



Festival of Globe celebrates Republic Day

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India-EU relationship "more important than before"

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Lisa Mishra to perform with Ed Sheeran in Delhi

▶ Details on page 15

INDIA POST
SURVEY
survey@indiapost.com

This week's question
Should illegal Indians be deported?

Last week's result
Should US get involved in Gaza?
YES 24% NO 76%

DUNKI ROUTE BURST

India's proactive stance on illegal immigration hailed as US deports migrants



US Air Force Plane carrying Indian citizens who allegedly illegally migrated to US arrives in Amritsar. (ANI Photo)

WASHINGTON: India's proactive stance on illegal immigration and streamlining legal mobility has come in for praise as an India-bound US C-17 military aircraft, carrying around 200 deported illegal migrants left Texas, marking President Donald Trump's first crackdown on illegal immigrants from India after assuming office last month.

The move comes after detailed discussions held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Trump over a phone call on January 27 and ahead of PM Modi's forthcoming February 13-14 visit to Washington.

Similar deportation flights have left for Guatemala, Peru, Honduras and other countries since January 24 as the US President has vowed to crack down on illegal mi-

gration that has been the highlight of his Presidential election campaign. Within hours of taking office for the second time, Trump had decided to put an end to birthright citizenship and mobilize troops along the US-Mexico border.

"New Delhi has been proactive in saying that we also have no reason to support illegal immigration and that we would, as in the past, cooperate in deportation of those who have been identified by our authorities as Indian citizens. At the same time, there is a push from the US side to try and ensure that legal migration is streamlined which is an important source of talent for the country.

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PM Modi to visit White House next week

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'India is a very important market for AI'

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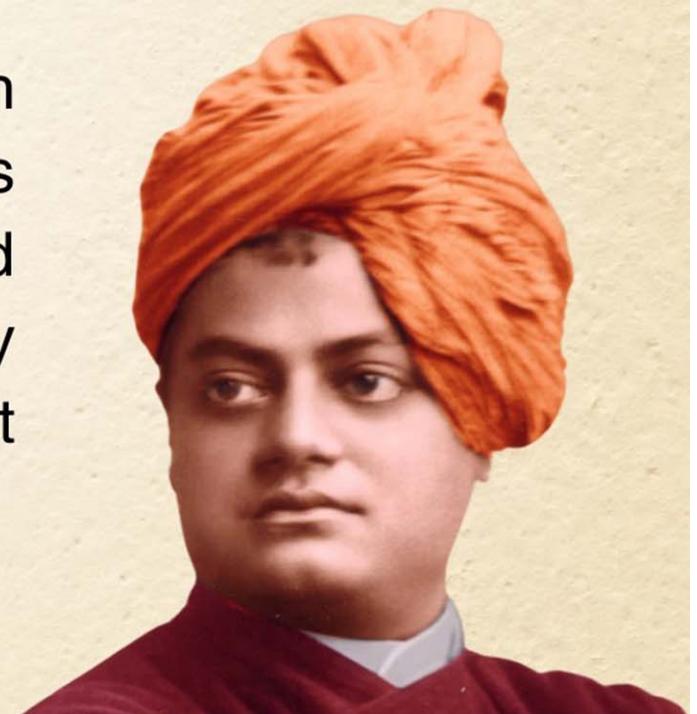


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February 22,2025 marks the 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's arrival in Oakland, where he delivered eight historic lectures from the very pulpit and chair we will gather around at the First Unitarian Church of Oakland.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Bollywood:

Tamannaah Bhatia's self-transformation



During her recent appearance on a podcast, Tamannaah recalled being in her caravan, overwhelmed by emotions, with tears welling up in her eyes

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Lifestyle:

Lisa Mishra with Ed Sheeran

Global singer Ed Sheeran's gig in Delhi-NCR will see Lisa Mishra joining him on the stage. Expressing her excitement, Lisa released a press note

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DUNKI ROUTE BURST



India's proactive stance on illegal immigration has come in for praise as an India-bound US military aircraft with deported illegal migrants left Texas

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India important market for AI

OpenAI Co-founder and CEO Sam Altman said, India is a very important market for AI and the company's second biggest market globally

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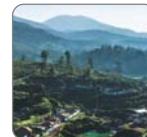
Community:

FOG celebrates Republic Day



FOG Republic Day event was a huge success. Jo Sharma (Jyotsna) FIA/FOG Cultural Chair organized and coordinated cultural with all the 80 dance-companies

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Travel

Ooty: Queen of the Nilgiris

Dotted with tea gardens, serene waterfalls, winding country lanes, and charming colonial architecture, Ooty is the perfect respite for everyone

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Trump imposes tariffs



The US President has taken action under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act emphasizing need to protect Americans and fulfill a campaign promise

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Wellness:

85% increase in cancer cases

South-East Asia region expected to witness 85% increase in the number of new Cancer cases and deaths, said the World Health Organization

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DUNKI ROUTE BURST

India's proactive stance on illegal immigration hailed as US deports migrants

WASHINGTON: India's proactive stance on illegal immigration and streamlining legal mobility has come in for praise as an India-bound US C-17 military aircraft, carrying around 200 deported illegal migrants left Texas, marking President Donald Trump's first crackdown on illegal immigrants from India after assuming office last month.

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Similar deportation flights have left for Guatemala, Peru, Honduras and other countries since January 24 as the US President has vowed to crack down on illegal migration that has been the highlight of his Presidential election campaign. Within hours of taking office for the second time, Trump had decided to put an end to birthright citizenship and mobilize troops along the US-Mexico border.

"New Delhi has been proactive in saying that we also have no reason to support illegal immigration and that we would, as in the past, cooperate in deportation of those who have been identified by our authorities as Indian citizens. At the same time, there is a push from the US side to try and ensure that legal migration is streamlined which is an important source of talent for the country. For us, a lot of our talented young people would have oppor-

tunities if these aspects are simplified, whether it is access to H-1b visas or green cards, I think this should be a part of the narrative with the United States," Former

"will do what's right" on the issue of deportation of illegal migrants.

The discussions also ranged around security issues and trade in what the

including in the US.

"We have always taken the view that if there are any of our citizens, who are not here legally, if we are sure that they are our citizens, we have always been open to their legitimate return to India. So it's not a position unique to the US," EAM Jaishankar told reporters in Washington, last month.

He affirmed that India's position on the issue has been "consistent" and "principled" and he did clearly convey this to the new US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

"I understand right now that there is a certain debate going on and a resulting sensitivity which is there. But we have been consistent, we have been very principled about it, and that remains our position, and I conveyed that very clearly to US State Secretary Marco Rubio," he added.

According to immigration statistics published on the website of US Customs and Border Protection, over 90,000 Indians entered the US illegally in 2022-23.

In the US fiscal year 2024, which ended in September, more than 1,000 Indian nationals had been repatriated by charter and commercial flights, according to the then Assistant Secretary at the US Department of Homeland Security, Royce Bernstein Murray.

In October last year, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported Indians back home, marking a growing trend in deportations to India. *ANS*



The move comes after detailed discussions held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Trump over a phone call on January 27 and ahead of PM Modi's forthcoming February 13-14 visit to Washington

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla recently told IANS.

After the January 27 phone conversation, the first between the two leaders since Trump's 2.0 inauguration on January 20, the US President said that India

White House had described as a "productive call".

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar had earlier stated that New Delhi is open to the "legitimate return" of Indian nationals living "illegally" abroad,

Plane carrying Indian citizens who allegedly illegally migrated to US arrives in Amritsar

AMRITSAR: The US Air Force plane carrying Indian citizens who allegedly illegally migrated to the US arrived in Punjab's Amritsar.

Earlier, a US Embassy spokesperson said that while specific details cannot be shared, the United States is vigorously enforcing its border and immigration laws. The spokesperson emphasized that the actions taken send a "clear message that illegal migration is not worth the risk."

