and his orchestra, with vocal performances by Sheela Shah, Manmeet Kour, and Rajesh Chalam. The program will take guests through a curated musical journey, followed by a formal dinner designed to encourage community connection and support for the foundation.

Event details

Date: Saturday, April 11, 2026

Time: 5:00 PM

Venue: Avery Coonley School Auditorium

Address: 1400 Maple Avenue, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

Cause: All donations will be directed to the Parkinson's Foundation for research, cure, and prevention efforts

Support the pulse of progress

"Dhadkan," meaning "heartbeat," invites community members to contribute toward scientific progress and hope for millions affected by Parkinson's disease.

DR. SHEELA G. SHAH
Presenting

Dhadkan

A pulsating musical Evening for the benefit of **PARKINSON FOUNDATION (NFP)**

Saturday, 11th April 2026
5:00 PM Dinner followed by Music

AVERY COONLEY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
1400 Maple Ave
Downers Grove, IL 60515

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Sponsor: Silver \$250 | Gold \$500
Platinum - Open

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Illinois 2026 primaries

A competitive reset ahead of November

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

The 2026 Illinois primary elections mark a transitional phase in the state's political landscape. The retirement of Senator Dick Durbin after more than two decades in office, along with multiple open congressional seats, has reshaped the field, producing new candidates, shifting alliances, and evolving party strategies ahead of the general election.

Senate race: Stratton secures Democratic nomination

The most closely watched contest was the Democratic primary to replace Durbin. Juliana Stratton emerged victorious after a competitive three-way race against Raja Krishnamoorthi and Robin Kelly.

Stratton's win reflected strong institutional support, significant fundraising backing linked to allies of Governor JB Pritzker, and effective late-stage campaigning. Her coalition drew from Chicago's urban base, suburban voters, African American communities, and progressive groups.

However, her plurality win also highlights ongoing ideological diversity within the Democratic electorate.

On the Republican side, Don Tracy, a former state party chair and businessman, secured the nomination. His profile reflects a more traditional, center-right

approach, suggesting Republican primary voters favored electability and stability over more ideological alternatives.

Congressional races: generational and ideological shifts

Beyond the Senate race, several open congressional seats produced competitive primaries across both parties.

For Democrats, retirements created opportunities for newer candidates, many aligned with progressive or grassroots platforms. These contests reflect a broader generational shift, particularly in urban districts where local organizing is increasingly influential.

Republican primaries in downstate Illinois highlighted an ongoing internal divide between establishment conservatives and populist challengers. While establishment-backed candidates prevailed in several districts, ideological tensions remain visible.

Overall, both parties enter the general election with partially unified but still evolving coalitions.

Structural balance: Democratic advantage, Republican challenge

Illinois remains structurally favorable to Democrats, particularly due to strong electoral performance in Chicago and surrounding suburban counties.

These regions provide a reliable base supported by robust fundraising and

organizational infrastructure.

Republicans retain strength in rural and downstate areas but continue to face challenges expanding appeal in suburban districts, where demographic and political shifts have increased competitiveness.

Key policy contrasts are shaping the race:

- ▶ Democrats are emphasizing economic equity, healthcare access, reproductive rights, and climate policy
- ▶ Republicans are focusing on fiscal discipline, public safety, and cost of living concerns

Voter turnout and suburban engagement will be decisive factors in determining how these messages translate into electoral outcomes.

Key factors shaping the general election Several structural and political dynamics are likely to influence November's results:

1. Illinois' partisan lean

The state's consistent Democratic preference provides an initial advantage, though margins vary based on turnout.

2. Suburban voters

Suburban counties remain pivotal, with voters balancing economic concerns and public safety priorities.

3. Economic conditions

Inflation and cost of living perceptions may shape voter sentiment,

potentially benefiting Republicans in closely contested areas.

4. Candidate profiles

Stratton's governance experience appeals to continuity-oriented voters, while Tracy's business background may attract those prioritizing economic management.

Leadership transition and party recalibration

Senator Durbin's departure represents a generational shift in Illinois Democratic leadership, raising broader questions about ideological balance, experience, and future direction.

For Republicans, the nomination of Tracy reflects an effort to broaden appeal following recent electoral setbacks, emphasizing pragmatism over ideological consolidation.

Outlook

As Illinois approaches the general election, Democrats retain structural advantages, but Republicans see opportunities driven by economic concerns and voter dissatisfaction in key regions.

The 2026 cycle will test both parties' ability to adapt to changing voter expectations and shifting demographic realities. The results will help define whether Illinois maintains its current political alignment or experiences measurable electoral movement.

