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M. Singh is first Ind-Am Official of Jersey City, NJ

► Details on page 17

Pak now place of 'uncertainty and fear'

► Details on page 20



Meenakshi Seshadri on RD Burman

► Details on page 26

INDIA POST

SURVEY
survey@indiapost.com

This week's question

Is US nervous with the developing India - Russia - China equation?

Last week's result

Will Russia accept Trump's peace plan with Ukraine?

YES 6% NO 94%

OP SAGAR BANDHU

"NDRF rescues senior citizen, injured woman in Sri Lanka as death toll reaches 465"

COLOMBO: Under the ongoing Operation Sagar Bandhu, a National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team evacuated a visually challenged senior citizen and an injured woman in Sedawatta and Nadeegama following the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah which triggered heavy rains, flash floods and landslides in the island nation.

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As part of the Operation Sagar Bandhu, Indian Naval Ship (INS) Vikrant and INS Udaygiri delivered immediate assistance to people of Sri Lanka and ship-borne helicopters were used to carry out aerial recce of the affected areas and increase search and rescue efforts.

Details on page 5



Four diplomats honored with 'Power of One'

► Details on page 7



Ruby Dhalla, awarded 'Dhee Punjab Di'

► Details on page 9

Air pollution may reduce health benefits

► Details on page 17



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Russian President Vladimir Putin after receiving him, on their way to the Prime Minister's residence, in New Delhi on December 4 (@narendramodi X/ANI Photo)

Details on page 6

CONTENTS

Bollywood	26-27
Classifieds	29
Community Post	8-11
Cover/Top Stories	5-7
Edit Page	28
Immigration Post	20-21
Info/Highlights	4
Life Style	25
OP-ED	24
TechBiz Post	14-15
Real Estate	22-23
Travel & Hospitality Post	31
Wellness Post	16-18



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HIGHLIGHTS

Bollywood:

Meenakshi Seshadri on RD Burman



Actress Meenakshi Seshadri has shared one of her favorite songs by legendary music composer R. D. Burman from the 1980s

26



Lifestyle:

15th International Sand Art Festival

Renowned cultural event, at beautiful Chandrabhaga Beach, commenced near the historic Konark Sun Temple under guidance of Sand Artist Sudarsan Pattnaik

25

Cover Story:

OP SAGAR BANDHU



In statement shared on X, the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka stated, "Under Operation Sagar Bandhu, NDRF teams continued life-saving efforts

5



Techbiz:

Noida Airport inches to inauguration

Noida International Airport has entered its final phase. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security is expected to submit its security inspection report soon

14

Community:

First Indian American elected



Mamta Singh wins Council At-Large seat in Jersey City, becoming the first Indian-American ever elected to public office in city's history

8



Travel

Kashmir

Captivates visitors with Shikara rides and Mughal gardens in Srinagar during summers; autumn's golden hues and skiing in Gulmarg is popular winter activity

31

Immigration:

Place of 'uncertainty and fear'



With arrest of Afghan journalist Hamoon Khamosh and family in Islamabad, Afghanistan Media Support Organization has slammed Pakistani authorities

20



Wellness:

Fit India program

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has credited the 'Fit India Sundays on Cycle' initiative for creating greater awareness about fitness in the country

16

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OP SAGAR BANDHU

"NDRF rescues senior citizen, injured woman in Sri Lanka as death toll reaches 465"

COLOMBO: Under the ongoing Operation Sagar Bandhu, a National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team evacuated a visually challenged senior citizen and an injured woman in Sedawatta and Nadeegama following the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah which triggered heavy rains, flash floods and landslides in the island nation.

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As part of the Operation Sagar Bandhu, Indian Naval Ship (INS) Vikrant and INS Udaygiri delivered immediate assistance to people of Sri Lanka and ship-borne helicopters were used to carry out aerial recce of the affected areas and increase search and rescue efforts.

"In the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah, INS Vikrant and INS Udaygiri at Colombo delivered immediate assistance by providing relief provisions at short notice. Ship-borne helicopters were deployed for aerial recce of the affected areas and augmented ongoing Search and Rescue efforts, leading to successful rescue of Sri Lankan citizens," Spokesperson of the Indian Navy at Naval Headquarters and DPR, Ministry of Defense, posted on X.

"Reinforcing these efforts, INS Sukanya arrived at Trincomalee on 01 Dec



NDRF team recovers the body of a victim from deep under the debris during ongoing search and rescue operations under Operation Sagar Bandhu, following Cyclone Ditwah, in Badulla. (@IndainSL X/ANI Photo)

2025 with critical relief material for handing over to Sri Lankan authorities. These actions reaffirm the Indian Navy's role as the First Responder in Indian Ocean Region in line with India's MAHASAGAR vision and Neighborhood First policy and reaffirm India's enduring resolve to support neighboring nations in times of crisis," it added.

Sri Lanka has experienced extreme weather conditions, flash floods and landslides due to Cyclone Ditwah and the re-

sulting weather system. The death toll in the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah in Sri Lanka has risen to 465, leading Sri Lankan media outlet Daily Mirror reported, citing the Disaster Management Centre (DMC).

The highest number of deaths was reported from Kandy district, where 118 people have died. As many as 366 people continue to remain missing, with majority of them coming from the Matale district. More than 1.5 million people have been

impacted by the cyclone and the floods triggered by it. According to DMC, 232,752 people from more than 61,000 families have been moved to safety centers.

A special gazette has been issued declaring 22 districts severely impacted by Cyclone Ditwah as national disaster areas. The declaration comes after damaged caused by heavy rains, floods and adverse weather conditions in Sri Lanka. *IANS*

India slams Pakistan for making 'ridiculous' airspace denial claims, spreading misinformation

NEW DELHI: India hit out at Pakistan for claiming that New Delhi denied over flight clearance to Pakistani aircraft carrying humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka, terming the Pakistan Foreign Office (PFO) statement as "ridiculous" and yet another attempt of "spreading anti-India misinformation."

In response to media queries regarding Pakistan's statement on over flight clearance, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) noted that India had expeditiously

processed Pakistan's request and granted the over flight permission.

"We reject the ridiculous statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan which is yet another attempt of spreading anti-India misinformation," stated MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal.

"The request for over flight clearance for Pakistani aircraft carrying humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka was received by the High Commission of India in

Islamabad at around 1300 hrs on December 01, 2025. Given the urgency of humanitarian assistance, the Government of India processed the request expeditiously the same day and granted the over flight permission as per the itinerary proposed at 1730 hrs on December 01, 2025," he added.

The MEA expressed India's commitment to assisting the people of Sri Lanka in these challenging times through all available means.

India's strong response came after Pakistan's Foreign Office claimed that India had blocked humanitarian assistance being sent from Pakistan to Sri Lanka and the Pakistani aircraft carrying humanitarian assistance was facing delay for over 60 hours, Pakistan's leading daily Dawn reported.

Sri Lanka has experienced extreme weather conditions, flash floods and landslides due to Cyclone Ditwah and the resulting weather system. *IANS*

India redefined strategy by treating terrorism as an act of war: Report

TELAVIV: India's readiness to impose costs on an ecosystem that enables terrorism without waiting for external validation created new opportunities for enhancing Israel-India strategic coordination, a recent report said.

It added that this marks the emergence of a new Indian playbook—one that the world cannot ignore.

"These shifts matter for Israel. India's new deterrence posture of explicitly rejecting nuclear blackmail, collapsing the line between proxy terror and state responsibility, and demonstrating a willingness to strike early and with precision mirrors many of the principles Israel has relied on for decades," John Spencer, the Executive Director at the US-based Urban Warfare Institute and Lauren Dagan Amoss, an international academic expert on India's foreign and security policy, wrote for an Israeli think tank Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies, affiliated with Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

"Both states face adversaries that use terrorism as a strategic tool under the umbrella of nuclear ambiguity. India's performance in Sindoor, especially its defeat of Chinese-origin PL-15 missiles and HQ-9/P air defenses, provides operational insights that are directly relevant to Israel as

"These shifts matter for Israel. India's new deterrence posture of explicitly rejecting nuclear blackmail, collapsing the line between proxy terror and state responsibility, and demonstrating a willingness to strike early and with precision mirrors many of the principles Israel has relied on for decades"

Chinese technology expands across the Middle East. The emerging convergence is not rhetorical; it is doctrinal," they added.

According to the experts, for nearly a decade, India has been abandoning the doctrine of strategic restraint. The pattern of responses to major Pakistan-based

terrorist attacks, including Uri in 2016, Balakot in 2019, and Pahalgam in 2025, underscored that predictable retaliation was not deterring cross-border terrorism but was enabling it. Restraint, once viewed as stabilizing, had become strategically risky.

"Indian strategic restraint was designed to prevent escalation with Pakistan. In practice, it did the opposite. Terror groups backed by Pakistan's security agencies exploited the firebreak between terrorism and state aggression on the assumption that India would avoid decisive retaliation or cross-border action. Limited

responses produced predictable patterns, and predictability invited more violence," said the experts.

Spencer and Amoss noted that India has shifted from its earlier approach to a doctrine of compellence, treating major attacks as acts of war. The move was made explicit during Operation Sindoor, when the Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that major terrorist attacks would be met with a wartime response rather than handled as matters for law enforcement.

"The government no longer waits for lengthy attribution cycles or international pressure before acting. Pre-emption is considered a sovereign right. During Operation Sindoor, India struck early and deep, using long-range fire, drone swarms, loitering munitions, and real-time fused intelligence. The operation broke the old template and signaled a permanent doctrinal change," they mentioned. *IANS*

"Aim to elevate cooperation with India": Putin ahead of visit to New Delhi

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Moscow aims to "elevate cooperation" with India and China to a "qualitatively new level."

Putin's remarks come ahead of his visit to India from December 4-5 for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Speaking at an investment forum in Moscow recently, Putin said the objective of the numerous joint projects in energy, industry, space, agriculture, and other sectors is to elevate the ties with Beijing and New Delhi.

"We aim to elevate cooperation with the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India to a qualitatively new level by strengthening its technological component. This is the objective of numerous joint projects in energy, industry, space, agriculture, and other sectors," he said.

Putin further said that he has established substantive dialogue on economic issues with Chinese President Xi Jinping and look to continue the same with PM Modi during his visit.

"We have established a substantive dialogue on economic issues with the President of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Xi Jinping. We will also discuss



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives Russian President Vladimir Putin, at Palam airport in New Delhi on December 4. (DD/ANI Video Grab)

these topics in detail during the upcoming visit to India with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, including increasing imports of Indian goods to our market," he said.

During his India visit, Putin will attend the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit and hold talks with PM Modi.

Earlier, Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that the sale of additional S-400 long-range anti-aircraft missiles

could be on the agenda during the visit.

"Highly on the agenda and this could be discussed. Our military industry is working pretty well. Russian arms 36 % in Indian armed forces and hopefully will continue," Peskov said.

Russia also hopes to discuss the possibility of India acquiring the Su-57 fifth-generation stealth fighter.

"SU- 57 is the best plane in the world. SU57 will be on the agenda," said Peskov

"As far as our cooperation in the defense industry goes, let's remember famous Brahmos missiles. It's not only just production or it's not only acts of buying or selling, it's exchange of high technologies, and it really paves the way for a bright future in this field of cooperation. We're developing quite, quite a variety of very complicated systems. And in this sense, of course, we have capabilities. We are ready to share this with our Indian friends, our experience," he added.

Kremlin Spokesperson Peskov also said that there was the possibility of an agreement on Nuclear energy between India and Russia during the President's visit.

"There will be an offer for small reactor. Russia possess important tech small and flexible reactor. Russia has real experience in producing small reactors. We're exchanging mutual investments, joint investments and it makes this kind of cooperation even more valuable for our countries, in terms for securing future of this country. We were deeply involved in creating a sector of peaceful nuclear energy in India, in Kudankulam, and so we were hoping for the continuation of this project," Peskov said. *ANI*

"Dawn of a new era," says von der Leyen as EU moves toward full energy independence from Russia

BRUSSELS: The European Union announced it is entering a "new era" by phasing out all Russian gas and oil imports, with gas imports to stop by autumn 2027, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Wednesday (Dec. 3).

"This is the dawn of a new era, the era of Europe's full energy independence from Russia," von der Leyen told reporters following an overnight agreement between European Union institutions.

This plan includes a ban on new long-term Russian gas pipeline contracts by September 30, 2027, and LNG contracts by January 1, 2027. The bloc is also drafting a separate plan to end Russian oil imports by the end of 2027.

European Union Energy Commissioner Dan Jorgensen posted on X that "We've made it: Europe is turning off the tap on Russian gas, forever," and added, "We've chosen energy security and independence for Europe."

This agreement is part of the REPowerEU Plan launched in 2022 to reduce dependency on Russian energy following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Under the deal, long-term pipeline gas contracts will stop from 30 September 2027 if storage levels allow, and in any

case by 1 November 2027. Long-term liquefied natural gas agreements will end from 1 January 2027, with short-term liquefied natural gas contracts ending from 25 April 2026 and short-term pipeline gas contracts finishing from 17 June 2026.