"I have received a number of inquiries on the report of a deportation flight to India. I can't share any details on those inquiries, but I can share, on the record,

that the United States is vigorously enforcing its border, tightening immigration laws, and removing illegal migrants. These actions send a clear message: illegal migration is not worth the risk," a US Embassy spokesperson said.

On January 24, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had stated that it would facilitate the return of Indian nationals "overstaying" or residing without proper documentation in the United States or "anywhere in the world."

While addressing a press briefing in New Delhi, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We are against illegal immigration, especially because it is linked to

several forms of organized crime."

He added, "For Indians not just in the United States, but anywhere in the world, if they are Indian nationals and they are overstaying, or they are in a particular country without proper documentation, we will take them back, provided documents are shared with us so that we can verify their nationality and that they are indeed Indians. If that happens to be the case, we will take things forward and facilitate their return to India."

The deportation has already taken a political turn with the Congress claiming that the US was treating Indian citizens poorly.

"Shocking & shameful! The way the US

is deporting Indians--chained like criminals--is inhumane & unacceptable. Why is PM Narendra Modi silent? Where is self-respect? Dr S Jaishankar what are you doing to stop this humiliation of our people? Speak up & act Now," posted Congress MP Manickam Tagore.

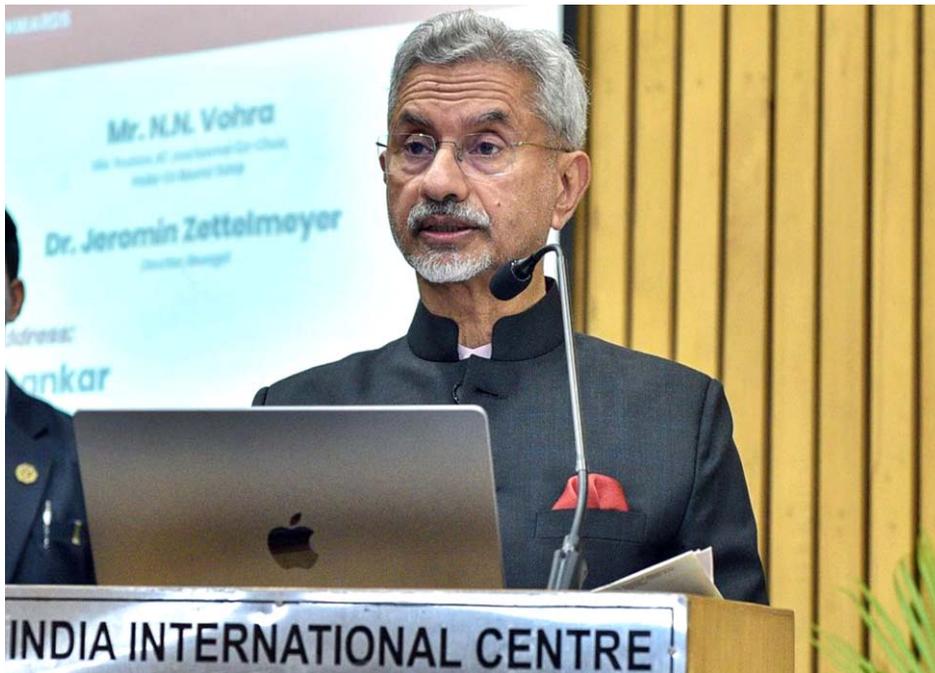
Meanwhile, CBS News reported that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is releasing some migrant detainee. This as its detention system has exceeded maximum capacity amid a spike in arrests under President Trump. According to CBS News, space inside detention facilities was at 109% capacity, with the close to 42,000 migrant detainees. *ANI*

India-EU relationship "more important than before" in this volatile, uncertain world: EAM Jaishankar

NEW DELHI: Emphasizing the importance of the ties between India and the European Union as a "stabilizing factor" amid the global volatility and uncertainty, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar asserted that the relationship between the two is "more important than ever before".

Delivering the keynote address at the IIC-Bruegel Annual Seminar in Delhi recently, the Foreign Minister further highlighted the interaction with the European Commission, expressing expectations for even collaboration in the future.

"In a world that promises to be so volatile and so uncertain, a stronger India-EU relationship can be an important stabilizing factor. India is certainly cognizant of the greater strategic awakening of Europe in the last few years. That too can serve as a driver of deeper engagement. We already see that happening, for example, in closer defence in security and technology cooperation. The bottom line is that the India-EU relationship is more important than



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar addresses the opening ceremony of the 2nd IIC-Bruegel Annual Seminar, in New Delhi. (ANI Photo)

ever before," Jaishankar said.

He added, "In recent years there has

been a more intensive engagement with the European Commission. We expect

that to be even more in the coming days."

Notably, India and the EU are two of the world's largest economies having shared synergies and offering significant trade and investment opportunities. The EU is India's largest trading partner and India is the EU's 9th trading partner in terms of bilateral trade in goods.

As per the Delegation of the European Union to India and Bhutan, in 2023, the total value of EU-India trade in goods stood at Euro 113.3 billion. The EU is the main export destination for Indian goods. India exported to the EU goods worth Euro 64.9 billion, while it imported from the EU goods worth Euro 48.4 billion, thus enjoying a trade in goods surplus of Euro 16.5 billion.

The main export items from the EU to India are: machinery and mechanical appliances, aircraft, spacecraft and parts, electrical machinery and equipment. The main import items from India to the EU are: machinery, transport equipment, chemicals and related products. ANI

India-Nepal Tourism Summit 2025 discusses measures to promote tourism

JANAKPUR: Aiming to strengthen bilateral cooperation in tourism and allied sectors, the Consulate General of India and States Division (MEA India), along with the PHDCCI India-Nepal Centre, organized the India-Nepal Tourism Summit 2025 in Janakpur early this week. The summit focused on new roadmaps to enhance collaboration, along with measures to improve government-industry interaction for tourism sector development in both countries.

A panel of experts deliberated on expanding cross-border tourism integration, with particular emphasis on neighboring Indian states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Uttarakhand. Discussions highlighted ways to facilitate travel and increase connectivity between India and Nepal, enabling economic and cultural benefits for both nations.

Addressing the event, Satish Kumar Singh, Chief Minister of Madhesh Pradesh, emphasized the economic significance of tourism, stating, "From the day when I became the Chief Minister, no matter the platform I always have been presenting my points forward in all possible platforms; it is not only the development (of tourism) in Madhesh, improved economy, it is contributing to the GDP of Nepal. I have been pre-

sending my points in front of the Prime Minister for further discussion on the measures of further elevating the possibilities."

Singh reaffirmed his government's commitment to transforming Janakpur into a major spiritual and cultural tourism destination. He highlighted ongoing efforts to develop historic sites like Dhanushadham, ensuring visitors experience Nepal's rich cultural heritage. He also underscored the

going, will be going and used to go for pilgrimage in various locations across these two countries. Currently, the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh which is underway, a large number of pilgrims from Nepal have reached there and the number is continuing to rise."

Meena highlighted the resurgence of India-Nepal tourism as both economies rebound from the effects of the COVID-19

A panel of experts deliberated on expanding cross-border tourism integration, with particular emphasis on neighboring Indian states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Uttarakhand. Discussions highlighted ways to facilitate travel and increase connectivity between India and Nepal

need for enhanced border area development and connectivity through improved road, railway, and air infrastructure. Additionally, he spoke about the Ramayana Circuit, which aims to put Janakpur and Ayodhya on the global tourism map as top pilgrimage destinations.

Speaking on India-Nepal cultural ties, Devi Sahai Meena, Consul General of India in Birgunj, stated, "Culture and religion are the major aspect between our nation and citizens of both the nations have been

pandemic. He noted that business conditions have improved, with positive developments in infrastructure and value-added services making tourism a more attractive economic sector.