Congratulations J.B. Pritzker



J.B. Pritzker secures Democratic nomination for Illinois governor, sets up 2026 rematch with Darren Bailey

By: Dr. Avi Verma

Incumbent Governor J.B. Pritzker has secured the Democratic nomination for Illinois governor in the 2026 primary elections, running unopposed and positioning himself for a potential third term in office. His uncontested path underscores both Democratic unity and his continued dominance within the state party as he heads into a general election rematch with Republican challenger Darren Bailey.

Bailey, the 2022 GOP nominee and former state senator, emerged from a contested Republican primary to once again challenge Pritzker in what is shaping up to be one of the most closely watched statewide races of the cycle.

Unopposed nomination reflects Democratic consolidation

Pritzker's path to the nomination was straightforward, with no Democratic challengers entering the race. The absence of intra-party competition allowed him to conserve resources and shift focus early to the general election.

His uncontested nomination also reflects strong institutional backing from Democratic leaders across Illinois, who have largely rallied behind his leadership heading into a competitive midterm environment.

Factors behind Pritzker's uncontested primary

1. Incumbency and governing record
Pritzker's incumbency remains a defining advantage. After winning reelection in 2022 by a wide margin, he enters 2026 with strong name recognition, a statewide political network, and an established policy record spanning economic development and

progressive reforms.

2. Party unity and strategic coordination

Illinois Democrats opted for early consolidation behind Pritzker, avoiding internal divisions seen in other races. This unity allows the party to concentrate resources on the general election and down-ballot contests.

3. Financial strength

Pritzker's personal wealth continues to give him a major financial edge. His ability to self-fund campaigns at a scale unmatched in Illinois politics strengthens his position and deters serious primary challenges.

Republican nominee: Darren Bailey returns for rematch

Darren Bailey secured the Republican nomination after defeating a field that included Ted Dabrowski, DuPage County Sheriff James Mendrick, and developer Rick Heidner.

Bailey, who previously ran against Pritzker

in 2022, brings a platform centered on cultural conservatism, opposition to the SAFE-T Act, and criticism of taxes, public spending, and cost of living pressures.

While he lost by a double-digit margin in 2022, his renomination reflects continued support within the Republican base, particularly in rural and downstate Illinois.

General election outlook: familiar dynamics, structural advantage for Democrats

Illinois remains a reliably Democratic-leaning state, driven by strong support in Chicago and suburban counties. These regions provide Pritzker with a significant structural advantage heading into November 2026.

However, Bailey's campaign is expected to once again target economic frustration, public safety concerns, and property tax debates, especially in suburban and exurban areas.

Key campaign battlegrounds Economic conditions

Bailey is likely to emphasize affordability

and cost-of-living concerns, while Pritzker will highlight economic stability and state-level policy achievements.

Public safety

Republicans are expected to focus heavily on crime and policing debates in suburban regions.

Turnout dynamics

Democratic success will depend on strong turnout in Cook County and surrounding metro areas, while Republicans will aim to maximize rural and downstate margins.

National political climate

As a midterm election cycle, broader national sentiment and party enthusiasm are likely to shape turnout patterns.

Conclusion: A familiar rematch with high stakes

Governor J.B. Pritzker's unopposed nomination reflects both his entrenched position within Illinois politics and his party's strategic focus on the general election. His combination of incumbency, funding strength, and institutional backing places him in a strong position heading into November.

Facing Darren Bailey again, Pritzker enters a rematch shaped by familiar ideological divides and structural voting patterns. While Democrats hold a clear advantage in Illinois, the outcome will depend on turnout, economic sentiment, and each campaign's ability to expand beyond their core bases.

As the race unfolds, the central question remains whether Pritzker can convert incumbency into another decisive victory or whether Bailey can shift the dynamics in a state long dominated by Democrats.



Congratulations Juliana Stratton



Juliana Stratton wins Illinois Democratic Senate primary, sets up general election battle with Don Tracy

By: Dr. Avi Verma

Juliana Stratton's victory in the 2026 Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate marks a defining moment in Illinois politics. The state's lieutenant governor defeated two sitting U.S. House members, Raja Krishnamoorthi and Robin Kelly, in a competitive March 17, 2026 primary to replace retiring Senator Dick Durbin.

Stratton secured about 40.1 percent of the vote, followed by Krishnamoorthi at roughly 33 percent and Kelly under 20 percent. Her win positions her as the Democratic nominee heading into a November general election against Republican Don Tracy.

A competitive primary shaped by shifting momentum

Stratton's victory was not predetermined. Krishnamoorthi entered the race as a strong frontrunner with significant fundraising capacity and national donor support, while Kelly brought deep congressional experience

and established party networks.

However, as the campaign progressed, Stratton steadily gained ground, building recognition and improving favorability across key voter blocs. Her late-cycle momentum proved decisive in a fragmented three-candidate race.