A European Council statement said the measure aims "to end dependency on

oil imports in 2022 but granted exemptions to Hungary and Slovakia due to their landlocked status. The shift away from Russian fuel comes almost four years after the invasion of Ukraine, as Brussels works to cut a major source of revenue linked to energy supplies.

Russian gas accounted for 45 percent

"This is the dawn of a new era, the era of Europe's full energy independence from Russia," von der Leyen told reporters following an overnight agreement between European Union institutions

Russian energy following Russia's weaponisation of gas supplies with significant effects on the European energy market." The timeline still requires final approval from both the European Parliament and member states.

European companies will be able to use "force majeure" provisions to legally exit existing contracts under the ban. The deal also asks the European Commission to prepare a plan to phase out Russian oil supplies to Hungary and Slovakia by the end of 2027.

The European Union reduced Russian

of the European Union's imports in 2021, but declined to 19 percent in 2024. While pipeline deliveries have decreased, liquefied natural gas transported by sea and fed into European systems continues to arrive.

The United States supplied 45 percent of liquefied natural gas imports in 2024, while Russia supplied 20 percent, equal to nearly 20 billion cubic meters out of approximately 100 billion. Imports of Russian liquefied natural gas into the European Union were still expected to total around 15 billion euros this year. ANI

US decision to exclude SA from 2026 G20 Summit sparks fear of North-South divide: Report

JOHANNESBURG: With tensions rising between Washington and Pretoria, potential mediators, such as Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia, the UK, and South Korea, must step in to push for reconciliation and failure to do so could push the G20 towards a North-South divide, a report said.

The US, slated to chair the next G20 summit and the only member absent from the 2025 Johannesburg meeting, announced on November 27 that it would not invite South Africa's President to the Miami Summit. The decision sparked a reaction of both hurt and indignation, raising questions about the immediate future of the G20.

According to a report in Indian think tank Politeia Research Foundation, as the emerging economies played an increasingly significant role in global platforms, the consecutive G20 presidencies of --Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa - underscored how the forum has evolved into a more inclusive and balanced body in its agenda and priorities.

It added that by granting full member-

ship to the African Union during India's 2022-23 presidency, along with Voice of Global South Summits hosted by India, underscored the G20's tilt towards the South - a trend that reached its peak under South Africa's presidency.

"As the country that handled its G20 presidency effectively, and the nation whose leader has participated in every G20 summit since 2014, India and Prime

pointed out the weaknesses in the existing global development model and called for a redefinition of "the parameters of development," which he said could be achieved by following "the pathway of Integral Humanism." PM Modi also pressed for a stronger voice for the Global South in global governance, outlining a three-point agenda for sustainable development, trusted trade and inclusive prosperity.

The US, slated to chair the next G20 summit and the only member absent from the 2025 Johannesburg meeting, announced on November 27 that it would not invite South Africa's President to the Miami Summit

Minister Narendra Modi drew considerable diplomatic and media attention in Johannesburg," wrote Rajiv Bhatia, a former Ambassador who served in Myanmar, Mexico, Kenya, and South Africa.

During his multiple interventions at the summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Four diplomats honored with 'Power of One' awards at UN

WASHINGTON: Four distinguished diplomats from different countries were honored with the 2025 Power of One Awards at the United Nations headquarters in New York, in the presence of India's Permanent Representative Parvathaneni Harish.

The annual award, bestowed by Diwali Foundation USA and hosted this year by the Permanent Mission of Georgia, recognizes leaders who have worked "to form a more perfect, peaceful and secure world for all," reflecting the core aspirations of the UN Charter.

This year's honorees were Jonathan R. Cohen, former Acting Permanent Representative of the United States to the UN; Dennis Francis, the 78th President of the UN General Assembly and former Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago; Darja Bavdaz-Kuret, former Permanent Representative of Slovenia; and Magzhan Ilyassov, former Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Harish spoke of the symbolism of celebrating Diwali at the UN during a turbulent moment for the international system.

"The spirit of Diwali... indicates that light shall prevail over darkness," he said, urging member states to "find ways to work together to face the challenges and to overcome those challenges... for every person around the world who needs help."

He stressed the need for collective action to reduce conflict, safeguard the environment and advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Even as 2030 looks a distant goal, we will do all we can and we must to achieve these goals," he noted.

Harish also paid tribute to Ranju Batra, chair of Diwali Foundation USA, whose decade-long campaign led to the creation of the historic Diwali postage stamp in the United States and later inspired the Power of One Awards.

"One individual who had a mission... sought out hands of collaboration," he said, commending her perseverance through "the difficult and arduous path" that resulted in a stamp widely seen as a symbol of cultural inclusion. IANS

Indian envoy hosts farewell reception for US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor

WASHINGTON: Indian envoy to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, hosted a farewell reception for US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor at India House and extended him wishes for his assignment in New Delhi.

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and US Senator Jim Risch, and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and US Representative Brian Mast were present on the occasion.

In a post on X, Kwatra stated, "Honored to host a farewell reception for Ambassador Sergio Gor at India House tonight. Wished him well for his assignment in New Delhi. Grateful for the presence of Senator Risch, Chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Representative Brian Mast, Chairman of House Foreign Affairs Committee on the occasion."

Details on page 10

US moves to restrict access to classified files in Tellis prosecution

Details on page 10

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

8 India Post

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December 5, 2025

Leading Indian jewelry brand opens its largest US store in Virginia



Details on page 11

Mamta Singh becomes first Indian American elected in Jersey City

WASHINGTON: In a milestone moment for one of the United States' largest Indian American population centers, Mamta Singh this week won a Council At-Large seat in Jersey City, becoming the first Indian American ever elected to public office in the city's history.

Her victory came on a night of sweeping political change, as reform-driven Councilmember James Solomon won the mayoral runoff with a commanding mandate. But for the diaspora, Singh's breakthrough stood out as the story of the evening.

Jersey City is home to tens of thousands of Indian Americans -- many settled across Journal Square, Exchange Place and surrounding neighborhoods -- yet the community had never before seen one of its own elected to City Hall.

Notably, Jersey City is often called the 'Little India', in particu-



Mamta Singh

lar, its Indian India Square.

Singh's win closes that gap and marks a long-awaited moment of visibility and representation for a community that has helped shape the city's economic and cultural footprint over

decades.

Singh, who ran on Solomon's 'Team Solomon' slate alongside Rolando Lavarro and Michael Griffin, campaigned on stabilizing property taxes, expanding recreation programs for youth and

strengthening services for working families. Her roots in community advocacy, however, are what resonated most strongly with diaspora families.

A nonprofit leader and organizer, Singh founded JCFamilies, one of Jersey City's most active grassroots groups, focused on women, children and working parents.

She also created Indians In Jersey City, which supports immigrant families and preserves Indian culture through festivals, gatherings and community forums. Over the years, she became a trusted bridge between newly arrived immigrants and longtime residents navigating schools, services and city life.

Singh's historic win unfolded alongside Solomon's decisive victory over former New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey. IANS

No ads, no timers, no flashing: BasuTots redefines early digital learning

India Post News Service

FREMONT, CA: What began as everyday conversations with parents and educators at a neighborhood daycare has turned into a new kind of learning app for toddlers. Fremont resident and founder Basu Ghosh

or dopamine-driven reward loops to keep kids tapping, BasuTots uses gentle puzzles that adapt to each child's pace. There are no ads, no external tracking, and no overstimulation features.

Ghosh, who volunteered alongside caregivers and spent

said. "They need calm guidance and tiny wins. When a child completes a puzzle without pressure, they feel confident - and that confidence stays with them even after the screen turns off."

Local teachers who participated in early trials reported calmer transitions after screen time, fewer tears, and more curiosity when children encountered a puzzle they didn't solve right away. In beta testing with local families, children using BasuTots showed 56% longer uninterrupted learning sessions compared to their experience with traditional educational apps.

At the center of the experience is BasuBot, a friendly digital guide who encourages effort, but doesn't evaluate or rank children.

The app includes 10 learning journeys-shapes, patterns, colors, shadows, and numbers-and allows parents to create up to four child profiles at myBasuTots.com. Parents can monitor puzzles

a new set of examples.

BasuTots is available now on iOS and Android.

Before building BasuTots, Ghosh spent 13 years as a Senior Director at Visa, leading AI and global platform initiatives. A named inventor on five granted patents with advanced certifications from MIT and Harvard, he left corporate work to step into childcare environments to understand how toddlers actually respond to digital content-not how adults think they do.

"The happiest moment wasn't the bright animations," he said. "It was when a toddler quietly said, 'I did it.' That's when I knew this idea mattered."

Ghosh, who volunteered alongside caregivers and spent months, closely observing toddlers at Bright Star Home Daycare in the Ardenwood area, says the idea grew from what he saw firsthand

has launched BasuTots, an AI-powered app that promotes calm, screen-safe learning for children ages 2 to 6.

Unlike many children's apps that use flashing colors, timers,



Basu Ghosh

completed, time spent learning, and skill development through a simple dashboard. Activities can be reset at any time to encourage repeated practice and mastery with

Former Canadian MP, Ruby Dhalla, honored with 'Dhee Punjab Di' award in Phagwara

ASHOK KAURA
India Post News Service

PHAGWARA: Former Canadian Member of Parliament Ruby Dhalla was honored with the prestigious 'Dhee Punjab Di' Award during a special ceremony held in Phagwara recently. The award is presented by the Punjabi Kala and Sahit Centre and, Sangeet Darpan (the monthly magazine), in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the promotion of Punjabi language, culture and global representation of the Punjabi community.

Speaking at the event, Principal Gurmeet Singh Palahi, President of the Punjabi Columnist Journalist Manch (Regd.) said, the Punjabi diaspora across the world has achieved remarkable success through dedication and hard work in fields such as business, agriculture and even politics. He noted that Ruby Dhalla stands as an inspiring example among these achievers, having been elected four times, as a Member of Parliament, on the ticket of the Liberal Party of Canada. He further mentioned that she emerged as a mature and influential contender, during the party's leadership considerations for the post of Prime Minister of Canada.

Dr. Akshita Gupta (IAS), Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation Phagwara, congratulated Dhalla on receiving the



Dr. Akshita Gupta (Commissioner), Taranjeet Singh Kinnra (President), Haripal Singh (Chairman), Principal Gurmeet Singh Palahi and others felicitate former MP Ruby Dhalla with the "Dhee Punjab Di" Award

'Dhee Punjab Di' Award and commended her for bringing honor to women at an international level. President Taranjeet Singh Kinnra also praised Dhalla for safeguarding and promoting Punjab, Punjabi language and Punjabi identity across the world.

Expressing her gratitude during the ceremony, Ruby Dhalla said she feels proud to have dedicated her life to social service through politics, always prioritizing the

welfare of Punjabis, as well as, the people of Canada. She stated she has consistently advocated for the rights of the needy, the elderly and all those who face challenges and marginalization in society.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Harvinder Basra, who appreciated the presence of all dignitaries and guests. Many prominent personalities attended the ceremony, including Advocate Vijay Sharma, Advocate S.L. Viridi,

Ravinder Rai, Baldev Komal, Haripal Singh (Chairman), Jagjit Singh Jaura, Chetan Bajaj, Sarabjit Kanda, Amit Taneja, Karamail Singh, Bhupinder Singh Kaali, Rimple Puri and Malkiat Singh Ragbotra. Ruby Dhalla was honored with a commemorative memento, a traditional robe of honor (siropa), and a set of books by the Punjabi Kala and Sahit Centre. Members of the Banga Road Market Association also presented her with a special honor.

Indian envoy holds 'fruitful' talks with bipartisan US Senators, discusses defense, trade ties

WASHINGTON: India's Ambassador to the United States, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, hosted a bipartisan group of US Senators and engaged in productive discussions about the bilateral partnership, covering areas such as energy, defense and trade.

The group of US Senators included Republicans Lindsey Graham, Dan

and Markwayne Mullin this evening at the India House. Had fruitful conversations on the India-US partnership, from energy and defense cooperation to trade and important global developments. Grateful for their support for a stronger India-US relationship," Kwatra recently posted on X.

The Indian Ambassador also held a

of Staff. We had an engaging conversation about our bilateral defense cooperation and regional issues of mutual interest," Kwatra posted on X.

Last week, Kwatra held a wide-ranging conversation on the bilateral economic engagement agenda with Jacob Helberg, the 22nd US Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

Taking to X, the Indian Ambassador said, "Congratulated US Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg on assuming his responsibilities. Had a wide-ranging conversation on our bilateral economic engagement agenda, including a mutually beneficial trade deal, strategic trade dialogue, and technology cooperation, including AI."

On November 24, Ambassador Kwatra met US Representative Jay Obernolte and highlighted opportunities for bilateral cooperation in science, tech, innovation and AI. IANS

The group of US Senators included Republicans Lindsey Graham, Dan Sullivan and Markwayne Mullin, and Democrats Peter Welch, Richard Blumenthal, and Sheldon Whitehouse at India House in Washington

Sullivan and Markwayne Mullin, and Democrats Peter Welch, Richard Blumenthal, and Sheldon Whitehouse at India House in Washington.