He further emphasized the importance of strengthening cross-border infrastructure, mentioning advancements such as Integrated Check Posts (ICPs), digital payment systems, operational railway networks, and an improved road network. ANI

MEA highlights India-Arab cooperation at Universities' Presidents' Conference

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs recently highlighted the growing cooperation between India and the Arab world while announcing the organization of the 1st India-Arab Universities' Presidents' Conference in New Delhi.

The event was organized by the MEA in collaboration with the League of Arab States, the University Grants Commission (UGC), and the Association of Arab Universities. The conference was inaugurated by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh.

"Further strengthening cooperation between India & the Arab world. 1st India Arab Universities' Presidents' Conference organized by @MEAIndia in collaboration with @arableague_gs, @ugc_india & Association of Arab Universities, took place in New Delhi today. MoS @KVSinghMPGonda inaugurated the event," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

It added, "Delegates from Arab countries, along with representatives from Indian universities participated in the conference, which provides a platform for further exchange of ideas in the field of higher education." ANI

"Moment of divine connection": PM Modi after Snan at Sangam

PRAYAGRAJ: Prime Minister Narendra Modi took 'Snan' at Triveni Sangam--the confluence of three rivers, Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati--and termed it a moment of 'divine' connection.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister said he was filled with a spirit of devotion after taking a dip in the Sangam.

"Blessed to be at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. The Snan at the Sangam is a moment of divine connection, and like the crores of others who have taken part in it, I was also filled with a spirit of devotion," PM Modi said on X.

"May Maa Ganga bless all with peace, wisdom, good health and harmony," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered puja at Triveni Sangam. After reaching Prayagraj, the Prime Minister took a boat tour on the Yamuna River with Uttar



Prime Minister Narendra Modi offers prayers at Triveni Sangam during the ongoing Mahakumbh 2025, in Prayagraj (ANI Photo)

Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Mahakumbh 2025, which commenced on Paus Purnima (January 13, 2025), is the world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering, attracting devotees from across the globe. The Mahakumbh will continue until Mahashivratri on February 26.

In line with his commitment to promote and preserve India's spiritual and cultural heritage, the prime minister has consistently taken proactive steps to enhance infrastructure and facilities at pilgrimage sites.

Earlier, during his visit to Prayagraj on December 13, 2024, the prime minister inaugurated 167 development projects worth Rs 5,500 crore, improving connectivity, amenities and services for the general public.

Meanwhile, by 8 am on the day, over 3.748 million devotees had taken a holy dip in the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mystical Saraswati, increasing the deep spiritual fervor surrounding the grand religious congregation.

This includes more than 10 lakh Kalpvasis and 2.748 million pilgrims who arrived in the early hours to seek divine blessings. ANI

PM Modi to visit White House next week on Donald Trump's invitation: Report

WASHINGTON, DC: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit the White House next week at the invitation of US President Donald Trump, Reuters reported citing a White House official.

The invitation comes days after a recent phone call between the two leaders on January 27, where both the leaders emphasized their commitment to advance the US-India strategic partnership and the Indo-Pacific Quad partnership.

During the call on January 27, Trump spoke about immigration and stressed the importance of India buying more American-made security equipment and fair bilateral trading ties.

"The two leaders discussed expanding and deepening cooperation. They also discussed a range of regional issues, including security in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe," the White House statement following the call read.

"The President emphasized the importance of India increasing its procurement of American-made security equipment and moving toward a fair bilateral trading relationship," it added.

The leaders also discussed plans for PM Modi's visit to the White House, and Indo-Pacific Quad partnership, with India hosting Quad Leaders for the first time later this year.

"The leaders discussed plans for Prime Minister Modi to visit the White House, underscoring the strength of the friendship and strategic ties between our nations." ANI

Trump to speak with Xi as China announces retaliatory tariffs

BEIJING: United States President Donald Trump is set to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Al Jazeera reported recently, citing Trump's top trade adviser, Peter Navarro.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt did not provide a specific timeline for the Trump-Xi call but said it would happen "soon", as reported by Al Jazeera.

Meanwhile, China has announced retaliatory tariffs on US goods in response to Washington's latest trade measures. Beijing will impose a 15 per cent tariff on imports of coal and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the US, following the American government's decision to impose 10 per cent tariffs on Chinese goods, Al Jazeera reported.

China's Ministry of Finance also said that a 10 per cent tariff would be applied to US imports, including crude oil, agricultural machinery, large-displacement vehicles and pick-up trucks, as reported by Al Jazeera.

The new measures were in response to the "unilateral tariff hike" by the US, it said, adding that Washington's decision "seriously violates World Trade Organization rules, does nothing to resolve its own problems, and disrupts normal economic and trade cooperation between China and the United States".

Beijing's tariffs, which would come into force on February 10, were announced shortly after US President Donald Trump said he would hold a call with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping.

"China's retaliatory tariffs are a calibrated response rather than an outright esca-

tion," Julien Chaisse, professor at City University of Hong Kong specializing in international economic law, told Al Jazeera. ANI

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FM Sitharaman to hold post-budget meeting with RBI top brass on Feb 8

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to address the Reserve Bank of India's central board on February 8 in a post-budget meeting to coordinate the fiscal and monetary steps required to accelerate GDP growth.

The customary meeting will take place a day after the RBI announces its monetary policy review amid expectations that it may cut interest rates for the first time in five years to spur growth as inflation has eased.

The Finance Minister has decided to stick to the fiscal consolidation path with a reduction in the fiscal deficit target to 4.4 percent of GDP for 2025-26 from 4.8 percent earlier, which has reduced the need for market borrowing by the Government.

This leaves more headroom for the RBI to adopt a soft money policy to spur growth and the Finance Minister is expected to drive home this point at the meeting. The new RBI Governor, Sanjay Malhotra, is a former Finance Ministry official and has already announced the injection of Rs 1.5 lakh crore in the banking system as the liquidity situation had become tight in the financial sector. *IANS*



Nirmala Sitharaman

TechBiz POST

India has over 300 mobile manufacturing units, exports surpass Rs 1.29 lakh cr: Ashwini Vaishnaw



NEW DELHI: India has risen to become the world's second-largest mobile manufacturer and from just 2 units in 2014, over 300 units are operational nationwide today, Union Minister for Railways and Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw said recently.

About 99.2 percent of mobile phones sold in India are now made locally as the manufacturing value has soared to Rs 4,22,000 crore, with exports crossing Rs 1,29,000 crore in 2024. *IANS*

India is a very important market for AI, can be a leading force in world: Sam Altman

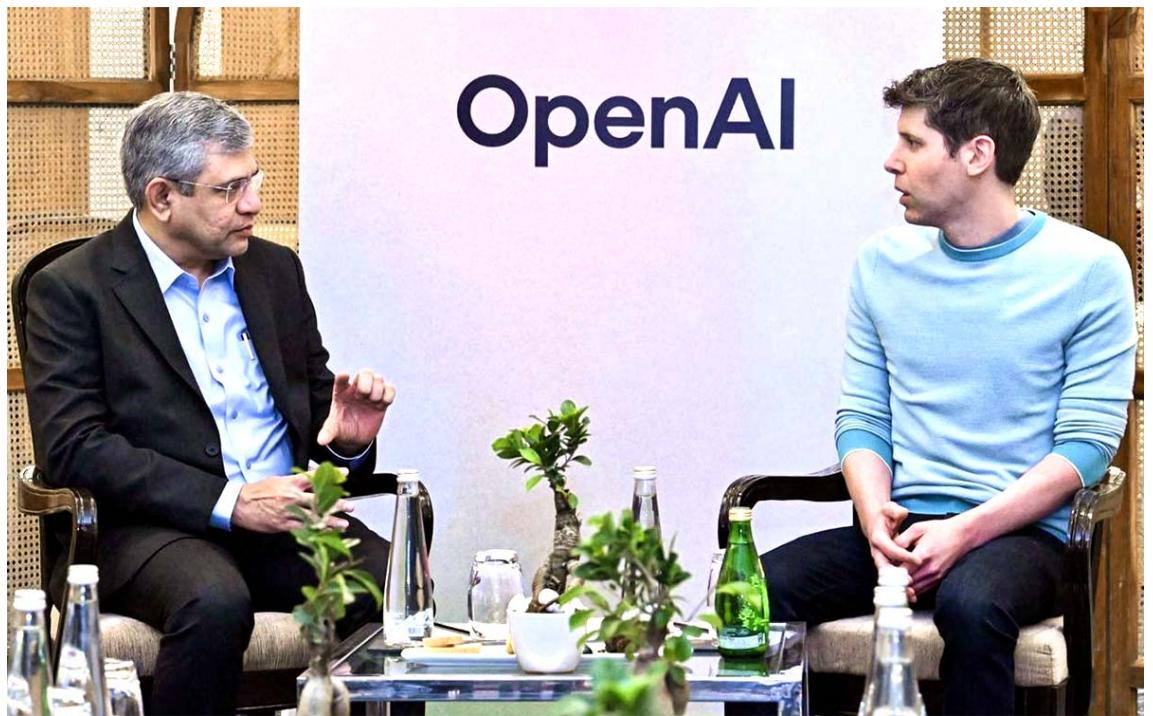
NEW DELHI: As India embarks on an exciting artificial intelligence (AI) journey, OpenAI Co-founder and CEO Sam Altman said, India is a very important market for AI and the company's second biggest market globally.