How Stratton built her winning coalition

1. Broad-based voter coalition

Stratton's campaign successfully bridged multiple Democratic constituencies, drawing support from Chicago voters, suburban communities, and grassroots progressive groups.

Her position as lieutenant governor strengthened her statewide profile and helped her connect with voters seeking both experience and accessibility.

2. Institutional backing and endorsements

A key advantage for Stratton was strong establishment support, including backing from Governor J.B. Pritzker.

This endorsement helped stabilize her campaign and signal unity within Illinois Democratic leadership.

She also received support from Senator Tammy Duckworth and multiple Democratic organizations, reinforcing her credibility across ideological wings of the party.

3. Policy positioning and messaging

Stratton emphasized a blend of progressive priorities and pragmatic governance. Her platform focused on healthcare access, workers' rights, economic equity, abortion rights, and civil liberties.

Her messaging contrasted with more moderate rivals, particularly on federal policy issues such as immigration and enforcement, helping her consolidate support among progressive-leaning voters.

Overcoming fundraising disadvantages

Despite entering the race with lower fundraising totals than Krishnamoorthi,

Stratton effectively deployed targeted resources.

While her opponent benefited from tens of millions in fundraising and outside spending from major donor networks, Stratton's campaign focused on high-impact outreach in Democratic strongholds and key suburban regions.

This disciplined allocation strategy helped her build a statewide plurality without matching the full scale of her opponents' financial reach.

General election outlook: Stratton vs Don Tracy

Stratton now faces Republican nominee Don Tracy, a former Illinois GOP chair who secured his party's nomination after a contested primary.

Illinois has not elected a Republican senator since 2010, giving Democrats a structural advantage heading into November 2026. However, Tracy's business background and more moderate positioning could appeal to independent and suburban voters.

For Stratton, the central challenge will be expanding beyond the Democratic primary base and consolidating broader statewide support.

Conclusion: A strategic win with statewide implications

Juliana Stratton's primary victory reflects a combination of coalition-building, institutional support, and strategic campaign execution.

Her ability to overcome stronger early fundraising opponents and unify diverse Democratic constituencies underscores her political strength heading into the general election.

As the race moves forward, the key question will be whether Stratton can maintain her coalition and translate primary momentum into a durable statewide victory in a politically favorable but increasingly complex environment.



Friday, 20 March 2026

Congratulations Daniel Biss



Daniel Biss secures Democratic nomination in Illinois' 9th Congressional District primary

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

Evanston Mayor Daniel Biss has won the crowded Democratic primary for Illinois' 9th Congressional District, securing the party's nomination to replace longtime Representative Jan Schakowsky, who is retiring after more than 25 years in office. The March 17, 2026 primary featured 15 candidates and drew significant attention from both progressive and establishment Democratic factions.

Unofficial results showed Biss leading with about 29.5 percent of the vote, followed by former journalist Kat Abughazaleh at 25.9 percent and State Senator Laura Fine at 20.2 percent. The fragmented field allowed Biss to prevail with a plurality rather than a majority. How Biss built a winning coalition Biss's victory reflected a combination of political experience, local recognition, and coalition-building across Democratic factions.

Local experience and name recognition Biss previously served as a state senator for the district and currently serves as mayor of Evanston, a key Democratic stronghold within the 9th District. His long-standing presence in local politics gave him an advantage in voter familiarity and issue credibility.

Balancing progressive and establishment support

Positioned between progressive and moderate wings of the party, Biss secured

backing from traditional Democratic networks, including an endorsement from Schakowsky. This support helped reinforce his image as a continuity candidate while still appealing to reform-minded voters.

Fundraising strength

Biss raised nearly \$2.6 million, keeping him competitive in a financially intense race that included strong fundraising efforts from rivals such as Abughazaleh and Fine. His resources enabled sustained outreach across the district.

External spending influence

The race saw significant outside spending from political action committees, including groups aligned with pro-Israel advocacy organizations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. The influx of outside money shaped campaign messaging and reinforced voter skepticism about external influence in local races.

General election outlook

Biss will now face Republican nominee John Elleson in the November 2026 general election. The 9th District has long leaned heavily Democratic, with Schakowsky previously winning reelection by wide margins, making Biss the early favorite.

However, shifting voter engagement patterns and issue salience could shape the contest. Key factors include:

- ▶ **Turnout dynamics:** Strong Democratic turnout in Chicago and suburban North Shore areas, including Evanston, will be critical
- ▶ **Issue positioning:** Voters are likely to

focus on healthcare, economic concerns, and foreign policy

- ▶ **National environment:** Broader midterm trends and economic sentiment could influence local outcomes

Broader political implications

Biss's victory reflects a broader pattern in Illinois Democratic primaries, where candidates with strong local governance experience and institutional credibility continue to perform well in crowded fields. While progressive voices remain influential, voters often appear to favor candidates perceived as broadly electable and administratively experienced.