"Honored to host Senators Lindsey Graham, Richard Blumenthal, Sheldon Whitehouse, Peter Welch, Dan Sullivan

meeting with General Dan Caine, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, discussing defense cooperation between India and the US and regional issues of shared interest.

"Had a pleasant meeting with General Dan Caine, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs

US authorities issue arrest detainer for Indian truck driver involved in Oregon accident

WASHINGTON DC: American immigration officials have asked for custody of an Indian truck driver involved in a fatal motorway accident in Oregon that killed two people in the United States.

Kumar is currently lodged in Deschutes County jail as he faces criminal charges linked to the fatal accident. The US' Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has stated that it will take steps for the custody of Kumar if he is released by local authorities.

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said Kumar entered the country "illegally" through Arizona in November 2022 and was subsequently granted work authorization and a commercial driving license by California state authorities. ANI

Indian envoy hosts farewell reception for US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor

WASHINGTON: Indian envoy to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, hosted a farewell reception for US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor at India House and extended him wishes for his assignment in New Delhi.

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and US Senator Jim Risch, and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and US Representative Brian Mast were present on the occasion.

In a post on X, Kwatra stated, "Honored to host a farewell reception for Ambassador Sergio Gor at India House tonight. Wished him well for his assignment in New Delhi. Grateful for the presence of Senator Risch, Chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Representative Brian Mast, Chairman of House Foreign Affairs Committee on the occasion. Also thanked other friends and well-wishers from the administration who joined the celebration, for their steadfast support to the relationship."

Congratulating Gor for his New Delhi assignment, Kwatra took to X and said, "I wish you the best as you prepare to take up your assignment in New Delhi. Pleasure to join the celebration at Kennedy Centre last evening to mark the occasion."

Earlier in November, US President Donald Trump hosted Gor's swearing-in ceremony at the White House. He was sworn in by Vice President JD Vance, and senior members of the Trump administration, such as Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, attended the ceremony.

During the event, Trump said he is very close to signing a trade agreement with India.

"We are making a deal with India, a much different deal than we had in the past... We're getting a fair deal, just a fair trade deal. We're getting close... I think we're pretty close to doing a deal that's good for everybody," Trump added.

Trump also said that he has a "fantastic relationship with Prime Minister Modi" and termed India one of America's most "im-



portant international relationships."

"I'm trusting Sergio to help strengthen one of our country's most important international relationships, and that's the strategic partnership with the Republic of India. It's a big deal. India is home to one of the world's oldest civilizations, the largest country in the world... We have a fantastic relationship with Prime Minister Modi, and Sergio has only enhanced that, because he's already friendly with the Prime Minister," Trump said.

Trump added that India is an "amazing

country" which is also "an important economic and strategic security partner in the Indo-Pacific region."

"So I know you are (Gor) going to have a great success over this, a very important relationship... It's also the fastest-growing middle class, and it's an important economic and strategic security partner in the Indo-Pacific region. It's an amazing country," he noted.

Gor thanked Trump for nominating him for the Ambassador's position and vowed to enhance the India-US relationship.

"I've been at your side for many years, and I will continue to be there, and it's just an incredible honor, and I look forward to enhancing the relationship between our two nations," he added.

Confirmed by a Senate vote in October, the 38-year-old Gor is the youngest US ambassador to India. He is one of the closest aides of Trump and was the Director of the White House Presidential Personnel Office, entrusted with vetting more than 4,000 posts in the new Trump administration. *IANS*

US moves to restrict access to classified files in Tellis prosecution

WASHINGTON: The US government has asked a federal court in Virginia to impose tight controls on classified material in the criminal case against Indian American strategic analyst Ashley J. Tellis, whose arrest this month sent ripples through policy and academic circles in Washington's South Asian community.

In a filing submitted to the Eastern District of Virginia last week, federal prosecu-

tors said the court is required under the Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA) to "issue an order to protect against the disclosure of any classified information disclosed by the United States to any defendant in any criminal case in a district court of the United States."

They told the judge the proposed protective order is necessary "to protect the national security" and would regulate discovery "by restricting the use and dissemination of classified documents and information obtained through discovery".

Earlier in November, Tellis was arrested in Northern Virginia following a federal inquiry into his alleged handling of classified material. He made his initial appearance before a magistrate judge soon after his detention.

A respected figure in the Indian-American policy world, Tellis has been a familiar presence in debates on US-In-

dia relations, Asian security, and America's strategic posture in the Indo-Pacific. His writings and government service made him a well-known voice across Washington's think tanks and academic networks.

As per the court documents, Tellis and his attorneys have reviewed the document and agreed, at least initially, to proceed under its terms.

The government noted that "the defense consents to its terms for now, in the hope that the consent will accelerate the production of at least some of the classified documents." However, his legal team has flagged "reservations about certain provisions of this order."

The filing adds that the defense "reserves its right to challenge any decision by the government to deny access, for defense counsel or for the defendant, to certain classified documents". *IANS*

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Leading Indian jewelry brand opens its largest US store in Virginia

WASHINGTON: A leading Indian jewelry brand has opened its largest showroom in the United States, marking a major expansion of its US presence as it seeks to cater to the growing Indian diaspora in the region.

Tanishq, the Tata Group's flagship jewelry brand, opened its first showroom in the Greater Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Formally inaugurated by India's Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, along with Virginia State Senator Kannan Srinivasan and several others, the Virginia store is the largest of this popular Indian jewelry brand owned by the Tata Group.

With this launch, the brand now operates eight stores across the United States.

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Kwatra, who presided as the chief guest and Srinivasan were joined by Michael McCabe, Resident Director, Tata Sons, North America. Store executives and community members filled the brightly lit showroom as the ceremonial ribbon was cut under a large gold chandelier.

Tanishq officials said the Tysons location—spread across nearly 5,000 square feet—quietly opened its doors to customers on August 8. Since then, the response, according to company leaders, has ex-



ceeded expectations.

The launch of Tanishq's story comes at a time when Indian companies are steadily increasing their investments and operational presence across the United States.

Speaking at the event, Suchita Sonalika, Director and Head-North America at the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), described it as amazing story of Indian companies expanding their footprint in the US. Indian companies' resilience and their investments stay strong in this country.

"We are so happy to see this Indian strength of investment stays strong in this country, allowing us to build a stronger narrative of our investments, of our job creation and of course local impact in the US," Sonalika added, noting that around 160 Indian companies have invested \$40 billion in the United States.

The new showroom in Tysons is among the brand's largest in the country, and features more than 5,000 unique pieces. From everyday wear to bridal sets and high-end cocktail jewelry, the selection is

designed to appeal to a cross-section of customers.

Tanishq plans to open two more flagship stores later this month: Orlando, Florida, and Boston, Massachusetts. It has set an ambitious goal of establishing more than 30 luxury boutiques across the country.

Earlier this year, the brand launched stores in Redmond, Washington, and Atlanta, Georgia, adding to its existing presence in New Jersey, Houston, Dallas and Chicago. *IANS*

Indian national sentenced to prison in US for \$1.17 million Medicare fraud

WASHINGTON: An Indian national who admitted to orchestrating a multimillion-dollar Medicare fraud through a Washington-based diagnostic lab was sentenced to two years in federal prison, US Attorney Charles Neil Floyd announced.

Mohammed Asif, 35, who was taken into custody on April 10, 2025, at Chicago O'Hare International Airport as he attempted to board an international flight, has been ordered to pay \$1,174,813 in restitution. He now faces likely deportation after completing his sentence.

Asif pleaded guilty on September 4 to conspiracy to commit health care fraud tied to the operations of American Labworks LLC, a now-defunct diagnostic testing laboratory in Everett, Washington.

US District Judge James L. Robart, delivering the sentence, described the \$1,174,813 fraud loss as "a significant amount of money. It was money that was

siphoned out of the Medicare system, which is designed to treat the elderly and the poor... (The defendant) lacks moral character as a knowing participant in the fraud... He is someone the public needs to be protected from."

Prosecutors said Asif and his co-conspirators billed Medicare for COVID-19 and other respiratory tests that were neither ordered nor performed. US Attorney Floyd said, "Mr Asif participated in a scheme to steal more than a million dollars from Medicare -- funds that are meant to be used for important medical care."

He added, "Regrettably, schemes like this one are not unique. Medicare is a constant target of fraud, and the harm to the United States and taxpayers is substantial. We will continue to investigate and prosecute such fraud schemes."

According to court filings, Washington state records show American Labworks

was formed in October 2021 and dissolved in March 2025. Its license as a Medical Test Site expired in December 2023. Throughout this period, Asif was listed as the owner and director with the state and Medicare.

Claims data from April to December 2024 show that the lab billed Medicare more than \$8.7 million for diagnostic services and received over \$1.1 million in

payouts. Complaints soon followed. Between June 2024 and March 2025, Medicare logged more than 200 complaints from beneficiaries and others about the lab.

Some beneficiaries reported charges for tests they never received. One enrollee said Medicare paid American Labworks \$545 for COVID-19 tests in August 2023 and March 2024, even though they were never tested on those dates. *IANS*

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India now home to nearly 2 lakh startups amid robust reforms: Govt

NEW DELHI: India's startup ecosystem continues to expand at a steady pace, with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recognizing 1,97,692 startups as on October 31, 2025, the Parliament was informed.

Nearly two lakh startups have been formally recognized under the Startup India initiative, which was launched in 2016 to promote entrepreneurship and ease doing business, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha.

Along with rising numbers, startups have also emerged as a major source of job creation.

Till October 31, recognized startups have reported creating more than 21.11 lakh direct jobs.

Maharashtra remains a leading hub, with 34,444 recognized startups that have generated over 3.76 lakh jobs -- one of the highest in the country.

The government has also shared key achievements of the Startup India initiative, which include efforts to improve access to funding, simplify regulations and strengthen support systems.

Three major schemes -- Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS), and the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS) -- are actively supporting ventures at different stages. *IANS*

Apple appoints Amar Subramanya as vice president of AI

CUPERTINO: Apple has announced to appoint renowned AI researcher Amar Subramanya as vice president of AI, reporting to Craig Federighi.

The company said that John Giannandrea, Apple's senior vice president for Machine Learning and AI Strategy, is stepping down from his position and will serve as an advisor to the company before retiring in the spring of 2026. *IANS*



Amar Subramanya

Noida Airport set for DGCA green light, inches closer to inauguration

GREATER NOIDA: Preparations for the operationalization of the Noida International Airport have entered its final phase. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) is expected to submit its security inspection report to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) soon.

If the DGCA finds the report satisfactory, the long-awaited aerodrome license may be issued on December 4, clearing a major hurdle ahead of the airport's inauguration.

According to officials, the airport inauguration is expected within a week of receiving the license, although the Uttar Pradesh government has not yet finalized the official date of inauguration.

The launch event is likely to be a high-profile ceremony attended by senior leaders from both the state and central governments.

Shailendra Bhatia, nodal officer for Noida International Airport Limited (NIAL), said the



BCAS team conducted a meticulous two-day inspection of security preparations. Some technical gaps identified earlier were re-evaluated recently during a comprehensive reassessment of the airport's high-end security installations.

He said the inspection covered

baggage and passenger screening systems; CCTV surveillance and access control points; perimeter security; anti-hijacking mechanisms; bomb disposal infrastructure, and 3D radar systems.

According to Bhatia, the security systems were found to be effective, and the BCAS has pre-

pared its report accordingly.

He added that all construction work under the airport's first phase -- spanning 1,334 hectares and including the runway, taxiways, terminal building, and parking facilities -- has been completed.

Key technical trials, including the baggage handling system, boarding processes, security checks, and passenger management protocols, have also been completed successfully, he said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had reviewed the progress on November 27 and instructed officials to speed up the remaining work and the licensing process.

In its first phase, the airport will begin with domestic passenger flights and cargo operations. However, international flights and additional facilities will be rolled out in subsequent phases.

The opening of the Noida International Airport is expected to significantly reduce air traffic pressure on airports in Western Uttar Pradesh and Delhi-NCR, while also boosting employment and business opportunities across the region. *IANS*

Air India staff linked to flying A320 plane with expired license de-rostered

NEW DELHI: Air India executives linked to the incident of allowing a 164-seater Airbus A320 plane with an expired airworthiness license to undertake eight commercial flights in November, have been de-rostered from service till the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) completes its investigation into the lapse, the regulator said.

The DGCA said it has instituted an investigation and instructed the operator to ground the aircraft.

"The Airworthiness Review Certificate process is in progress. Concerned personnel

have been de-rostered with immediate effect pending investigation. Air India, on the instructions of the DGCA, is carrying out an internal investigation to identify deficiencies in their system and put corrective measures in place to prevent such failures from occurring in future," the DGCA said

in a statement.

The Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisation (CAMO) within Air India is entrusted with issuing the Airworthiness Review Certificate (ARC) annually to ensure that the Certificate of Airworthiness remains valid.

According to the DGCA state-

ment, "ARC is issued annually in respect of an aircraft after a comprehensive review of its maintenance records, physical condition and verification of compliance with all airworthiness standards. It acts as a validation of the aircraft's main Certificate of Airworthiness."