The owner of ChatGPT AI models was speaking at an event in the presence of Union Minister for Railways and Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw.

According to Altman, who has just announced a massive \$500 billion project called 'Stargate' building new AI infrastructure in the US - with SoftBank, Oracle and MGX - over the next four years, said that India should be a leader in the AI model race.

"India is a very important market for AI. It is our second biggest market. Models are still not cheap, but they are doable. India should be a leader there of course," he told the gathering.

He also clarified that his earlier comment on India being able to make or not being able to make large language models (LLMs)



Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw in a conversation with OpenAI CEO Sam Altman during a meeting, in New Delhi. (ANI Photo)

were "taken out of context".

According to Minister Vaishnaw, young entrepreneurs in the country are really focused on getting the next level of innovation that will reduce the cost and on the same lines that "we did the Chandrayaan mission,

why can't we do the same in the LLM space".

The country is likely to launch its own safe and secure indigenous AI model within six months at an affordable cost, the minister announced last month.

The Indian AI model would help the country emerge as a more reliable technological powerhouse of ethical AI solutions in the days to come. Backed by a high-end common computing facility, the IndiaAI mission is now closer to customizing indigenous AI solutions for the domestic context using Indian languages.

Scientists, researchers, developers and coders are working on multiple foundational models in this regard and with the given pace, the Union Minister expressed hope that the Indian AI model is likely to be ready within six months.

The AI model is beginning with the computation facility of roughly 10,000 GPUs. Soon, the remaining 8693 GPUs will be added. It will largely benefit researchers, students and developers in the beginning. The government has decided to give it to the users for less than Rs 100 per GPU after subsidizing 40 percent of the cost. *IANS*

Women-led Indian startups making global mark: Union Minister

NEW DELHI: Women-led startups in India are making a global mark, and they hold the promise to realize the Viksit Bharat goal, said Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology.

Speaking to a delegation of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry - Ladies Organization (FICCI-FLO), the Minister said that women have made a mark even in difficult sectors like the space.

He said this citing the example of India's Solar mission "Aditya L1" which is led by Nigar Shaji who became known as ISRO's "Sunny Lady".

"Women-led development is a key priority of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's governance agenda with the vision that women-led startups will place In-

dia on the global map in the years to come and our women entrepreneurs have the potential to realize that goal," Singh said.

He added that from 2014 onwards, women's empowerment has got a practical meaning with many of the welfare schemes. This includes entrepreneurship-promoting schemes like PM MUDRA and PM Vishwakarma schemes largely benefiting the women workforce. *IANS*



Tata Power posts 10 pc jump in Q3 net profit at Rs 1,188 crore

MUMBAI: Tata Power reported a robust 10 percent increase in net profit to Rs 1,188 crore for the Oct-Dec quarter of the current financial year compared to the corresponding figure of Rs 1,076 crore in the same period of 2023-24.

The Tata Group company said the strong performance was due to better realization in the core business segments comprising power generation, transmission, distribution and renewables.

The consolidated revenue of the power major during the third quarter rose 3 percent to Rs 15,793 crore from Rs 15,294 crore during the same period last year, according to the company statement.

The company's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) increased by 7 percent to Rs 3,481 crore from Rs 3,250 crore in the year-ago period.

Tata Power said its renewable business in Q3FY25 recorded a 59 percent jump to Rs 214 crore and by 41 percent to Rs 787 crore over nine months of the current financial year. The clean and green portfolio now stands at around 6.7 GW installed and a pipeline of 10 GW, which will take the total portfolio to over 16.7 GW.



With close to 2.5 GW of rooftop installations nationwide, the Company has advanced its #GharGharSolar initiative to Tamil Nadu, building on the success in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, and Chhattisgarh.

With capex investments of Rs 3,000+ crore in the first 9 months of FY25, the Transmission & Distribution business reported 7 percent growth in net profit to Rs 370 crore in Q3FY25 and 32 percent to Rs 1384 crore in the nine months of the financial year, according to the company statement.

Praveer Sinha, CEO and Managing Director of Tata Power said the company has delivered a sustained PAT (profit after tax) growth trajectory over the last 21 quarters and that all the businesses have been contributing to this growth.

"We have emerged as a clean energy leader with a presence across the full value chain of manufacturing, EPC, and development of renewable projects along with retail supply through group captives. As an integrated power company, we offer complete energy services towards our portfolio of generation, transmission and distribution solutions to provide affordable power for all," Sinha added. *IANS*

India's premium smartphone market grows 36 pc, affordable 5G share at 80 pc

NEW DELHI: India's premium smartphone segment continued its strong double-digit growth momentum last year, with Apple, for the first time, securing a spot among the top five smartphone brands in India in Q4 2024, according to a new report.

Apple recorded a 72 percent YoY growth, capturing an 11 percent market share in Q4.

Similarly, the super-premium smartphone segment and uber-premium segment (above Rs 1,00,000) posted impressive gains, up 10 percent and 25 percent, respectively, according to the CyberMedia Research (CMR) report.

Apple's market share in the super-premium segment (Rs 50,000-Rs 1,00,000) segment skyrocketed by 82 percent YoY, while the uber-premium segment (Rs 1,00,000) surged by 32 percent YoY.

Aggressive marketing, deep festive discounts, and strong demand for both latest and previous-generation iPhones enabled this market growth, according to the report.



According to Menka Kumari, senior analyst, Industry Intelligence Group (IIG), CMR, in 2024, India's smartphone market presents a complex picture of a heterogeneous consumer base.

On one end, the premium segment continues to expand, reflecting a shift toward high-performance lifestyle statements. On the other hand, less than Rs 10,000 segment is experiencing green shoots of recovery, she mentioned.

Across price segments, affordability and accessibility initiatives are empowering consumer aspirations and driving market growth.

The India smartphone market in 2024 saw mixed trends across segments. While the affordable segment grew slightly by 1 percent YoY, the value-for-money segment declined by 7 percent, reflecting a shift toward premium smartphones, the findings showed.

The sub-Rs 10,000 5G segment saw 80 percent YoY growth in 2024, driven by new launches and rising demand for affordable, feature-rich smartphones. *IANS*

PM Modi smarter than Prez Trump, knows how to convince global leaders: Jim Rogers

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is smarter than US President Donald Trump and in the current world economic order, he is most capable of working together with the new US administration, which would be good for both the nations, veteran global investor Jim Rogers told IANS recently.