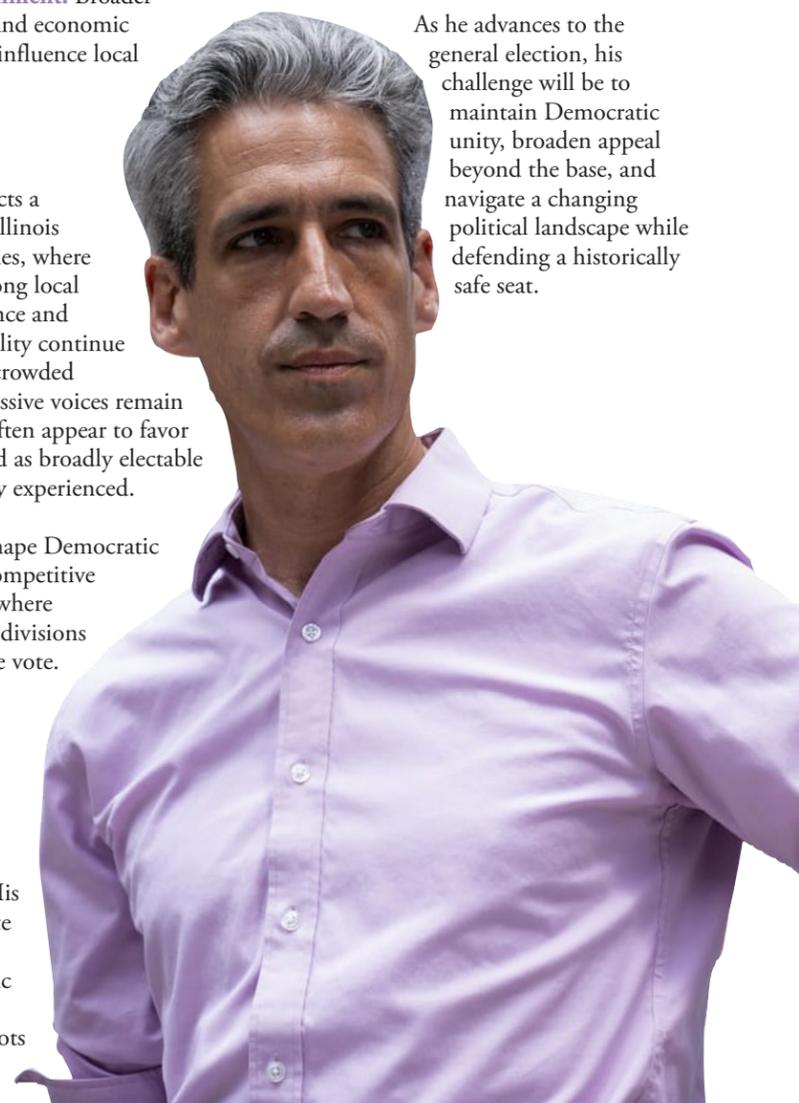
This trend may shape Democratic strategy in future competitive districts, especially where internal ideological divisions risk fragmenting the vote.

Conclusion

Daniel Biss's nomination marks a significant step in a tightly contested and strategically complex primary. His ability to consolidate support across multiple Democratic factions, combined with strong local roots and fundraising

capacity, positioned him for victory in a fractured field.

As he advances to the general election, his challenge will be to maintain Democratic unity, broaden appeal beyond the base, and navigate a changing political landscape while defending a historically safe seat.



Global progress in regenerative cardiology

Japan leads with first commercial stem cell heart repair; what it means for the US and India

By: Dr. Avi Verma

Regenerative medicine has reached a historic milestone as Japan officially approved the commercial use of bio-engineered heart muscle sheets derived from induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells. This breakthrough, developed by a Tokyo-based medical venture, represents the first time a lab-grown cellular product for heart repair has moved from experimental trials to the commercial market.

These "Myocardial Repair Sheets" are grafted directly onto a failing heart. Once applied, they release growth factors that stimulate new blood vessel formation and physically reinforce the heart wall, offering a lifeline to those with severe heart failure.