The statement said that when Vistara was merged into Air India in 2024, it was decided that the first post-merger ARC of all 70 Vistara aircraft would be reviewed and renewed by the regulator itself and not by the delegated authority within Air India. *IANS*



Auto sector shines in festive quarter; PV sales up 12 pc, two-wheelers 18 pc

NEW DELHI: The Indian automobile sector witnessed a robust festive season (September + October + November) as passenger vehicle (PV) wholesale was up 12 percent year-on-year (YoY) and retail was up 15 percent, while two-wheeler (2W) wholesale was up 9 percent YoY and retail up 18 percent YoY, a recent report.

This implies inventory is manageable, and December could be another strong month with low discounts.

The 2W witnessed continued demand, especially in entry-level segments during the period, HSBC Global Investment Research said in its report.

"PV demand has been good so far, but we have yet to see any meaningful growth from first-time buyers or entry-level segments. If this trend persists, we might see an increase in discounts in the fourth quarter," the report added.

CV sales growth was strong on the back of pent-up demand post monsoon, and the medium-heavy commercial vehicle (MHCVs) to grow by 5-6 percent YoY



in FY26.

Among four-wheelers, Maruti's overall volumes rose 26 percent YoY, as domestic sales grew 21 percent and exports by 61 percent. Within domestic sales, car sales increased by 19 percent YoY, but UVs declined by 23 percent YoY.

M&M's SUV wholesale was 56.3k units, up 22 percent. Tata's PV volumes grew 26 percent YoY, with EVs up 52 percent. Meanwhile, Hyundai domestic sales rose 4.3 percent, while its exports were up 35.2 percent in November.

Among the two-wheeler manufactur-

ers, Bajaj's domestic 2W volume was flat YoY, while exports were up 7.7 percent. TVS' 2W volumes rose 27 percent YoY, with domestic volumes growing at 20 percent and exports at 52 percent. Meanwhile, RE's domestic volume increased 25 percent YoY, and exports by 2.4 percent YoY.

At the same time, tractor manufacturer M&M's domestic volume grew by 33 percent, while Escorts' grew by 16 percent YoY. M&M's exports increased 8.8 percent, while Escorts grew 88 percent YoY on a smaller base.

The overall commercial vehicle (CV) volumes for key original manufacturers (OEMs) rose 28 percent YoY, with light commercial vehicles (LCVs) up by 29 percent, MHCVs up 33 percent YoY, and buses up 10.5 percent.

Tata Motors' truck sales rose 34.5 percent, and overall CV sales were up 35.6 percent. Eicher's HCV truck domestic CV volumes rose 41 percent, and its overall CV sales were up 36 percent. *IANS*

India firms rapidly scaling AI amid need for stronger governance and security: Report

NEW DELHI: India Inc. is rapidly scaling AI, fueled by global tailwinds, competition and advances in GenAI technologies, a recent report said, noting that AI now cuts across customer engagement, operational optimization and mission-critical processes in multiple sectors.

Yet adoption remains fragmented, with only 15 percent of organizations having extensive enterprise-wide AI deployment.

"While AI will continue growing, oversight is not keeping pace with it. In many organizations, AI infrastructure is expanding faster than the governance, security and ethical safeguards needed, creating widening gaps in accountability and risk management," Alvarez & Marsal (A&M), a global professional services firm, said in its report.

Meanwhile, governance maturity remains limited despite rising usage.

While 60 percent of organizations have introduced basic governance or acceptable-use policies, only 19 percent have carried out detailed risk assessments, and 81 percent still lack full visibility of how their AI systems are monitored or governed, the report noted.

With many AI initiatives developed in silos, accountability and standards vary widely, especially when third-party and in-

house models coexist.

The report highlighted the need for integrated, organization-wide governance frameworks that embed transparency, oversight and clear role ownership.



"AI is now embedded deeper into business processes and decision systems than ever before. India's AI opportunity is substantial but its long-term gains depend on how effectively organizations govern and secure the systems they deploy," said Dhruv Phophalia, MD and India Lead - Disputes and Investi-

gations, Alvarez & Marsal.

Those who invest early in these foundations will be best placed to unlock the full economic and competitive potential of AI, he added.

According to the report, responsible AI principles are widely acknowledged; however, their implementation remains limited.

Fewer than 20 percent of organizations have deployed mechanisms for explainability, bias detection or fairness, and 60 percent lack any formal process to validate model integrity. *IANS*

India can help tackle digital inequality, build an inclusive AI future for world: UNDP

NEW DELHI: India is well positioned to tackle digital inequality and shape an inclusive transition in Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the world, said a new United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report released recently.

While AI is advancing at a historic pace, strong digital ecosystems in some countries and limited connectivity, skills, and infrastructure in others are widening gaps.

The report, focused on the Asia Pacific region, warned that without deliberate action, AI could widen gaps in income, opportunity, and governance, reversing years of progress in reducing global inequality.

However, it showed that India's digital public infrastructure, expanding AI research ecosystem, and large technology workforce provide a strong foundation to scale AI for public value.

"India's digital strengths give it a head start in building an AI future that works for everyone. AI is already strengthening public health, improving climate resilience, and supporting better services. *IANS*

424 living with HIV/AIDS in Mongolia

ULAN BATOR: A total of 424 HIV carriers and AIDS patients are now living in Mongolia, the country's National Center for Communicable Diseases (NCCD) said.

A total of 36 new HIV cases were recorded in the first 11 months of 2025, the NCCD said in a statement issued in observance of World AIDS Day, marked annually on December 1.



The majority of the HIV-infected are aged between 20 and 44. About 99.7 percent of the infections resulted from sexual transmission.

The first case of HIV infection in Mongolia was registered in 1992. Since then, 71 people have died of AIDS in the country with a population of 3.5 million, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to the World Health Organization, HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. AIDS occurs at the most advanced stage of infection.

HIV targets the body's white blood cells, weakening the immune system. This makes it easier to get sick with diseases like tuberculosis, infections and some cancers. HIV is spread from the body fluids of an infected person, including blood, breast milk, semen and vaginal fluids. It is not spread by kisses, hugs or sharing food. It can also spread from a mother to her baby.

HIV can be prevented and treated with antiretroviral therapy (ART). Untreated HIV can progress to AIDS, often after many years.

HIV spreads more easily in the first few months after a person is infected, but many are unaware of their status until the later stages. In the first few weeks after being infected people may not experience symptoms. Others may have an influenza-like illness including: fever, headache, rash, and sore throat. /ANS

One can be said to be perfectly healthy in body and mind only if no part of the body or mind makes itself felt. A part makes itself felt only when there is something wrong with it. You know that you have a head only when it aches.
Sri Atmananda (1883 - 1959)

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December 5, 2025

Fit India programme creating greater fitness awareness: PM Modi



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has credited the 'Fit India Sundays on Cycle' initiative for creating greater awareness about fitness in the country.

Speaking during his radio programme Mann Ki Baat on Sundays, PM Modi lauded the initiative.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

"There are many other competitions that are becoming very popular among our young friends. Many people are coming together to participate in programs like Fit India Sundays on Cycle. These are all ways to promote fitness,"

said the Prime Minister in his address in the 128th Episode of 'Mann Ki Baat'.

Rajasthan Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, who led the 51st edition of the nationwide cycling drive on November 30 from Jaipur, acknowledged PM Modi's sustained encouragement to the nation in advancing a culture of better health and well-being.

"There are very few Prime Ministers in the world who make so many clarion calls, focusing on the health and well-being of their citizens. Narendra Modi ji has time and again spoken about Fit India," said Rathore.

"From reducing our oil consumption to having millets (shree anna) and working dedicatedly on reducing obesity, our Prime Minister has always urged us to take all measures to be fit, be it through yoga, cycling, running, or other various ways. The movement created in the nation through the Sundays on

Cycle is an evident example of this," added the Athens 2004 Olympic silver-medalist.

The Fit India Sundays on Cycle began in December 2024, under the guidance of Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya.

It is now a weekly event, which reinforces the vision of PM Modi, "Fitness Ka Dose, Adha Ghanta Roz" and "Fight

turning this initiative into a nationwide community-led fitness revolution. The event is conducted weekly by these clubs.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) also ensures a strong nationwide footprint with SoC activities held across its network of SAI Training Centres (STCs), including Kokrajhar in Assam, Jagatpur and Badal in Punjab, Utlou in Manipur, Kargil in

"There are many other competitions that are becoming very popular among our young friends. Many people are coming together to participate in programs like Fit India Sundays on Cycle"

Against Obesity".

Sundays on Cycle has now grown into a true public movement, with common people taking the lead across the country.

Over 4,000 NaMo Fit India Cycling Clubs, along with lakhs of everyday citizens, cycle regularly and participate every week,

Ladakh, and several others.

It is also being organized across several Khelo India Centers, including in Bhadrak, Jharsuguda, and Dhenkanal, in addition to 23 SAI National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) across the nation, every Sunday. /ANS

Air pollution may reduce health benefits of exercise: Study

ENGLAND: A new study led by researchers at University College London (UCL) shows that chronic exposure to toxic air can significantly diminish the health benefits of regular physical activity.

The study analyzed data from more than 1.5 million adults tracked for more than a decade in countries including the UK, Taiwan, China, Denmark and the United States.

The team found that the protective effect of regular exercise on people's risk of dying over a specific period - from any cause and from cancer and heart disease specifically - appeared to be reduced, but not eliminated, for those who lived in high pollution areas.

The researchers looked at levels of fine particulate matter - tiny particles known as PM2.5s with a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers across. These particles are so small they can get stuck in the lungs and enter the bloodstream.

The health benefits of exercise significantly weakened where the yearly average level of PM2.5s was 25 micrograms per cubic meter (mg/m³) or higher, the team found. Nearly half (46%) of the world's population live in areas exceeding this threshold.

The lead researcher, Professor Po-Wen Ku of National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan, said, "Our findings emphasize that exercise remains beneficial even in polluted

environments. However, improving air quality can greatly enhance these health gains."

Co-author Professor Andrew Steptoe, from UCL's Department of Behavioral Science & Health, said: "Our study shows that toxic air can to some extent block the benefits of exercise, although not eliminate them. The findings are further evidence of the damage that fine particle pollution can do to our health."

"We believe clean air and physical activity are both important for healthy ageing and so we encourage greater efforts to curb health-harming pollution levels."

For the study, the research team looked at data from seven existing studies, including three that were unpublished, combining the summary statistics from each study into one overall analysis. For three of these studies, they re-analyzed the raw data at the level of individual participants.

Combining the data from seven studies, they found that people who did at least two and a half hours of moderate or vigorous exercise* a week had a 30% lower risk of dying during the study period than those who did not meet this exercise threshold.

However, if people in this very physically active group lived in an area with high fine particle pollution (above 25 mg/m³), this reduction in risk halved to 12-15 percent. ANI





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India not only protecting its citizens, but supporting world in AIDS control: Nadda

NEW DELHI: India is not only protecting its citizens, but also supporting other countries in achieving control of HIV/AIDS, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda said recently.

diagnostics that not only helped India put up a fight against AIDS but also supported other nations.

"India leads the fight against AIDS globally, upholding responsibility towards all

results, demonstrated by substantial reductions in new infections and mortality, along with expanded access to essential services.

"Between 2010 and 2024, new HIV infections declined by 48.7 percent, AIDS-related deaths by 81.4 percent, and mother-to-child transmission by 74.6 percent," he said.

litical commitment, sustained domestic investment, evidence-based program strategies, and consistent community engagement.

He underlined that the country has achieved a 35 percent reduction in new HIV infections (compared to the global 32 percent) and a 69 percent decline in HIV-related deaths, far exceeding the global



Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda

Speaking at the occasion of World AIDS Day at Vigyan Bhawan, Nadda reaffirmed India's commitment to accelerating progress toward ending AIDS as a public health threat.

He also lauded the efforts of the Indian pharma industry for developing medicines;

humanity," Nadda said.

"India not only protects its own but also supports the world in AIDS Control by supplying affordable and quality medicines across the globe," he added.

Nadda highlighted that India's HIV and STD program continues to deliver strong

"India leads the fight against AIDS globally, upholding responsibility towards all humanity," Nadda said.

"India not only protects its own but also supports the world in AIDS Control by supplying affordable and quality medicines across the globe," he added.

"Testing coverage increased from 4.13 crore in 2020-21 to 6.62 crore in 2024-25, while the number of people on treatment rose from 14.94 lakh to 18.60 lakh. Viral load testing also expanded significantly -- from 8.90 lakh to 15.98 lakh tests," he added.

The Health Minister noted that these achievements surpass global averages for the same period and reflect strong po-

reduction of 37 percent.

He also emphasized that India is firmly on track to achieve the global 95-95-95 targets by 2030.

"Awareness of HIV status has reached 85 percent, against a national goal of 95 percent, treatment coverage now stands at 88 percent, and viral load suppression remains exceptionally high at 97 percent," Nadda said. *IANS*

Medicines alone will not solve global obesity woes: WHO

NEW DELHI: While obesity is growing as a global health challenge contributing to millions of preventable deaths each year, the World Health Organization (WHO), in a recent report, said that medications like Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) alone will not solve the problem affecting more than one billion people worldwide.