After finishing his two-day visit to Paris, PM Modi is likely to pay a two-day visit to the US beginning February 12, to hold wide-ranging talks with the US President on February 13.

Rogers said that PM Modi is going to convince many leaders in the world with his dynamic vision and capabilities, which have kept the country on the path



Jim Rogers

to become the world's third-largest economy despite geo-political uncertainties.

"PM Modi is going to meet Trump. In my view, he will be true to himself, to his own brains, that he will not get swept away by the dazzle of foreign politicians. In my view, Mr. Modi is smarter than Mr. Trump," said the 82-year-old American investor and financial commentator based in Singapore.

PM Modi will be one of the few foreign leaders to visit Washington, DC, for one-on-one talks just weeks after Trump's new administration took office.

The leaders also held a phone call last month, after which the US President said PM Modi will probably visit the White House in February.

The January 27 phone conversation was the second time the two leaders spoke after Trump's re-election - the first took place just after he had won the Presidential election in November 2024.

According to Rogers, if PM Modi continues to be true to what he knows is good for India, he's going to be fantastic.

"And I'm sure India and America can work together to be even more fantastic. PM Modi can open up the Indian economy; he is smart enough to do that. It would be good for India as well as for America," said the ace global investor.

The US President has already promised to strengthen the "great partnership" with India and PM Modi, continuing the close ties he forged in his first term. *IANS*

Mexico responds to US tariff announcement with proposal for collaboration

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo has rejected US President Donald Trump's accusations of Mexico's alleged alliances with criminal organizations. She emphasized Mexico's commitment to combating crime and drug trafficking, highlighting the need for cooperation between neighboring countries.

Sheinbaum emphasized the importance of collaboration between neighboring countries, stating, "Mexico does not want confrontation. We start with collaboration between neighboring countries. Mexico not only does not want fentanyl to reach the United States but anywhere."

This comes after US President Donald Trump announced a 25 percent tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico, as well as a 10 percent tariff on goods from China, citing concerns over illegal immigration and the smuggling of drugs, including fentanyl.

Pardo strongly rejected the White House accusations, stating, "Problems are not resolved by imposing tariffs."

Highlighting the need for joint efforts to combat criminal groups involved in drug trafficking, she affirmed, "If the United States wants to combat criminal groups that traffic drugs and generate violence, we must work together in an integrated manner, but always under the principles of shared responsibility, mutual trust,." ANI

Immigration

POST

The US President has taken action under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), emphasizing the need to protect Americans and fulfill a campaign promise

Trump imposes 25 percent tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico, 10 percent on China

WASHINGTON DC: United States President Donald Trump has announced a 25 percent tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico, as well as a 10 percent tariff on goods from China, citing concerns over illegal immigration and the smuggling of drugs, including fentanyl.

The US President has taken action under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), emphasizing the need to protect Americans and fulfill a campaign promise.

Trump said that the tariffs have been implemented to protect US citizens from the threats posed by illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

"Today, I have implemented a 25% Tariff on Imports from Mexico and Canada (10% on Canadian Energy), and a 10% additional Tariff on China. This was done through the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) because of the major threat of illegal aliens and deadly drugs killing our Citizens, including fentanyl. We need to protect Americans, and it is my duty as President to ensure the safety of all. I made a promise on my Campaign to stop the flood of

illegal aliens and drugs from pouring across our Borders, and

<https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/>

to hit imports from Canada and Mexico on 1 February.

During the election campaign, Trump threatened to hit Chinese-made products with tariffs of up to 60 percent, but held off on any immediate action on his first day back in the White House, instead ordering his administration to study the issue.

Earlier, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that their response to US tariffs would be "forceful but reasonable".

"If the president does choose to implement any tariffs against Canada, we're ready with a response -- a purposeful, forceful but reasonable, immediate response," Trudeau told reporters before a meeting with his advisory council on Canada-US relations recently, The Globe and Mail reported. ANI



United States President Donald Trump

Americans overwhelmingly voted in favor of it," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

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Trump has repeatedly said he will follow through with his threat

German parliament rejects immigration bill, big blow to Merz ahead of elections

BERLIN: German Parliament rejected the immigration bill pushed by opposition's Friedrich Merz to tighten rules in the existing laws, DW reported.

The bill, backed by the Germany's far-right parties, was narrowly rejected in the parliament by 11 votes with 349 lawmakers voting against it and 338 voting in support.

Christian Democratic Union Of Germany leader Friedrich Merz pushed the 'Influx Limitation Law' that advocates permanent border control with all neighboring countries and for people to be turned back at the borders, even if they make a request for asylum. DW reported.

This comes as a major setback for Merz who is running

against Olaf Scholz to be the next chancellor of Germany. The snap elections are scheduled to be held on February 23.

The polls in Germany shows that Merz has a 30 percent support and is favorite to become the Chancellor. Alternative for Germany (AfD) is in second with 20 percent support, DW reported.

Social Democratic Party of

Failed to gain the majority in the German Bundestag."

AfD leader Alice Weidel also slammed Merz saying that parliament decision signified "implosion of a conservative people's party," adding "this was the dismantling of Friedrich Merz as a candidate for chancellor."

Germany's upcoming

The bill, backed by the Germany's far-right parties, was narrowly rejected in the parliament by 11 votes with 349 lawmakers voting against it and 338 voting in support

Germany General Secretary saw the rejection of the bill as a major defeat of Merz, DW reported.

"Mr. Merz has failed twice today," Mutzenich said. "Failed to find the way to the AfD.

elections were triggered after Chancellor Olaf Scholz lost a vote of confidence in December, resulting in the collapse of his coalition government. ANI

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"Illegal migration is not worth the risk": US Embassy spokesperson

NEW DELHI: Following the reports of a US military plane deporting migrants to India, a US Embassy spokesperson said that while specific details cannot be shared, the United States is vigorously enforcing its border and immigration laws.

The spokesperson emphasized that the actions taken send a "clear message that illegal migration is not worth the risk."

"I have received a number of inquiries on the report of a deportation flight to India. I can't share any details

on those inquiries, but I can share, on the record, that the United States is vigorously enforcing its border, tightening immigration laws, and removing illegal migrants. These actions send a clear message: illegal migration is not worth the risk," a US Embassy spokesperson said.

Notably, citing US officials, Reuters had reported that a US military plane is deporting migrants to India, marking the farthest destination for such flights under the Trump administration.

The official, who requested anonymity, said that a C-17 aircraft had departed with migrants on board, though it would not reach India only after 24 hours.

Additionally, the Pentagon has begun providing flights to deport over 5,000 immigrants held in US facilities in El Paso, Texas, and San Diego, California.

So far, military aircraft have flown migrants to Guatemala, Peru and Honduras.

Military flights are a costly way to transport migrants. According to Reuters, a military deportation flight to Guatemala last week likely cost at least USD 4,675 per

migrant, Reuters reported.

On January 24, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had stated that it would facilitate the return of Indian nationals "overstaying" or residing without proper docu-

"I have received a number of inquiries on the report of a deportation flight to India. I can't share any details on those inquiries, but I can share, on the record, that the United States is vigorously enforcing its border, tightening immigration laws, and removing illegal migrants

mentation in the United States or "anywhere in the world."

During a press briefing in New Delhi, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We are against illegal immigration, especially because it is linked to several forms of organised crime." ANI

Shakira dedicates Grammy award to her 'immigrant brothers, sisters'

LOS ANGELES: During her Grammy acceptance speech, singer-songwriter Shakira took the opportunity to talk about the political turmoil surrounding President Donald Trump's immigration policies.

Shakira, who was awarded for the best Latin pop album for "Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran" from Jennifer Lopez, the "Waka Waka" hitmaker thanked her children and dedicated the award "to all my immigrant brothers and sisters in this country," she said.

"You are loved. You are worth it and I will always fight with you," added the Colombian singer.

Additionally, Shakira also honored "all of those women who work really hard everyday to provide to their families."