The status in the United States: Rigorous trials underway

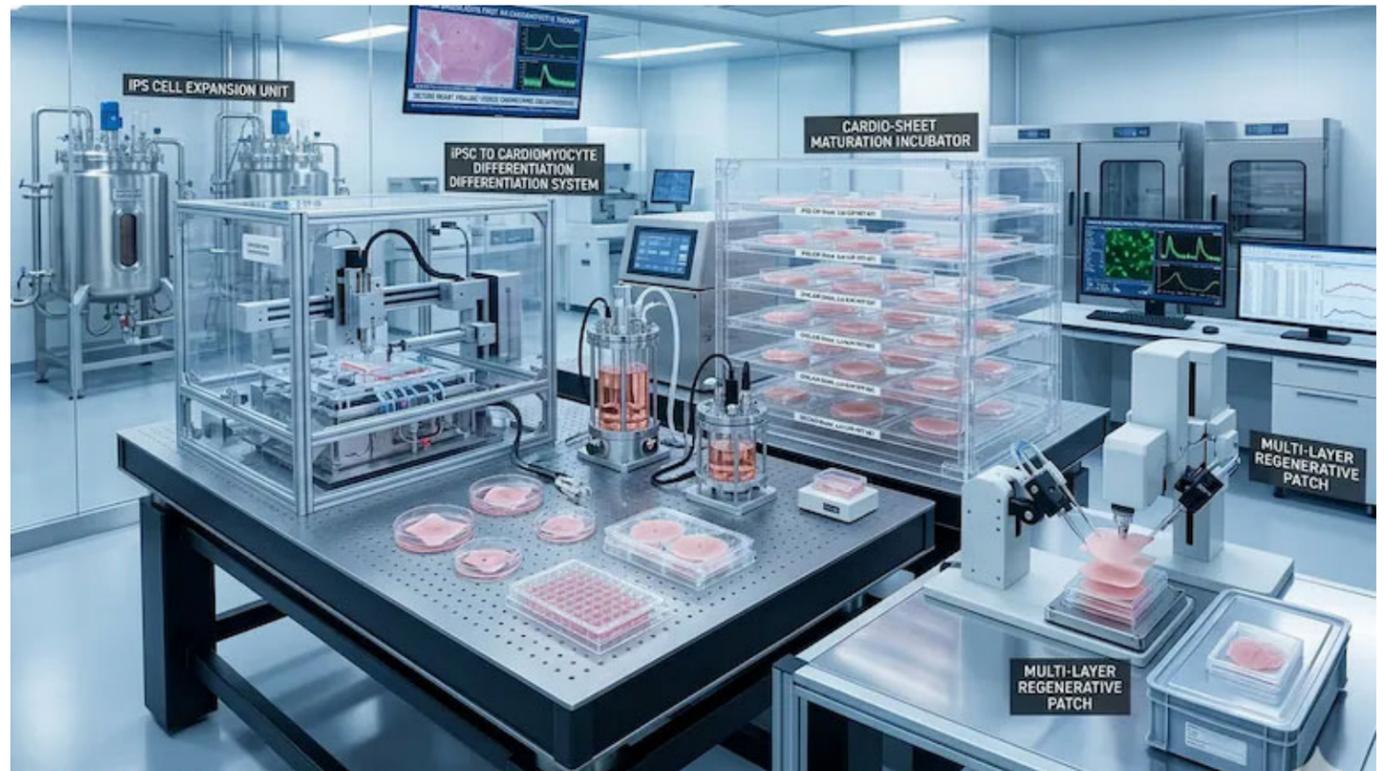
While Japan has granted a "provisional license" to fast-track this technology, it is not yet commercially available in the United States. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) maintains a different regulatory pathway, requiring large-scale Phase III clinical trials before commercial sale.

However, the U.S. is a global hub for this research:

Active research: Institutions like Stanford University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (where iPS research was pioneered alongside Japan) are conducting advanced human trials.

Current availability: In the US, patients can currently only access these specific iPS-derived cardiac treatments by enrolling in FDA-sanctioned clinical trials.

Several American biotech firms are working on "off-the-shelf" universal stem cell patches that would not require a patient's own cells, potentially lowering costs.



The status in India: A rising frontier in stem cells

In India, regenerative heart therapy is in a stage of rapid clinical evolution, though it has not yet reached the level of commercial approval seen in Japan.

Institutional leadership: The International Centre for Cardio Thoracic and Vascular Diseases in Chennai and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi have been at the forefront of stem cell research for cardiac repair.

Regulatory environment: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has established strict guidelines for stem cell therapy. While bone-marrow-derived stem cell treatments have been used in some Indian hospitals for years, the specific iPS cell technology used in Japan is currently restricted to academic research and limited clinical studies in India.

Future outlook: India is positioning itself as a cost-effective destination for stem cell research, with several startups in Bangalore and Hyderabad working on cardiac regenerative patches aimed at the South Asian genetic profile.