WHO defines obesity as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or higher in adults.

It has approved GLP-1 therapies to treat obesity as a chronic, relapsing disease. GLP-1 receptor agonists are a

class of medicines that help lower blood sugar, support weight loss, reduce the risk of heart and kidney complications, and can even lower the risk of early death in people with type 2 diabetes.

But the global demand for GLP-1 therapies has fueled the spread of falsified and substandard products, threatening patient safety and trust.



In view of this, the WHO has released its first guideline on the use of GLP-1 therapies, providing recommendations specifically for three agents used in the long-term treatment of obesity in adults: liraglutide, semaglutide and tirzepatide.

With the new guideline, the WHO has issued conditional recommendations for using these therapies to support people living with obesity in overcoming this serious health challenge, as part of a comprehensive approach that includes healthy diets, regular physical activity, and support from health professionals.

"Obesity is a major global health challenge that WHO is committed to addressing by supporting countries and people worldwide to control it, effectively and equitably. Our new guidance recognizes that obesity is a chronic disease that can be treated with comprehensive and lifelong care," WHO Director-General. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. *IANS*

Indian scientists find genetic clues to tackle oral cancer among women

NEW DELHI: A team of Indian scientists has discovered oral cancer-causing driver gene mutations in women patients in southern parts of the country.

The team from the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru and the BRIC-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG), Kalyani, in collaboration with clinicians from Sri Devraj Urs Academy of Higher Education and Research (SDUAHER), Kolar, conducted a female-centric study on oral cancer in India with a unique tobacco chewing habit.

This study led by Professor Tapas K Kundu, JNCASR, Bengaluru aimed to understand what makes cancers in women unique, how the disease manifests and progresses in female patients and how we can treat them better.

The team also used artificial intelligence (deep learning) to digitally analyze tumor tissues. This revealed two distinct groups of female patients, each with a dif-

ferent immune response in their tumors.

India carries one of the world's heaviest burdens of oral cancer with alarmingly high rates witnessed among women in certain regions, especially in southern and north-east India, due to the widespread habit of chewing tobacco-infused betel quid, gutka,



and related products.

While the disease is widely studied in men, oral cancer in women has often remained under the radar.

The study was performed on paired tumor and blood samples from female OSCC-GB patients with a unique regional tobacco-chewing habit (Kaddipudi), commonly observed among women in the Kolar district of Karnataka. *IANS*

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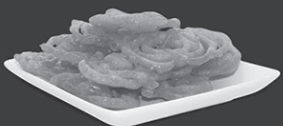


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Tamil Nadu-based fake French visa racket busted by IGI Airport Police

NEW DELHI: Indira Gandhi International Airport Unit has busted yet another interstate network involved in arranging counterfeit French D-type visas for Indian job aspirants. An agent, namely V Kannan (55), son of Vadamalai, resident of Nanjai Adiyar, Namakkal, Tamil Nadu, has been arrested by PS IGI Airport from Tamil Nadu.

The matter came to notice on October 28, 2025, when three Indian passengers namely Naveeraj Subramaniyam (23), resident of Namakkal, Tamil Nadu, Mohan Gandhi Elangovan (38), resident of Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu and Prabhakaran Senthilkumar (28), resident of Namakkal, Tamil Nadu reported at the Departure Immigration Counter at Terminal-3, IGI Airport, seeking clearance to Paris, France. During scrutiny, the French D-type visas affixed to their passports were found to be counterfeit and lacked essential security features. Based on these facts, a case under the relevant provisions of the BNS and Passport Act was registered at PS IGI Airport.

During interrogation, it was revealed that Naveeraj Subramaniyam's fake visa was arranged by his brother in exchange for Rs 6 lakhs, whereas the counterfeit visas of Mohan Gandhi Elangovan and Prabhakaran Senthilkumar were arranged by an agent based in Namakkal District for Rs 12 lakhs each.

Based on actionable local intelligence and technical surveillance, the team successfully located and arrested 55-year-old agent V Kannan, son of Vadamalai, resident of South Street, Nanjai Adiyar, Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu.

During sustained interrogation, V Kannan confessed to his involvement and disclosed that he runs a government-affiliated ITI at Paramathi and also operates an overseas education consultancy named "Vetri Overseas" at Velur. With the help of co-accused agent Sathik Syed, Abdul Hakim of Madurai, he lured at least 16 job aspirants for warehouse jobs in Paris. ANI

Immigration

POST

20 India Post

www.indiapost.com

December 5, 2025

Last month, several Afghan refugees in Pakistan went on record, saying that they have been overwhelmed by continuous pressure from the country's police

Pakistan now place of 'uncertainty and fear' for Afghan journalists

KABUL: Highlighting the arrest of Afghan journalist Hamoon Khamosh and his family in Islamabad, the Afghanistan Media Support Organization (AMSO) has slammed the Pakistani authorities for escalating harassment, arrests and expulsion of Afghan journalists from the neighboring country.

AMSO said Khamosh faces possible deportation to Afghanistan, where journalists have been facing restrictions, intimidation and arbitrary detention. The organization emphasized that many Afghan refugees who travelled to Pakistan for safety now fear for their lives, Afghanistan's leading news agency Khaama Press reported on Monday.

According to AMSO, the Pakistani authorities have arrested and forcibly deported six Afghan journalists in the past month. Many of them had earlier fled after intense censorship, political pressure and direct security threats in Afghanistan before seeking asylum in Pakistan.

AMSO detailed that Afghan journalists, who left Afghanistan due to professional risks, now live in conditions where "their lives and human dignity face serious danger." Many of them felt Pakistan would be a temporary sanctuary for them. However, it has turned out to be a place of uncertainty and fear.

Press freedom advocates have requested Pakistan to stop deportations and immediately restore visa services for Afghan journalists as forced deportation could expose them to grave danger. Pakistan has escalated arrests and expulsions of Afghan nationals amid ongoing tensions with Afghanistan.

Last month, several Afghan

refugees in Pakistan went on record, saying that they have been overwhelmed by continuous pressure from the country's police which, apart from conduct-

Over the past few months, as tensions between the Taliban and Pakistan continue, Islamabad has increased its pressure on Afghan refugees with the Pakistani

rest and take people away. This method is not right; the police know no one will report them, so they come individually for searches. Several men in plain



ing searches, is arresting people and exploiting their vulnerable situation as a source of income.

A report in Afghanistan-based newspaper 8AM Media, also known as Hasht-e-Subh Daily, highlighted that Afghan refugees in Pakistan do not have basic human rights and live in constant fear and anxiety. Human rights

forces conducting widespread harassment of migrants each day in various areas, including Islamabad. Apart from official operations involving the arrest of Afghan refugees without visas, people in plain clothes extort money from migrants in residential areas. Afghan people have said that they live in inhumane

clothes lie in wait in the neighborhood, grab someone, and take them away. It is unclear whether they are police, thieves, or cooperating with the police. Now, even if an ordinary person commits theft or kidnapping under the name of the police, people assume he is a police officer," quoted an Afghan national as saying.

"These individuals detain migrants in their personal vehicles; some are released on the spot after paying money, while others are taken to police posts. They are probably police themselves or collaborating with the police. The level of theft and robbery is extremely high, and no institution hears the people's voices. The situation is deeply painful; a country that has no defender and whose citizens have no protection or credibility anywhere in the world," the refugee added. IANS

Over the past few months, as tensions between the Taliban and Pakistan continue, Islamabad has increased its pressure on Afghan refugees with the Pakistani forces conducting widespread harassment of migrants each day in various areas

groups and refugee-support groups have remained silent regarding the uncertainty and the government's failure to fulfill its commitment about human rights and the protection of refugees.

conditions filled with fear and anxiety and their refugee rights are not respected.

"The situation is extremely distressing. I wish the official operations team would simply ar-

"Many of them are no good": Trump intends to pause asylum "for a long time"

WASHINGTON, DC: As the US administration makes several moves on country's immigration policy, President Donald Trump said that he intends to pause asylum "for a long time".

"They are the people who shouldn't be in our country, including Somalians and plenty of others," Trump told reporters while referring to the Afghan national accused of shooting near White House.

He was speaking to reporters on board Air Force One. When asked about the duration of the pause on asylum, Trump said that it would be for a long time since "most of

countries targeted, he said it is likely more than 19. "They are not good countries. They are very crime-ridden countries. They are countries that don't register from a standpoint of success. We, frankly, don't need their people in our country and telling us what to do," he added. Speaking on the attack on two members of the National Guard, Trump said, "Andrew is fighting for his life". He added that he intends to honor both of them at the White House.

Trump lambasted the previous Joe Biden administration, accusing its leaders of "screwing the country" by admitting "unchecked and unvetted" immigrants.

The President also hit out at former Vice President Kamala Harris for letting "anyone and everyone come in" to the US, who was responsible for overseeing the country's border security policies and immigration enforcement efforts.

"Crooked Joe Biden, Mayorkas, and so-called 'Border Czar' Kamala Harris really screwed our Country by letting anyone and everyone come in totally unchecked and unvetted," Trump posted on Truth Social.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also accused the previous Biden administration of committing an "act of national self-sabotage" by letting immigrants like Lakanwal into the country. The department further stated that immigration requests for Afghan nationals have been suspended indefinitely.

Kristi Noem, Secretary at the DHS, has held the previous Joe Biden administration responsible for the killing of National Guard member Spec. Sarah Beckstrom in the White House shooting. ANI

"For a long time. No time limit. We don't want those people. We have enough problems. You know why? Because many of them are no good and they shouldn't be in our country," he added

them are no good".

"For a long time. No time limit. We don't want those people. We have enough problems. You know why? Because many of them are no good and they shouldn't be in our country," he added. Launching a scathing attack on immigrants from countries like Somalia, Trump said that they don't have governments or police and "go around killing each other".

"These people are the people from different countries that aren't friendly to the us and the countries that are out of control themselves. Countries like Somalia that have virtually no government, military or police. All they do is go around killing each other. Then they come into our country and tell us how to run our country. We don't want them," Trump said.

Although Trump did not elaborate on the number of

Homeland Security holds Biden administration responsible for killing of Sarah Beckstrom

WASHINGTON, DC: Kristi Noem, Secretary at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has held the previous Joe Biden administration responsible for the killing of National Guard member Spec. Sarah Beckstrom in the White House shooting.

"This individual's application to be in this country started under the Joe Biden administration. The consequences of the shooting and the death of Sarah are directly on the shoulders of Joe Biden and his administration," Noem said while referring to suspect Rahmanullah Lakanwal being charged with first-degree murder after one of the two severely wounded National Guard members died.

Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe (24), the other National Guard member, battles for his life as he recovers from severe injuries from the shooting.

Lakanwal (29), who migrated from Afghanistan in 2021 under "Operation Allies Welcome" during Joe Biden's tenure, after the chaotic withdrawal of US forces in Afghanistan.

Speaking on the migration from Afghanistan, Noem argued that the Joe Biden administration didn't conduct a thorough investigation and was lackadaisical in the vetting

process.

"If you remember, during that operation, when Afghanistan was abandoned, people were just put on aircraft and brought to the United States. The administration at that time said that they would vet them, but didn't do a thorough investigation," the DHS Secretary said.

However, Noem said, the Trump administration has put in place extensive measures to vet immigrants, including scrutiny of their social media platforms and communications. She stated that it was never done before, and thus, incidents like the Wednesday White House shooting occur.

"They only checked names and a few data points, but President Trump has put in place biometric information, checking social media platforms, communications, and contacts. The Biden administration never did that. He brought them in and said we would vet them later. This is how things like these happen," she added.

DHS also accused the previous Biden administration of committing an "act of national self-sabotage" by letting immigrants like Lakanwal into the country. The department further stated that immigration requests for Afghan nationals have been suspended indefinitely. ANI

'Worked very hard': Australian envoy on ensuring safety and welfare of Indian students Down Under

NEW DELHI: Expressing the Anthony Albanese-led government's longstanding support for continued migration and having a multicultural Australia, the country's High Commissioner to India, Philip Green has said that Canberra has worked hard on ensuring the safety and welfare of Indian students.

In an interview with IANS, Green also expressed Canberra's intent to strengthen academic collaboration with India while citing the scholarship offerings for Indian students by several Australian universities.

When asked about steps being taken to ensure the safety and welfare of Indian students in Australia, Green responded, "We worked very hard on this. As you may know, Australia is one of the safest countries on Earth, and we are proud of that. We want all visitors to our country, be they Indian or be they from other countries, indeed our own people to be safe and we have a very strong and effective police force, a border force, and a very effective security intelligence agencies. We also want to make sure that Indian visitors to our country feel welcome."

Earlier this year, 'March for Australia' protests were held Down Under with thousands of people participating in rallies in major Australian cities and regional centers, carrying flags and demanding an end to what they termed as "mass migration" into Australia.

"Now, like in many countries, in Australia there have been protests, rather loud, small numbers of people who are protesting against immigration and against multiculturalism. What I want you and your viewers to know is that our government has very clearly come out and said that we stand for continued migration into Australia in a way that is sustainable and we very much stand for a multicultural Australia in which people, wherever they come from the world, feel safe and welcome and are indeed celebrated in our society," Green told IANS.