She concluded by saying: "You are the true She-wolves."

Grammys host and comedian Trevor Noah earlier in the evening made an unsightly joke about Colombia and its ongoing battle with criminal activity, reports variety.com.

He said that the "Hips Don't Lie" songstress "was the greatest thing out of Colombia that isn't a Class A felony."

Trevor also talked about how the Grammy winners are chosen after a vote of 13,000 members of the Recording Academy, quipping that the voting class also included "20 million illegal immigrants."

The jokes fell flat, seeing that just down the road, thousands of protesters had gathered to combat President Trump's aggressive policies against undocumented immigrants and promise of mass deportations, reports variety.com. IANS



Illegal immigration disrupting Delhi's economy, causing "notable increase of Muslim population": JNU report

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the Delhi assembly elections, the Jawaharlal Nehru University report on illegal immigrants in Delhi revealed that the migration from Bangladesh and Myanmar has altered Delhi-NCR's socio-political and economic fabric, causing a "notable increase of Muslim population".

The JNU report elaborated on how such influx of illegal settlers has not only transformed the city's demographics but disrupted its economy, strained the resources, and also strengthened criminal networks by feeding into it.

The report also claimed that the political patronage provided to illegal immigrants, including the facilitation of voter registration, has raised concerns about electoral manipulation and democratic integrity.

The 114-page report titled - Illegal Immigrants to Delhi: Analysing Socio-economic and Political Consequences also mentioned that illegal immigration has heightened the risk of public health crises, as overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions in migrant settlements contribute to the spread of infectious diseases.

"The presence of undocumented migrants complicates disaster response and crisis management, as these populations are often excluded from official relief efforts during emergencies," it said.

It also asserted that the porous India-Bangladesh border remains a major challenge for managing illegal immigration, with inadequate border control enabling the continued influx of migrants.

The JNU report pointed out that the lack of a comprehensive immigration policy in India has made it difficult to address the root causes of illegal migration and implement effective solutions.

"Migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar often face discrimination and hostility from local populations, further complicating their integration into Delhi's social fabric, which creates a higher level of social tension," the report said.

It also highlighted that illegal immigration has geopolitical implications, affecting India's relations with neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar. "Collaborative efforts are needed to address cross-border migration issues," it said.

Mentioning that the rising population density in Delhi due to migration has strained public transportation systems, the report also mentioned that the environmental impact of migrant settlements includes unregulated waste disposal, which contributes to pollution and public health hazards.

According to the findings in the JNU report, the illegal immigration has contributed to the proliferation of criminal networks, which exploit vulnerable migrants for activities such as smuggling and trafficking.

"Efforts to deport illegal immigrants are often delayed by bureaucratic challenges the lack of cooperation from migrants' home countries, and the approach of Delhi National capital territory," it said. ANI

Israel seeks to bring in record 133,000 Thai agricultural workers in 2025

JERUSALEM: A delegation from Israel's Population and Immigration Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Labor, headed by the Authority's Director General, Ronen Peretz, and with the participation of the Head of the Foreign Workers Administration at the Authority, Moshe Nakash, is leaving for Thailand with the aim of promoting dialogue with the Thai government.

The discussion is intended to examine two parallel issues: Doubling the number of workers coming to work in the agricultural sector, within the framework of the existing agreement. Currently, there are approximately 38,000 Thai agricultural workers in Israel. With preparations being made for the entry of a record number of approximately 13,000 agricultural workers in 2025.

The second issue was promoting a framework agreement for additional employment sectors, including construction and industry.

The delegation will meet with relevant government officials in Thailand, hold professional meetings, and return towards the end of the week. ANI/TPS

Rs 1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund to implement 'Cities as Growth Hubs'

NEW DELHI: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the Budget 2025-2026 in the Parliament last week, said the Government will set up an Urban Challenge Fund of Rs 1 lakh crore to implement the proposals for 'Cities as Growth Hubs', 'Creative Redevelopment of Cities' and 'Water and Sanitation' announced in the July Budget.

She further added this fund will finance up to 25 percent of the cost of bankable projects with a stipulation that at least 50 percent of the cost is funded from bonds, bank loans, and PPPs. An allocation of Rs 10,000 crore is proposed for 2025-26.

The Budget has proposed that a National Geospatial Mission will be started to develop foundational geospatial infrastructure and data. Using PM Gati Shakti, this Mission will facilitate the modernization of land records, urban planning, and design of infrastructure projects.

Sitharaman said that the Government has been giving priority to assisting urban poor and vulnerable groups. A scheme for the socio-economic upliftment of urban workers, will be implemented to help them improve their incomes, have sustainable livelihoods and, a better quality of life.

Gig workers of online platforms provide great dynamism to the new-age services economy. "Recognizing their contribution, our Government will arrange for their identity cards and registration on the e-Shram portal. They will be provided healthcare under PM Jan Arogya Yojana. This measure is likely to assist nearly 1 crore gig-workers," she said.

The Finance Minister highlighted that the PM SVANidhi scheme has benefitted more than 68 lakh street vendors giving them respite from high-interest informal sector loans. Building on this success, the scheme will be revamped with enhanced loans from banks, UPI-linked credit cards with Rs 30,000 limit, and capacity-building support. IANS

SINGAPORE: Singapore's public housing authority announced recently, it would apply cool coatings to all public estates islandwide following a successful pilot, as part of a broader program for sustainable living.

The Housing and Development Board (HDB) said in a statement that it would work closely with Town Councils, which are autonomous entities run by elected members of parliament and residents, to complete the coatings by 2030. IANS

Chandigarh's Rs. 2.73 Billion Development Projects: A Boon for Tricity Real Estate



CHANDIGARH: Chandigarh's administration has unveiled ambitious development plans worth Rs 2.73 billion for FY 2025, aimed at enhancing urban infrastructure and boosting public amenities. Key initiatives include the construction of over 600 government housing units in sectors like 20, 43, and 46, and the establishment of a state-of-the-art Police Training Centre in Sarangpur at an estimated cost of Rs 980 million. These projects are expected to catalyze growth not just within Chandigarh but also in its satellite cities, Zirakpur, Mohali, and Panchkula, making the Tricity region a preferred destination for businesses and residents alike.

Mukul Bansal, Managing Director, Motiaz highlighted the long-term implications of such investments, saying, "This initiative by the Chandigarh administration is a testament to their vision for urban transformation. The new housing projects and infrastructure developments will set a benchmark for regional planning. For neighboring cities like Zirakpur, these develop-

ments bring opportunities for enhanced connectivity and surplus demand. We anticipate increased interest in residential and commercial real estate, as people and businesses look for quality spaces in Chandigarh's tricity. This is the kind of momentum the region needs to establish itself as a truly integrated urban ecosystem."

Prateek Mittal, Executive Director, Sushma Group, stressed the strategic benefits, stating, "The announced projects are not just about building infrastructure

and commercial solutions. Mohali, with its robust IT sector and connectivity to Chandigarh, is poised to attract a younger, tech-savvy demographic, further fueling demand for well-planned developments. These investments lay the foundation for an inclusive, forward-looking Tricity region."

Piyush Kansal, Executive Director, Royale Estate Group, elaborated on the economic ripple effects, "With Chandigarh leading the way in infrastructure upgrades, the benefits will radi-

ate across the Tricity region. Surrounding cities, in particular, stand to gain from its proximity to these developments, with increased demand for high-end residential projects and commercial spaces. These initiatives not only promise economic growth

but also enhance the quality of life for residents. As developers, it gives us the opportunity to align our projects with the city's evolving aspirations and cater to a more discerning clientele."

Tejpreet Singh Gill, Managing Director, Gillco Group, emphasized the regional transformation, "The Rs 2.73 billion investment is a clear signal of the administration's commitment to holistic growth. Mohali, already a rising star in the real estate market, will benefit significantly from Chandigarh's infrastructure push. The improved road networks, enhanced public facilities, and focus on sustainability will make the Tricity region one of the most sought-after real estate destinations in North India. At Gillco, we are excited to contribute to this transformation by delivering high-quality developments that complement this growth story."