A new era for heart patients

The move in Japan provides a roadmap for both the US and India. By transforming specialized adult cells into versatile building blocks, doctors are moving closer to a future where heart damage is no longer "irreversible," but can be physically mended using the body's own cellular potential.

Health corner: Understanding the science

A glossary of regenerative medicine

To help our readers navigate the latest medical breakthrough in heart repair, here is a simplified guide to the terminology used in this field:

- ▶ **iPS cells (Induced pluripotent stem cells):** These are "reprogrammed" cells. Scientists take a regular adult cell (like a skin or blood cell) and use genetic instructions to turn back its internal clock. This transforms it into a "blank slate" cell that can become any type of tissue in the human body.
- ▶ **Regenerative medicine:** A branch of medicine focused on "regrowing" or replacing human cells, tissues, or organs to restore normal function. Instead of just treating symptoms, it aims to physically mend the underlying damage.
- ▶ **Myocardial repair sheets:** Thin, lab-grown layers of living heart muscle cells. These are grafted onto the surface of a patient's heart. They act like a "living bandage," secreting proteins that help the heart grow new blood vessels and pump more efficiently.
- ▶ **Provisional license:** A fast-track regulatory approval (common in Japan) that allows a life-saving treatment to be sold commercially while the company continues to collect long-term data on a larger group of patients.
- ▶ **Differentiation:** The biological process by which a "blank slate" stem cell turns into a specialized cell, such as a beating heart cell (cardiomyocyte) or a nerve cell.
- ▶ **Off-the-shelf therapy:** Medical products created from a universal donor's cells rather than the patient's own. This allows the treatment to be ready immediately for emergencies, rather than waiting weeks to grow the patient's specific cells in a lab.

Important medical disclaimer

The information provided in this article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. This technology is currently commercially available only in Japan. Always seek the advice of your physician or a qualified health provider in the USA or India regarding your specific medical condition or participation in clinical trials.



Personal finance insights: News & Features

● Dr. K C Gupta, YBB Personal Finance

CONTRARIAN INDICATORS

AAll Bull-Bear Spread -14.5% (low)
 CNN Fear & Greed Index 20 (extreme fear)
 NYSE %Above 50-dMA % 30.40% (negative; barely clearing oversold)
 SP500 %Above 50-dMA 32.40% (negative)

ICI Fund Allocations (Cumulative), 1/31/26
 OEFs & ETFs: Stocks 61.83%, Hybrids 4.01%, Bonds 17.25%, M-Mkt 16.92%

INTEREST RATES

CME FedWatch
 Current 3.50-3.75%
 FOMC 3/18/26+ hold
 FOMC 4/29/26+ hold

Treasury

T-Bills 3-mo yield 3.72%, 1-yr 3.66%;
 T-Notes 2-yr 3.73%, 5-yr 3.87%, 10-yr 4.28%; T-Bonds 30-yr 4.90%;
 TIPS/Real yields 5-yr 1.26%, 10-yr 1.92%, 30-yr 2.66%
 FRNs Index 3.638%

Bank Rates www.depositaccounts.com/

Stable-Value (SV) Rates, 3/1/26
 TIAA Traditional Annuity (Accumulation) Rates
 Restricted RC 5.00%, RA 4.75%
 Flexible RCP 4.25%, SRA 4.00%, IRA-101110+ 3.30%
 TSP G Fund 4.00% (previous 4.250%)

 India Fear & Greed MMI 24.34 (extreme fear)
 Weekly ETFs: INDA -3.86%, INDY -4.37%, EPI -3.33%, INDH -2.72%, SPY -1.50%

The data above are as of Sunday preceding



the publication date.

ECONOMY

India has 1,800+ GCCs (Global Capability Centers) now including those from 33% of Fortune 500 (global) companies. They are commonly established as wholly-owned subsidiaries (WOS), joint-ventures (JVs), build-operate-transfer (BOT) arrangements, or through entities at GIFT City, Gandhinagar IFSC special economic zone. Most of the GCCs are in Bengaluru & Hyderabad & leading sectors include financials (21%), retail (14%), healthcare (12%) & automotive (11%).

PHARMA

French pharma Sanofi is expanding its GCC in Hyderabad, India. Sanofi-India will hire specialists in R&D, AI, data innovation & analytics, medical

affairs, commercial capabilities & corporate functions.

French pharma Servier, operated by a French nonprofit foundation, will start production of single pill combinations (SPCs) in India as an entity called GATINN ("gati" = speed, "inn" = innovation in India) under Servier-India. Active pharma ingredients (APIs) will be imported from France, pills will be manufactured by contract manufacturers in India & will be exported to Asia, Latin America, Africa & the Middle East.