On new scholarship opportunities and academic collaboration plans with the Indian institutions, the Australian diplomat emphasized: "There's a lot. So, many Australian universities have scholarship offerings for Indian students. And what is new is the Australian government is now providing around 15 scholarships to students at the PhD level. This is particularly focused in STEM, so science and technology is very much foregrounded here. IANS

"We worked very hard on this. As you may know, Australia is one of the safest countries on Earth, and we are proud of that. We want all visitors to our country, be they Indian or be they from other countries, indeed our own people to be safe"

'India records fastest growth in six quarters defying US tariff pressures'

NEW DELHI: India's economy grew 8.2 percent in the July-September quarter, with the fastest pace in six quarters, despite steep tariffs imposed by the US, proving that the era of economic hectoring has waned, a report said.

Even as the tariffs dented shipments to America, total merchandise and services exports rose 5 to 6 percent in the quarter, due to export diversification and robust policy, a report by India Narrative said.

"Production-linked incentives lured assembly lines for phones, drugs, and solar panels, transforming India from importer to exporter. Factories, once tethered to American buyers, pivoted seamlessly to new shores," the report said.



"Infrastructure spending -- roads doubling in length, airports tripling -- slashed logistics costs, letting firms compete post-tariff. Fiscal prudence trimmed deficits without gutting capital expenditure, steadying rates and drawing foreign funds amid global flux," it added.

The report said that exports to the US, which absorbs about one-fifth of India's shipments, fell by double digits in key months after tariff hikes, yet total exports rose, cushioned by surges to the Gulf, Europe, Africa, and East Asia.

India's real gross domestic product growth exceeded economists' forecasts of 7.9 percent and was a sharp rebound from 5.6 percent in the July-September quarter of the previous year.

Nominal growth hit nearly 9 percent, buoyed by cooling inflation. Manufacturing surged over 9 percent, construction topped 7 percent, and services such as finance and real estate expanded by double digits. *IANs*

Real Estate POST

22 India Post

www.indiapost.com

December 5, 2025

Global Construction Leader Turner International Celebrates 60 Years of Building the Future

MUMBAI: Turner International, a global leader in construction and project management services, proudly marked its 60th Anniversary recently with a spectacular gala celebration held at the Jio World Centre in Mumbai. The event brought together industry titans, valued clients, and partners who have been instrumental in the company's six decades of success and innovation.

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

NCR's luxury projects redefining high-end living

DELHI NCR: As NCR's real estate landscape evolves at an unprecedented pace; luxury housing is entering a defining new era-one shaped by design excellence, expansive green living, and hyper-curated lifestyle experiences. Today's high-end homebuyers are no longer seeking just larger homes; they want holistic environments that balance sophistication with sustainability, privacy with community, and convenience with tranquility.

In response, leading developers across Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, and Gurugram are unveiling landmark residential projects that set new benchmarks in architecture, wellness, and future-ready urban living. Amidst some of the marquee projects, below are a few potential projects to watch out for in NCR.

Gulshan Dynasty - Located in the prestigious Sector 144 along the Noida Expressway, Gulshan Dynasty emerges as the pinnacle of luxury condominiums, promising residents a lifestyle defined by grandeur and sophistication. This IGBC Platinum-rated project in NCR is meticulously planned to provide a verdant sanctuary, featuring a unique farm-to-fork experience and preserving 70% of its land as open space. Spanning 5.8 acres, this lavish development comprises luxurious condominiums and duplexes that offer stunning sunrise and sunset views, enhancing the overall living experience. Gulshan Dynasty redefines traditional living with unparalleled luxury, comfort, and natural surroundings. Tailored for the discerning elite, the project



boasts a wealth of deluxe amenities, including a temperature-controlled swimming pool, an impressive triple-height lobby, and meticulously landscaped terraces.

Prateek Canary - Located in the highly sought-after Noida Sector 150, Prateek Canary is redefining luxury living amid nature's embrace. Renowned as one of the greenest and most meticulously planned sectors in

boasts a wealth of deluxe amenities, including a temperature-controlled swimming pool, an impressive triple-height lobby, and meticulously landscaped terraces. Complemented by lifestyle amenities such as a thematic island entrance, an amphitheater lawn, and a forest trail, Prateek Canary blends sophistication with serenity, offering an unmatched residential address

of the project spans 1.5 million sq. ft. and includes five elegant towers rising 27 to 31 stories, set within a 13.33-acre land parcel. The project is designed as an IGBC pre-certified gold community and will offer around 1,000 premium residences in four spacious configurations-2358 sq. ft., 2898 sq. ft., 3555 sq. ft., and 5094 sq. ft.- bringing a blend of sustainable design, contemporary living, and superior access to one of Ghaziabad's fastest-growing corridors.

Prateek Grand Begonia- Located in Siddharth Vihar along NH24, the project is designed as a harmonious blend of classic elegance and modern sophistication, offering expansive homes surrounded by landscaped greens, open spaces, and a lavish clubhouse.

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In response, leading developers across Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, and Gurugram are unveiling landmark residential projects that set new benchmarks in architecture, wellness, and future-ready urban living

Noida-Greater Noida, Sector 150 dedicates maximum area to open spaces, featuring landscaped parks, artificial lakes, fountains, sculptures, and manicured walkways. The project is spread over 12.55 acres, with just 664 exclusive units, comprising 3/4 BHK residences and

in NCR.

Jade County: Jade County, located in Sector 6 of Wave City, Ghaziabad, is a modern high-rise residential development strategically positioned near the Delhi-Meerut Expressway for seamless connectivity to Delhi and the wider NCR. Phase one

Should you rent an apartment after retirement?

HARINI BALASUBRAMANIAN

For most Indians, investing in property is a major financial goal aimed at securing their post-retirement years. The rise in disposable income, growing awareness of real estate investments, and evolving lifestyle preferences have driven many people towards property buying. Yet affordability remains a prime concern for many, particularly those eyeing top cities. Property prices have seen a steep surge across top-tier cities, especially during the post-pandemic phase. The question of whether to buy or rent concerns not only young home seekers but also many retirees in India. Factors such as lifestyle flexibility, income and financial stability and location choices push many retirees towards renting. In this guide, we discuss the pros and cons of renting a home after retirement.

Factors influencing post-retirement housing decision

An individual's decision regarding where to reside after retirement goes beyond merely choosing a comfortable house. The idea is to ensure long-term stability and lifestyle choices. We discuss some of the major factors:

Financial situation and long-term stability

Most people's income sources change after retirement, often shifting from monthly salaries to pensions or interest income. This compels them to choose between downsizing, renting or homeownership, depending on their income levels. One must consider their monthly expenditures, including medical costs, as well as savings and investments, before making a decision. While buying or renting is a personal choice, most retirees choose a housing option that lets them maintain financial liquidity and minimize heavy investments.

Most individuals, nearing or post their retirement, tend to look for long-term stability with respect to their residence. This comes from the need to avoid frequent travel or relocation. So, for renters, it is beneficial to look for long-term rentals with predictable rent increases and a permanent location for several years. For prospective owners, investing in a residential property in a fast-developing neighborhood with growth potential makes sense.

Health and location concerns

As one approaches retirement, the growing health-related challenges and potential medical expenses cannot be ig-

nored. This is a primary factor influencing housing decisions among retirees. Most senior home seekers check neighborhood safety, accessibility to nearby markets, parks, and social spaces, and the availability of public transportation. Moreover, seniors looking for a home are more likely to stay close to their children or relatives, which is another key factor influencing their property decisions. Furthermore, access to affordable healthcare drives home-buying or renting decisions among seniors, whether in metro or tier-2 cities.

Lifestyle preferences

Retirement brings major lifestyle changes, with more time to pursue hob-

financial resources and focus on other priorities, such as healthcare or everyday expenses.

Moreover, renting offers greater freedom and mobility. So, it is easy for retirees to relocate when needed. They can decide to move closer to children or relocate to another city with better medical facilities.

There are several senior living communities with tailored amenities for specific lifestyle needs, such as smart home features and security systems, parks, senior-friendly layouts and wheelchair accessibility, medical facilities, including doctors or nurses on call and proximity to hospitals. These factors ensure the desired comfort



bies or personal interests. Most retirees seek a low-maintenance lifestyle, which is why some prefer renting to homeownership. Overseeing property maintenance, repairs and renovations can be overwhelming for many. So, a suitable option is renting a home. Some of them, who own a house, consider renting out the property to tenants and prefer living on rent themselves.

Popular housing options among retirees include independent houses or apartments in gated societies with in-house maintenance facilities. A key trend emerging in India is the rise of senior living homes. These include a range of housing projects, from independent living communities to assisted living facilities.

When does renting after retirement make sense?

Renting a home after retirement can be a convenient and practical choice for many people. It provides the financial flexibility most seniors look for at this age, helping them avoid recurring costs such as property taxes, maintenance, and repairs. This enables them to conserve their

and safety for seniors.

Who should choose to rent after retirement?

Post-retirement home seekers can consider renting a home if they prefer mobility and ease of relocation. This is a practical option for ageing parents whose children are in the process of securing their careers and finances. Moreover, renting is ideal for those who do not want the burden of property maintenance or similar responsibilities.

Downsides of renting after retirement

For some retirees, owning property may be a better option than renting. Despite the flexibility and convenience that renting offers, it does not provide the benefits of asset creation, such as property investment. That is, an individual will continue to make monthly rental payments without receiving any returns. On the other hand, property purchases may involve high initial costs and monthly EMIs, but in the long term, one owns a tangible asset with a guarantee of future returns.

www.housing.com

Mumbai property registrations mark best Nov since 2013, revenue up 12 pc

MUMBAI: The real estate market in Mumbai recorded its strongest November since 2013, supported by rising demand for residential properties and steady market confidence, a new report said.

According to Knight Frank India, the city -- covering areas under the BMC - registered 12,219 properties in November 2025, marking a 20 percent increase compared to the same month last year.

Stamp duty collections also rose 12 percent year-on-year to Rs 1,038 crore -- reflecting sustained buying momentum.

On a month-on-month basis, registrations increased by 5 percent, while stamp duty collections remained stable.

From January to November 2025, Mumbai recorded 1,35,807 property registrations, contributing more than Rs 12,224 crore to the state government.

During this period, registrations grew 5 percent year-on-year and revenue increased 11 percent, showing the city's solid real estate activity throughout the year.

Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director Shishir Bajjal said that Mumbai's residential market has maintained its strong momentum.

He noted that the 20 percent annual rise in registrations and 12 percent growth in revenue reflect steady demand across segments and a clear shift toward higher-value homes.

With over 1.35 lakh registrations in eleven months, Bajjal said the market now operates at a structurally higher level with consistent monthly activity.

He added that the stability in both sales volumes and revenue indicates a mature demand cycle and continued buyer confidence.

Demand for higher-priced homes continued to rise in November. Properties priced above Rs 5 crore made up 7 percent of total registrations, compared with 5 percent a year ago.

Meanwhile, the share of homes priced below Rs 1 crore declined due to affordability pressures. The mid-range segment of Rs 2-5 crore held steady, while homes priced between Rs 1 crore and Rs 2 crore saw their share increase from 31 percent in 2024 to 33 percent in 2025. IANS

Philosophy

ATMANANDA KRISHNA MENON

What do you mean when you say 'I'? It does not at all mean the body, senses or mind. It is pure experience itself - in other words, the end of all knowledge or feeling. First of all, see that the body, senses and mind are your objects and that you are always the changeless subject, distinct and separate from the objects.

The objects are present only when they are perceived. But I exist, always changeless, whether perceptions occur or not, extending through and beyond all states. Thus you see that you are never the body, senses or mind. Make this thought as deep and intense as possible, until you are doubly sure that the wrong identification will never recur.

Next, examine if there is anything else that does not part with the 'I'-principle, even for a moment. Yes. There is Consciousness. It never parts with the 'I'-principle, and can never be an object either. So both must mean one and the same thing. Or, in other words, 'I' is Con-



Atmananda Krishna Menon

suited to each activity. But to love your own self, you require no instrument at all. Since you experience happiness by retreating into that 'I'-principle, that 'I' must be either an object to give you happiness, which is impossible; or it must be happiness itself. So the 'I'-principle, Peace and Consciousness are all one and the same. It is in Peace that thoughts and feelings rise and set. This peace is very clearly expressed in deep sleep, when the mind is not there and you are one with Consciousness and Peace.

Pure consciousness and deep peace are your real nature. Having understood this in the right manner, you can well give up the use of the words 'Consciousness' and 'Happiness' and invariably use 'I' to denote the Reality. Don't be satisfied with only reducing objects into Consciousness. Don't stop there. Reduce them further into the 'I'-principle.

So also, reduce all feelings into pure Happiness and then reduce them into the 'I'-principle. When you are sure that you will not return to identification with the body, you can very well leave off the

You are never the body, senses or mind

Often I knew women better than they knew themselves; (so they said) yet I could not myself act a pose or play a part, which was not my own

sciousness itself.