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"This initiative by the Chandigarh administration is a testament to their vision for urban transformation. The new housing projects and infrastructure developments will set a benchmark for regional planning"

but about creating a framework for sustained growth. Chandigarh's focus on government housing and institutional facilities will ease pressure on existing infrastructure, allowing private real estate players to focus on creating innovative housing

ate across the Tricity region. Surrounding cities, in particular, stand to gain from its proximity to these developments, with increased demand for high-end residential projects and commercial spaces. These initiatives not only promise economic growth

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Langston's duet-style homes enjoy nearby access to the amenities of Mountain House - parks, trails, conservation areas, quality schools and a library. Beautifully appointed and thoughtfully designed, they range in size from ~1,777 to ~2,084 square feet, with 3-4 bedrooms, up to 3 bathrooms and a loft featured in two of the plans. The epicurean kitchens are modern and efficient, perfect for those who love to cook, while open concept living areas make it easy for the family to be together. Shea understands the needs of families as a family-owned homebuilder.

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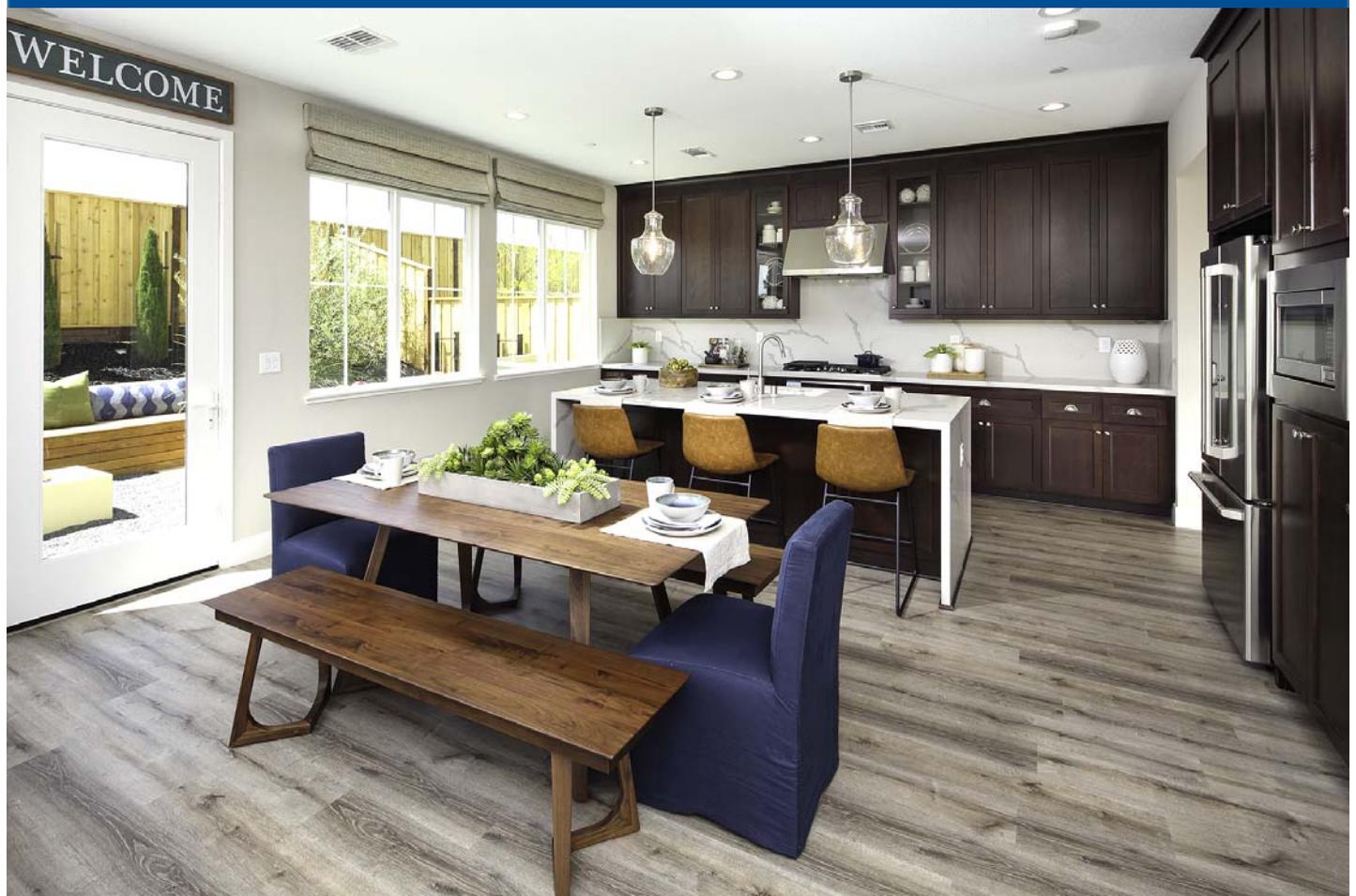
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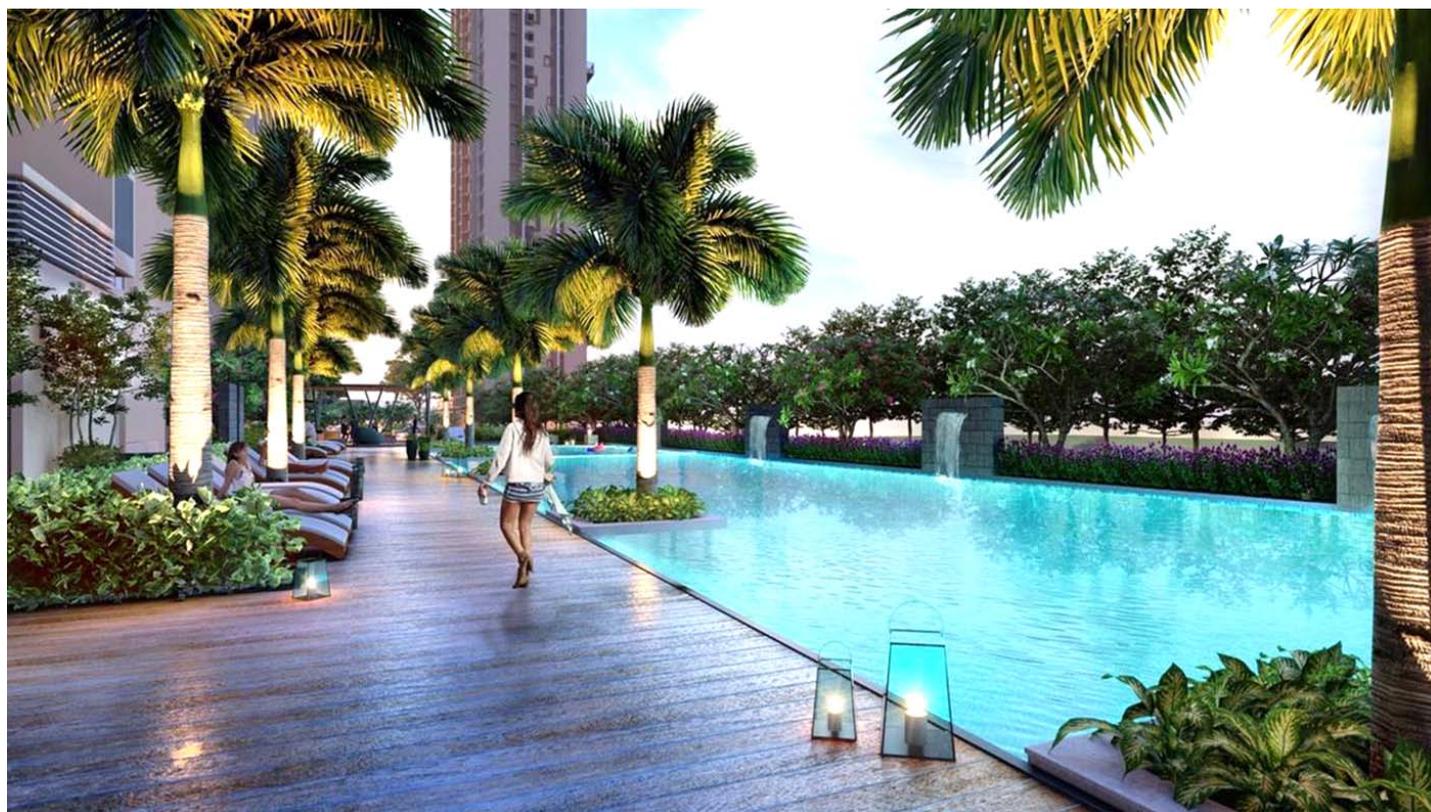
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62 pc HNIs and UHNIs plan to buy luxury properties in India in next 12-24 months