Swiss pharma Novartis/NVS is exiting its Indian pharma distribution operations by selling its 70.68% stake in Novartis-India (listed) to private-equity (P-E) firms ChrysCapital (56.45%), WaveRise Investments & Two Infinity Partners. As per regulations, an open market offer from P-E firms will follow for 26%. Novartis cited restructuring of its global businesses. Novartis-Healthcare-India will continue operations that include drug R&D & clinal testing.

AUTOS. French auto-parts supplier Valeo is expanding its footprint significantly (3x) in India for ICE cars & EVs. It will also supply cooling systems (including water-free, 2-phase liquid cooling) for datacenters & other industrial applications. Valeo spends 11.8% of sales for R&D - much higher than typical for auto-parts companies.

ENERGY

First US refinery in 50 years in Brownsville, Texas with a processing capacity of 168K barrels/day of light/sweet US shale oil will be financed by Ambani's Reliance under a 20-year, \$300 billion, 1.2 billion barrels oil deal. Brownsville lacks pipelines for domestic supplies, so much of the refined products may be exported (including to India). The existing US refineries can process middle-grade heavy/

sour crude blend, so most of US shale oil is exported & US has to import heavier crude from elsewhere (Canada, Venezuela, Middle East).

US/Israel-Iran/Lebanon War & related disruptions in the flow of crude oil & LNG are bad for India. There is a small Indian SPR for crude & refined oil, but there is almost none for natural gas. Most of the natural gas storage is imported LNG held only at LNG terminals. Government has ordered refineries to boost natural gas production - normally a byproduct of petroleum refining. Supplies of natural gas to companies, hotels, restaurants have been cut; some have closed temporarily. Despite 30-day waiver by US to purchase Russian container oil, some Indian banks such as SBI are not processing related payments due to potential future risks. If the War is prolonged & oil & gas prices remain high, Indian rupee may weaken to Rs 95 for \$1.

Indian strategic petroleum reserve (SPR) capacity for crude & refined oil is only about 74 days - 9.5 days government capacity (5.33 MMT), 64.5 days corporate capacity. This is quite low! Government is expanding its reserve capacity by another 6.5 MMT. India counts on aggressively buying of oil in multiple markets (OPEC, non-OPEC) but that's risky if there are global disruptions or if oil prices jump a lot. India's proven estimated ultimate recovery (EUR) reserves are 1,948.1 MMT for crude oil & 1,844.3 BCM for natural gas; easily recoverable reserves are 423.1 MMT for crude oil & 595.4 BCM for natural gas. BCM = billion cubic meters, MMT = million metric tonnes, 1 MMT = 7.33 barrels (range 6.8-7.6 depending on crude density).

For more information, see www.ybbpersonalfinance.proboards.com



Everything you need to know about IUHS School of Medicine

● By: Dr. Avi Verma

1. Location: Our study centre is based on the Caribbean island of St. Kitts, but there is no requirement to travel there. The administrative office is in Winnipeg, Canada.

2. Program Structure & Exams:

- ▶ **Preclinical Phase (Years 1 & 2):** Fully online, divided into 11 study blocks. The first block is 12 weeks, the rest are 8 weeks each. After completion, students take the IUHS Exit Exam, and U.S. students also prepare for Step 1.
- ▶ **Clinical Phase (Years 3 & 4):** 80 weeks of rotations—48 weeks core, 32 weeks electives. Students then take the IUHS Exit Exam 2 and officially graduate. U.S. students also take Step 2 before graduation.

3. Assessments:

- ▶ End-of-block graded exams
- ▶ DxR Clinician virtual patient simulation graded assignments
- ▶ Non-graded DAR exams (at the end of Blocks 3, 6, 9) to identify

knowledge gaps.

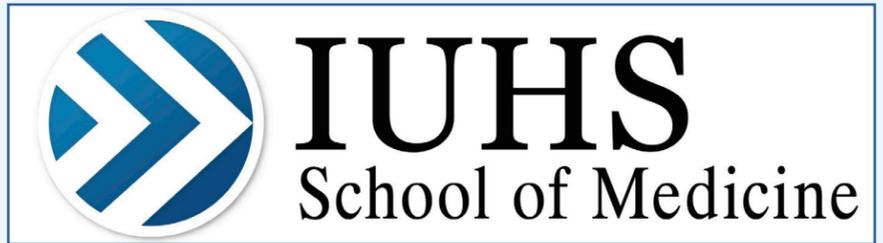
- ▶ Lecturio self-assessments which are mandatory but not graded.

4. Teaching methods:

- ▶ **Systems-based learning:** Integrates anatomy, pathology, and pharmacology within each body system.
- ▶ **Problem-based learning:** Encourages critical thinking and challenges students to draw on all the knowledge they have acquired as they would in a real-life scenario when treating a patient.
- ▶ **Spaced repetition:** Reinforces knowledge through periodic review, enhancing long-term retention.