Similarly, wherever there is the 'I'-principle left alone, there is also the idea of deep peace or happiness, existing along with it. It is universally admitted that one loves only that which gives one happiness, or that a thing is loved only for its happiness value. Evidently, happiness itself is loved more than that which is supposed to give happiness.

It is also admitted that one loves one's self more than anything else. So it is clear that you must be one with happiness or that you are happiness itself. All your activities are only attempts to experience that happiness or self in every experience

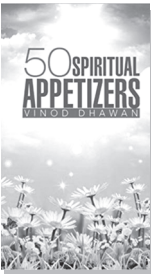
The ordinary man fixes a certain standard for all his worldly activities and tries to attain it to his satisfaction. Thereby, he is only trying to experience the self in the form of happiness, as a result of the satisfaction obtained on reaching the standard already accepted by him. For every perception, thought or feeling, you require the services of an instrument

intermediaries of Consciousness and Happiness, and directly take the thought 'I, I, I', subjectively. Diversity is only in objects. Consciousness, which perceives them all, is one and the same. The word 'I' has the advantage of taking you direct to the core of your self.

Excerpted from 'Notes on Spiritual Discourses of Shri Atmananda taken by Nitya Tripta'. The 142nd birth anniversary of Atmananda Krishna Menon is observed on December 8

50 SPIRITUAL APPETIZERS

Vinod Dhawan



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Jac O'Keeffe
Spirituality teacher based in USA.

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Pakistan's New National Security Doctrine: Re-establishing Deterrence

SARA NAZIR

The past happenings have seen a flurry of headlines about Pakistani air strikes inside Afghanistan, border skirmishes, and the temporary closure of key trade crossings. Much of the international commentary has framed these developments as escalation, even aggression. That framing is not only incomplete, it is dangerous, because it fundamentally misreads what Pakistan is actually doing: re-establishing credible deterrence after years in which deterrence had collapsed.

In international-relations terms, deterrence works only when three conditions are met: capability, credibility, and communication. From 2021 to early 2025, Pakistan possessed the capability but had lost credibility. Terror groups based in Afghanistan learned, through painful experience for Islamabad, that they could strike inside Pakistan and suffer no meaningful consequences. Requests, evidence folders, and diplomatic notes were ignored. The red line kept moving. That is the textbook definition of deterrence failure.

Consider the broader trend: according to the latest Institute for Economics &

Restraint without credibility does not produce stability; it produces contempt and more body bags.

Imposing Costs On Adversary

So Pakistan did what deterrence theory prescribes when deterrence has broken down: it restored credibility by imposing costs that the adversary (the TTP and its Taliban hosts) could neither ignore nor absorb without pain. The airstrikes were not revenge; they were a deliberate signaling act that said, in the clearest possible language, "The era of cost-free aggression against Pakistan is over."

This is sometimes called "cumulative deterrence", a series of graduated, proportionate actions that, taken together, rebuild the adversary's belief that further attacks will be met with escalating punishment. Pakistan waited years, warned repeatedly, shared intelligence, and, crucially, struck only known TTP facilities while issuing prior warnings through tribal channels to minimize civilian losses. These are not the actions of a state seeking war. They are the actions of a state methodically repairing a broken deterrent.

Securing The Corridors

A second imperative, protecting the eco-

From 2021 to early 2025, Pakistan possessed the capability but had lost credibility. Terror groups based in Afghanistan learned, through painful experience for Islamabad, that they could strike inside Pakistan and suffer no meaningful consequences

Peace (IEP) report, Pakistan recorded 1,099 terror-related incidents in 2024, up from 517 in 2023 - the first time attacks crossed the 1,000-mark since the Global Terrorism Index began tracking. At the same time, fatalities rose sharply: deaths from terrorism jumped from 748 in 2023 to 1,081 in 2024 - a 45% increase. Among these, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is identified as the single deadliest group, responsible for roughly 52% of all terrorism-related deaths in 2024.

When suicide bombers killed Chinese engineers at Dasu in March 2024 and again in October 2025, and when more than 3,400 Pakistanis (mostly civilians) died in attacks planned from Afghan soil since 2021, the old policy of strategic restraint had become strategic self-harm.

conomic corridors, also has a theoretical name: "escalation dominance in the grey zone". Terror groups were waging low-intensity economic warfare by targeting CPEC projects and trade routes. By disrupting convoys and killing Chinese workers they sought to raise the cost of Beijing's investment to an unacceptable level, forcing Pakistan either to abandon its pivot to geo-economics or to accept permanent insecurity.

(The author is a visiting faculty at the Department of Politics and International Relations, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI). She holds an MS in Strategic Studies from Air University Islamabad) South Asia Monitor

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15th edition of INTERNATIONAL SAND ART FESTIVAL begins in Odisha, artists from across world showcase creativity

KONARK: The 15th edition of the International Sand Art Festival, a renowned cultural event that annually takes place on the beautiful Chandrabhaga Beach, commenced near the historic Konark Sun Temple.

Coinciding with the 36th Konark Festival, the five-day cultural celebration runs until December 5, transforming the golden sands into an open-air gallery of stunning sculptures under the guidance of Padma Shri awardee Sand Artist Sudarsan Pattnaik.

Organized by the Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha, the festival brings together master sculptors from across the world, including participants from various Indian states and international artists from countries like Spain, Portugal, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Russia.

The festival brings together around 140 artists from India and abroad, competing to cre-

ate mesmerizing sand sculptures on daily themes focused on environmental awareness, women's empowerment, and cultural pride.

The festival is strategically held just two kilometers from the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Konark Sun Temple, offering visitors a unique blend of ancient architecture and ephemeral modern art.

This festival not only attracts international sand sculptors but also celebrates the talents of local artisans. The fusion of global perspectives and local flair creates a vibrant tapestry of artistic expression.

The festival aims to promote tourism, celebrate the rich artistry of sand sculpting, and provide a platform for artists to exchange ideas and techniques.

Visitors to the festival can witness the evolution of these ephemeral masterpieces throughout the event.

The sculptures, despite their temporary nature, leave a lasting impression due to their intricate details and the skilled hands that brought them to life.

The Sand Art Festival runs concurrently with the renowned Konark Dance Festival, where acclaimed maestros and ensembles perform classical Indian dance forms at the nearby open-air auditorium every evening from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm. ANI



NAGALAND ALL SET FOR 26TH 'HORNBILL FESTIVAL'

KOHIMA: Nagaland is fully geared up for the 26th edition of the iconic 'Hornbill Festival', beginning 1st December, with elaborate preparations in place at the Naga Heritage Village in Kisama, around 12 km south of the state capital Kohima.

The 10-day festival, coinciding with Nagaland's Statehood Day, will be celebrated from December 1 to 10. This year's 'Hornbill Festival' will also see the participation of six Partner Countries - the UK, France, Austria, Switzerland, Malta and Ireland, while Arunachal Pradesh will participate as the Partner State.

Named after the hornbill, the globally admired bird revered across Naga folklore, the festival draws together all 17 major tribes of Nagaland and their sub-tribes, showcasing their rich cultural heritage through traditional dances, music, attire and customs.

Over 86 per cent of the state's two million population (2011 census) belong to tribals. The objective of the annual event is to preserve and promote the enduring traditions of Nagaland while offering visitors a closer understanding of its diverse cultural tapestry.

Tourists from across India and abroad, flock to the festival every year to enjoy traditional cuisine, art forms, performances and indigenous sports.

Celebrated as the 'Festival of Festivals', Hornbill is one of India's biggest cultural tourism events and plays a key role in promoting Nagaland as a vibrant travel destination.



Alongside cultural showcases, the state will highlight business and investment opportunities through industry roundtables during the 10-day extravaganza.

A Tourism Department official said the festival unites people across communities and nations, offering a vivid display of crafts, sports, food fairs, games and ceremonial events.

Traditional arts, including wood carving, painting and sculpture, will also be featured prominently. Major highlights include the Naga Morungs exhibition, sale of arts and crafts, food and herbal medicine stalls, flower shows, cultural medleys, fashion shows, beauty pageants, traditional archery, Naga wrestling, indigenous games and musical concerts.

Meanwhile, responding to requests from the Nagaland government, the Centre has relaxed the Protected Area Permit (PAP) regime for foreign visitors during the festival. IANS

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MEENAKSHI SESHADRI: RD BURMAN CREATED BEAUTIFUL ROMANTIC NUMBERS

Actress Meenakshi Seshadri has shared one of her favorite songs by legendary music composer R. D. Burman from the 1980s and said that he made some beautiful romantic numbers.

Meenakshi took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself sauntering in a garden dressed in a black fitted ensemble with a drizzle of color. For the background score, she added the song "Aisa Sama Na Hota" sung by late legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar for the film "Zameen Aasman" starring Sanjay Dutt and Anita Raj.

"One of my favorite RD Burman songs from the 1980s. He created some beautiful romantic numbers and this one was pictured on my favorite costars Sanjay Dutt and Anita Raaj," she wrote as the caption.

"Zameen Aasman" is directed by Bharat Rangachary. The film follows a widower who has a run of good luck such as a sudden increase in his fortunes, and a new woman in his life whose resemblance to his late wife seals the deal. However, the new bride may not have the best intentions towards him.

Talking about Meenakshi, she became one of Hindi cinema's leading actresses in the 1980s and 1990s.

She made her debut with the film Painter Babu in 1983 and her second film Hero catapulted her to instant stardom.

ANS

Raashii Khanna's 'warm' birthday celebration

Actress Raashii Khanna turned 35 years old on November 30. She used social media to give an insight into her 'warm' birthday celebration. In the primary photo uploaded by her on her IG, Raashii was seen posing in front of her birthday cake, surrounded by some lovely flowers and candles. Next, was a photo of the 'Farzi' actress posing with her admirers with a rose in her hand. Raashii's post further included some photos of the birthday girl, spending some quality time with her loved ones. She revealed that her family had organized a satsang at their home to commemorate the special day.

Calling this birthday truly special, Raashii penned on the photo-sharing app, "Some birthdays feel loud, this one felt warm - fan meet full of love to a quiet satsang at home surrounded by loved ones, this birthday was truly special.. (Sunflower emoji) Deeply grateful (Red heart emoji) (sic)."

"P.S. Thankyou to everyone who took time out to wish me! Lots of love (hug emoji)," she added.

Work-wise, Raashii was recently seen as Farhan Akhtar's better half in the war drama, "120 Bahadur". Through one of her social media posts, she shared her experience of working with the 'Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara' actor in the project directed by Razneesh Ghai. ANS

TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

- 1 Saiyaara: **Saiyaara**
- 2 Barbaad: **Saiyaara**
- 3 Pardesiya: **Param Sundari**
- 4 Qayde Se: **Metro ... In Dino**
- 5 Dhun: **Saiyaara**
- 6 Janaab-e-Aali: **WAR 2**
- 7 Deewaniyat: **Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat**
- 8 Tum Ho Toh: **Saiyaara**
- 9 Raanjhan: **Do Patti**
- 10 Zamaana Lage: **Metro ... In Dino**

Prajakta Koli was a good child, till she met her husband

For someone who grew up as the "perfect child," content creator and actor Prajakta Koli says her first real brush with trouble came because of one boy, whom she later married.

Talking about how she was when she was younger, Prajakta, who will be seen in the show "Single Papa", told IANS: "I was a very good child. I'm not saying that I was a topper. I was very average academically. But, I've grown up a single child. I've had a very friendly relationship with my parents. I've had 2-3 friends in the last few years. My childhood friends are a small group. So, my life has been the same."

Prajakta said that she has never been someone who's "very social" and that she "rarely ever got in trouble."

Spilling the beans about finally being a troublemaker, Prajakta had a sweet story to tell. "The only time I started getting in trouble was when I met this I married this year. That's when I started going out at night and drinking. ANS



Mrunal Thakur reacts to rumors, calls it 'free PR'

Being an actor means one is constantly subjected to rumors, and actress Mrunal Thakur's latest social media post goes to show how she deals with these rumors.

Mrunal took to the Stories section of her Insta handle and shared a video of her laughing while getting her hair oiled, revealing how she reacts every time she hears or reads a rumor about herself.

Calling these rumors free pr, she wrote the caption, "They talk we laugh (Laughing with tears emojis) P.S Rumors are free Pr and I love free stuff (sic)."

Although Mrunal has not specified which rumor she is talking about, her post seems to be hinting at the speculations that the 'Super 30' actress is romantically involved with Dhanush.

While both Mrunal and Dhanush have remained tight-lipped about their relationship status, netizens have been keeping a keen watch on their every move on social media.

Recently, Dhanush uploaded a couple of photos from Varanasi, with the "Tere Ishk Mein" and "Raanjhanaa" maker Aanand L Rai on his IG, reflecting on his journey from Kundan to Shankar.

An excited Mrunal commented on the post, calling it a beautiful journey".
IANS



Ranveer Singh APOLOGIZES for Kantara mimicry

Actor Ranveer Singh, who is facing massive backlash for mimicking Rishab Shetty's Daiva from "Kantara Chapter 1", has now apologized for his act.

Ranveer tried to recreate the sequence from the film where Rishab is possessed by the Chamundi daiva during one of the ceremonies of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2025.

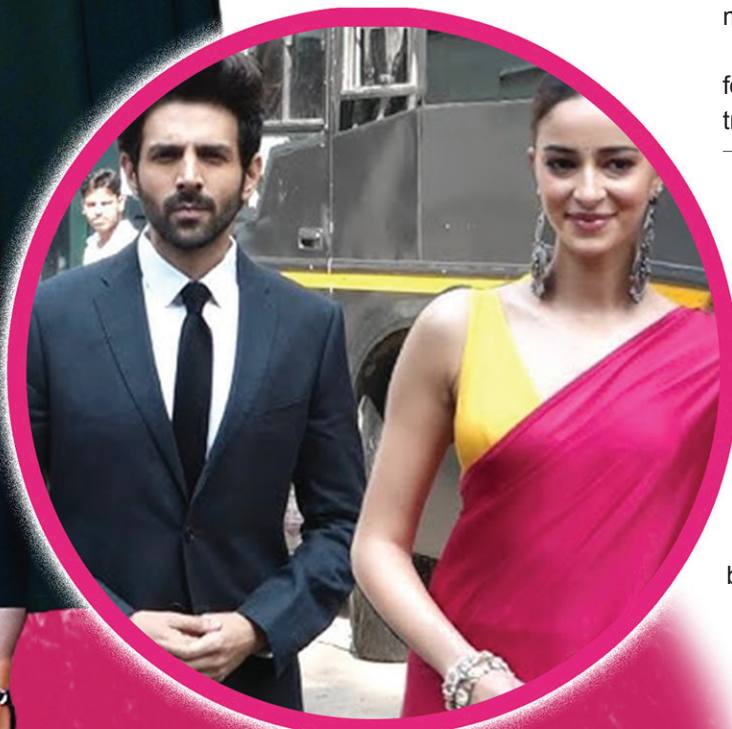
Post the event, the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS) even

lodged an official complaint against Ranveer for allegedly hurting religious sentiments.

Now, the 'Dhurandhar' actor has issued a heartfelt apology, saying that all he wanted to do was to show his appreciation for Rishab Shetty's exceptional performance in the film as an actor.

Ranveer wrote on his Instagram Stories, "My intention was to highlight Rishabh's incredible performance in the film. Actor to actor, I know how much it would take to perform that particular scene in the way that he did, for which he has my utmost admiration. (sic)."

He further stressed that he has deep respect for every culture, tradition, and belief in our country. IANS



Kartik Aaryan, Ananya Panday promote 'TMMT, MTTM' on KBC

Actors Kartik Aaryan and Ananya Panday are all geared up for their upcoming movie 'Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri', which is slated for a Christmas release this year.

The actors who are currently on a promotional spree were spotted at the Kaun Banega Crorepati sets on the 1st of December to promote their movie on the iconic quiz reality show hosted by the legendary Amitabh Bachchan. Ananya was seen dressed in a beautiful and classy saree, while Kartik looked dapper in his suit-boot avatar.

Apart from imparting knowledge to the audience, KBC has become a hotspot for movie and show promotions for the entertainment industry, owing to its popularity. Earlier, the cast of Family Man, Jaideep Ahlawat, Manoj Bajpayee, and Sharib Hashmi, had appeared on the show to promote their series. The cast, along with Big B, was seen having a blast. IANS

Bangladesh staring at a crisis of nationhood as political crisis deepens

M A HOSSAIN & VISHAKHA JHA

Bangladesh stands today in one of the most fragile moments of its political history, not because the country has never seen turmoil, but because the current uncertainty feels deeper, darker, and far less predictable than the cyclical unrest that used to define its past. What began months ago as factional squabbling among BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the National Citizens Party (NCP) has now collided with a far more explosive development. The death sentence for former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is in exile in India, for crimes against humanity would push the country's remaining political balance into turmoil and plunge the nation into a maze of fear, protest, and uncertainty.

among the gravest in Bangladesh's history: crimes against humanity for allegedly orchestrating the 2024 crackdown that killed as many as 1,400 people, according to a UN report. On November 17, the International Crime Tribunal (ICT) of Bangladesh awarded the death penalty, calling her the "mastermind" behind the violence. Whether one agrees with that characterization or not, the consequences of the trial are unmistakable. Every faction sees the verdict not merely as a legal matter but as a political earthquake.

Transitional Justice Theory: Principles and Preconditions

The role of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Bangladesh's current crisis can be analyzed using Transitional

Justice Theory. This framework examines how societies deal with a legacy of large-scale human rights abuses during a political transition. Transitional justice typically seeks to achieve accountability, reconciliation, and institutional reform, often through mechanisms like truth commissions, reparations, and, critically, prosecutions. However, the success of such mechanisms hinges on their impartiality and perceived legitimacy.

Fractured Alliances, Shifting Ambitions

The Awami League, banned from political activity, has denounced the tribunal as a "kangaroo court." Its call for a nationwide lockdown in November 2025 brought parts of the country to a halt - schools closed, transport choked, businesses shuttered. For a party that once commanded the state machinery, this was a dramatic and desperate show of defiance. For citizens, it meant another long stretch of fear.

The BNP and Jamaat, once uneasy allies, suddenly found themselves walking on political quicksand. BNP, which had hoped to rebuild itself gradually, now faces pressure to reposition: should it distance itself from a trial many view as politically motivated, or should it lean into the narrative of accountability? Jamaat, meanwhile, senses an opening it has not enjoyed in decades. Its demand for a referendum on the July Charter is less about constitutional order and more about reclaiming lost ground.

(MA Hossain, is a political and security analyst based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Dr Vishakha jha is assistant professor, Woxsen University, Hyderabad, India) South Asia Monitor

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

For weeks, political actors behaved as though they were fighting over turf in an old-fashioned rivalry. BNP insisted that the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, betrayed earlier commitments. Jamaat demanded a referendum on the July Charter, mobilizing its traditional Islamic networks

For weeks, political actors behaved as though they were fighting over turf in an old-fashioned rivalry. BNP insisted that the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, betrayed earlier commitments. Jamaat demanded a referendum on the July Charter, mobilizing its traditional Islamic networks. The NCP, newer and weaker, tried to preserve its self-declared neutrality while begging for relevance. The bickering was constant, almost theatrical.

But that was before the Hasina trial eclipsed everything. Her fall in August 2024 - after a student-led uprising that ended her 15-year rule - was momentous. Yet what followed has been nothing short of national trauma. The charges brought against her are

Justice Theory. This framework examines how societies deal with a legacy of large-scale human rights abuses during a political transition. Transitional justice typically seeks to achieve accountability, reconciliation, and institutional reform, often through mechanisms like truth commissions, reparations, and, critically, prosecutions. However, the success of such mechanisms hinges on their impartiality and perceived legitimacy.

In Bangladesh, the death sentence for former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for alleged crimes against humanity represents a highly politicized application of transitional justice. Instead of acting as a neutral mechanism for national healing and closure, the ICT's verdict is widely perceived



Delhi woke up to worsening air last Friday as the city's overall Air Quality Index (AQI) reached 384 at 8:00 am, placing it in the 'very poor' category, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Noida reported an AQI of 404, falling into the 'severe' category, while Greater Noida and Ghaziabad recorded 'very poor' air quality with AQI of 377 and 350 respectively. Mundka recorded the highest pollution level in the city with an AQI of 436, followed closely by Rohini at 432. Anand Vihar (408) and Jahangirpuri (420) also remained in the 'severe' range, reflecting sharp deterioration across several parts of the national capital.

Neighboring cities fared no better. Noida reported an AQI of 404, falling into the 'severe' category, while Greater Noida and Ghaziabad recorded 'very poor' air quality with AQI of 377 and 350 respectively.

AQI is a number measuring the current level of outdoor air pollution and its associated health risks. It provides a simple, single number and color to show the air's quality, with higher numbers indicating more pollution and greater health risks. A higher AQI often means sensitive groups should limit outdoor exertion and everyone may experience health effects, especially at higher levels. The AQI tracks pollutants like ozone, particle pollution (PM2.5), carbon monoxide, and others. It converts complex air quality data into a single index number on a scale that usually runs from 0 to 500. The index is broken down into six color-coded categories (e.g., green for good, red for unhealthy), which represent different levels of health concern. (0-50) means, air quality is satisfactory, and there is little to no risk. (50-100) is moderate, meaning air quality is acceptable, but some people, especially those sensitive to pollution, may experience minor symptoms. (102-150) means unhealthy, sensitive individuals may experience more severe health effects. And goes up to hazardous at (303-500), which means extreme emergency with major health hazards.

Every year with the start of winter, soon after Diwali, North India, mainly Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) surrounding Delhi, become choked with severe pollutants and the skies becoming smoggy. Most news channels and papers carry stories of politicians from different parties blame each other of their inability to control and deal seriously with this annual pollution. The same stories repeat year after year but they have failed to tackle the problem.

Some piecemeal efforts were made to pacify people but the lack of serious efforts is missing. Even though some efforts to find solutions for the burning of agricultural waste were made at village level in Punjab and Haryana, it is not enough.

Solving northern India's pollution problem requires a multi-pronged approach including improving agricultural practices like ending stubble burning, transitioning to cleaner energy and fuels, for industries and transport, enhancing waste management and strengthening regulations and policies. Implementing these solutions requires immediate action and long-term strategies like investing in green infrastructure and community and village level engagements. Meantime, overseas Indians can also rope in their expertise to solve the pollution issue. School and college curriculums must include deeper learning to ensure the young imbibe best practices for such issues.

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Udupi Palace is a South Indian vegetarian BYOB restaurant. My friend and I had dinner there shortly after I returned from south India. We were greeted warmly and the ambiance is pleasant. The menu is so enticing that we ordered too much food but it was almost as good the next day.

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Popularly referred to as the "Paradise on Earth," Kashmir is a breathtaking valley in Jammu & Kashmir union territory in 2019. Offering unique experiences year-round, it captivates visitors with Shikara rides and Mughal gardens in Srinagar during summers and autumn where the golden hues of Chinar trees transform the landscape. The Gondola ride-Asia's longest cable car-and skiing in Gulmarg are popular winter activities.

Spring bring blooming tulips and pleasant weather for outdoor adventure making Wildlife spotting at the Dachigam National Park, River rafting and trekking in Sonamarg top things to do. Whereas, summer is the best time to explore the Lidder, Aru, and Betaab Valleys in Pahalgam, where trout fishing and nature walks are popular. Each destination in Kashmir has its own distinct charm.

The ideal duration for a trip ranges from 4 to 7 days, with Srinagar serving as the perfect base for day trips to Gulmarg and Sonamarg. However, some travelers prefer staying overnight in these destinations for a more immersive experience. A stay of 1-2 nights in Pahalgam is highly recommended to fully appreciate its scenic beauty and tranquil surroundings. Other destinations, such as Anantnag and Baramulla, are lesser-known gems often combined with these popular spots.

Stay options in Kashmir cater to all preferences, ranging from houseboats on Dal Lake in Srinagar to cozy mountain resorts in Gulmarg. In Sonamarg, guesthouses and eco-friendly accommodations are popular, while Pahalgam is known for its riverfront cottages and heritage properties. Budget-friendly mid-

range hotels are available across all major destinations.

Kashmiri cuisine, especially the traditional Wazwan, is renowned worldwide for its rich, aromatic spices and flavors. Sampling these local dishes is a must. Don't leave without purchasing Kashmiri shawls, apples, saffron and dried fruits (almonds and walnuts) from Lal Chowk Market in Srinagar, where the region's craftsmanship and produce shine.

While Kashmir is generally safe for tourists, it's advisable to stay updated with local news and advisories. Srinagar, the gateway to the region, is well connected by air. Travelers should also be mindful of winter travel disruptions caused by heavy snowfall, which can impact road connectivity to Gulmarg and Sonamarg.

PLACES TO VISIT IN KASHMIR

Dal Lake: The Jewel of Srinagar, the Dal Lake is synonymous to a visit to Srinagar and is almost a visual definition of the town. Spread over 15 kms, it is the second-largest lake in Jammu & Kashmir. The mirror-like Dal Lake reflects the snow-dusted peaks of the Pir Panjal moun-

tains while the colorful shikaras (gondolas) float around. The houseboats and shikaras are its main attractions.

Gulmarg Gondola: Gulmarg Gondola is the second longest and second highest cable car in the world and the prime attraction Gulmarg is known for. Divided into two phases, it ferries

almost 600 people per hour to and from the Apharwat Mountain, which is where most of the winter sports happen in Gulmarg.

Stay in a Houseboat: Nestled on the serene waters of Dal Lake and Nigeen Lake, the houseboats of Srinagar offer a unique and immersive experience, providing a glimpse into the lifestyle of the Kashmir Valley. A stay in these floating abodes is a poetic journey where every moment is embraced by the gentle ripples of the lake and, the picturesque views of the surrounding mountains.

Shankaracharya Temple: The Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar, located on top of the Shankaracharya Hill, is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is one of the oldest shrines in Kashmir. www.holidify.com

For detailed story visit
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