5. Clinical rotations:

- ▶ U.S. students can complete all rotations at the main affiliated hospital in Chicago, Illinois with additional sites in Texas, West Virginia, California, Nevada, Missouri and Arizona (subject to availability). Clinical rotation preparation starts around Block 8.
- ▶ Australian students have a



dedicated clinical director assisting them with the arrangements for clinical placements.

6. DxR Clinician: is a medical education software designed to help students develop clinical reasoning and diagnostic skills. It provides virtual patient cases that simulate real-life medical scenarios, allowing students to practice taking patient histories, ordering diagnostic tests, making differential diagnoses, and developing treatment plans.

Key Features:

- ▶ Interactive case-based learning with simulated patient encounters
- ▶ Clinical reasoning training to improve diagnostic accuracy
- ▶ Access to medical history, physical exams, and lab results
- ▶ Immediate feedback on decision-making and reasoning DxR Clinician is integrated into IUHS's problem-based learning (PBL) and case-based learning (CBL) curricula to enhance students' ability to apply medical knowledge in real world scenarios.

7. Live lectures: Learn from top-tier professors who also teach at prestigious universities through live, interactive lectures. Sessions are scheduled on weekdays, and if you miss one, you can easily catch up with recorded lectures available in the virtual library at your convenience.

8. Question and Concept Sessions:

In addition to live lectures, students can participate in weekly live Q&C sessions with the academic advisor for their current block of study. These sessions provide valuable support for students studying from home, fostering engagement with both peers and faculty.

9. Lecturio: is a digital learning platform providing medical education resources. It offers a comprehensive, AI-driven learning system designed to support medical education through high-quality video lectures, question banks, and advanced learning tools.

Key Features:

- ▶ Comprehensive Medical Curriculum Support – Covers

preclinical and clinical subjects aligned with USMLE, NBME, and other global medical exams.

- ▶ High-Quality Video Lectures – Taught by expert professors from leading medical institutions.
- ▶ AI-Powered Adaptive Learning – Personalized study recommendations based on student performance.
- ▶ Question Banks & Clinical Case Scenarios – USMLE-style questions, explanations, and performance tracking.
- ▶ Spaced Repetition & Smart Recall – Helps reinforce learning and improve long term retention.

Lecturio supplements the education delivered, improves student performance, and provide flexible, self-paced learning opportunities.

10. Mentorship: IUHS integrates the Integrated Clinical Medicine program into the preclinical years of the MD curriculum, allowing students to gain early exposure to clinical settings. This hands-on experience gives IUHS students a competitive edge over their peers from other universities.

IUHS students become comfortable and confident in a clinical environment before starting clinical rotations having developed the necessary clinical skills. Working alongside a local physician mentor, each student spends 20 hours per month shadowing and discussing cases with their mentor, a doctor from their own community. Under the guidance of IUHS's clinical director, students select a mentor who fits their needs and location. This early integration of clinical skills enhances learning, bridging the gap between theory and practice, and making the transition to full-time clinical training more seamless and rewarding.

11. Get in Touch: You can ask me anything about IUHS if you still have more questions!

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

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



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Want to smell divine all day? Inside the layered fragrance ritual beauty insiders swear by

There are few beauty compliments more satisfying than being told you smell incredible. Unlike bone structure, hair texture or height, scent is entirely within your control, which is why fragrance has become one of the most expressive parts of modern beauty routines. But if your perfume disappears by lunchtime, experts say you are likely missing one key step: layering.

A long-lasting fragrance routine begins long before perfume is applied. It starts in the shower, where a scented body wash sets the foundation.



Creamy florals like rose, crisp spa-like eucalyptus, or warm spicy blends help create a subtle base that clings to freshly cleansed skin.

From there, hydration becomes essential. Applying body lotion on slightly damp skin helps lock in moisture while giving fragrance something to grip onto, extending its wear time significantly.

Next comes body oil, a step often overlooked but crucial for depth and longevity. Oils seal in previous layers and create a soft, radiant finish that enhances scent diffusion throughout the day. Deodorant acts as the invisible anchor, ensuring freshness while blending seamlessly with your chosen fragrance family rather than competing with it.

Finally, perfume becomes the signature moment. Whether you lean toward smoky oud, bright citrus, romantic florals or minimalist skin scents, this final layer sits on top of your carefully built base, evolving beautifully as the day unfolds.

The real artistry lies in harmony, choosing complementary notes so each layer enhances the next instead of overpowering it.

When done right, fragrance layering is not about excess, but intention. It transforms scent from something you wear into something you build, turning your daily routine into a subtle, lasting expression of identity.



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