NEW DELHI: Confidence in India's economic growth remains strong and 62 percent of high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) and ultra high-net-worth individuals (UHNIs) have expressed desire to buy luxury properties in the country in the next 12-24 months, according to a recent report.

Affluent buyers believe that India will continue to be the fastest-growing major economy, with GDP growth projected to hover between 6 percent and 6.5 percent, said the annual 'Luxury Residential Outlook Survey 2025' conducted by India Sotheby's International Realty (ISIR).

The steady confidence underscores real estate's enduring appeal as a wealth-building asset. The number of ultra high-net-worth individuals in India has reached 13,600 in 2024, with projections of a 50 percent increase by 2028.

HNIs and UHNIs remain primarily motivated by capital appreciation, with 55 percent citing it as their main reason for investing in luxury residential real estate in 2025, up from 44 percent in 2024.

Nearly half of respondents expect real estate investments to deliver returns between 12 percent and 18 percent, while 38 percent anticipate returns below 12 percent.

Fewer than 15 percent foresee returns exceeding 18 percent, reflecting more realistic expectations after three years of strong gains, according to the report.

"As we look ahead to 2025, India's luxury real estate market is primed for continued growth, though with a more cautious optimism. We believe demand for trophy and bespoke luxury assets, especially spacious farmhouses and gated

community villas in hill and beach destinations will be a significant trend in the coming year," said Amit Goyal, MD of India Sotheby's International Realty.

India stands out as a frontrunner, with billionaires here experiencing a staggering 42 percent surge in collective wealth, now exceeding \$905 billion, according to the UBS "Billionaire Ambitions Report."

Over the past decade, India's billionaire count has more than doubled to 185, with their total wealth tripling. This solidifies India's position as the third-largest base for billionaires globally, just behind the US and China, Goyal noted.

The survey also highlighted a rising interest in second and holiday homes, with 54 percent of respondents considering

properties in hill or beach destinations.

Convenience is a key factor, as 55 percent prefer homes within a four-hour drive, while only 20 percent opt for international locations.

Among global markets, Dubai has overtaken London as the top choice, with US cities also gaining attention, said the report IANS

Trendy almirah designs ideas for your home 2025

HARINI BALASUBRAMANIAN

When you wish your home to look beautiful and clutter-free, there is no way you can ignore the need for storage spaces. Almirahs are an integral part of Indian homes. Since every room in the house has its unique storage requirements, installing the right storage unit can help you to organize things while making the room look spacious. With the variety of cabinets and almirahs and the different materials available these days, you can pick some inspiring almirah interior designs to deck up any corner of your home.

Full wall almirah design

Consider a full wall wardrobe for a spacious bedroom. Choose a darker shade if the walls are of neutral colors. Almirah design with hinged doors is an excellent idea as they always stay in trend.

Almirah design with decorative handle

Give a unique twist to a simple white wardrobe with a decorative golden handle.



This works well for wall cupboards and blends with the surrounding space and interior design theme.

Almirah cum dressing table design

This wardrobe is ideal for compact homes and it comes with an in-built dressing table. There are drawers and mirror attached to the same unit, saving a lot of space.



Almirah cum corner dressing table design

This is a variation of the above design, wherein the wardrobe unit with attached dresser can be placed in a room corner. It is suited for small bedrooms.

Almirah design with study table

This is among the latest bedroom



almirah designs, which comes with an attached study unit. It can be a great addition for children's room. The modern almirah is fitted with LED lights to illuminate the study space. www.housing.com

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

NEW DELHI: Global singer Ed Sheeran's gig in Delhi-NCR will see Lisa Mishra joining him on the stage.

Expressing her excitement, Lisa in a press note said, "Performing with Ed Sheeran is nothing short of a dream come true. He has been one of my biggest inspirations, and to share the same stage with him is surreal. This is a defining moment in my career--one that reinforces my belief in the power of music and hard work. I've always wanted to push boundaries, and this opportunity is a huge step forward in that journey. I'm incredibly grateful for the love and support I've received, and I can't wait to bring my heart and soul to this performance. I might even surprise the audience with some unreleased music, which makes this even more special. Music has been my passion since day one, and



Lisa Mishra to perform with Ed Sheeran in Delhi-NCR



"PERFORMING WITH ED SHEERAN IS NOTHING SHORT OF A DREAM COME TRUE. HE HAS BEEN ONE OF MY BIGGEST INSPIRATIONS, AND TO SHARE THE SAME STAGE WITH HIM IS SURREAL. THIS IS A DEFINING MOMENT IN MY CAREER--ONE THAT REINFORCES MY BELIEF IN THE POWER OF MUSIC AND HARD WORK"

that said 'Pune' celebrating the city and the crowd erupted in cheers.

One of the highlights of the evening was when Sheeran paused for a moment to express his gratitude. He shared that he has performed twice in India, both times in Mumbai and was excited to bring his music to other cities this time. He also expressed that every visit makes him feel like a tourist exploring this beautiful country and that he is always grateful for the opportunity to perform for the people of India. ANI

this experience is only fueling my fire to go bigger and bolder in my artistic journey."

Ed Sheeran's performance has been scheduled for February 15 at Leisure Valley Ground, Delhi - NCR.

He recently brought his +- = / x Tour to Pune. Ed Sheeran took the stage donning a t-shirt



PM Modi congratulates Chandrika Tandon on winning The Grammy Award

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has congratulated the Indian-American musician Chandrika Tandon on winning the Grammy award for her album 'Triveni' and also commended her passion towards Indian culture and accomplishments as an entrepreneur, philanthropist and musician.

PM Modi took to X to express happiness over her notable achievement and said that her success will inspire scores of youngsters to chase big goals.

"Congratulations to @chandrikatandon on winning the Grammy for the album Triveni. We take great pride in her accomplishments as an entrepreneur, philanthropist and of course, music! It is commendable how she has remained passionate about Indian culture and has been working to popularize it. She is an inspiration for several people."

"I fondly recall meeting her in New York in 2023," he added.

Indian-origin singer Chandrika Tandon won the Grammy Award in the Best New Age, Ambient or Chant Album category for the album 'Triveni'. She won this honor by defeating Ricky Kej and Anoushka Shankar.

Notably, Chandrika Tandon is the sister of former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi, a name that reverberated in the corporate world and reflected the emergence of women as global leaders.

The 67th Grammy was held last Sunday in Los Angeles. She won the award along with her colleagues, South African flautist Wouter Kellerman and Japanese cellist Eru Matsumoto. IANS

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Hall of Fame to honor Indian-American community leader

India Post News Service

OAKLAND: The Multi-Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame announced today it will honor Ritu Maheshwari, who will receive the Hall of Fame's Community Advocate Award. The ceremony will be held at Scott's Seafood Pavilion, #2 Broadway, Oakland. CA 94607 from 6 pm-10 pm.

Maheshwari is a passionate community leader who strives to unite the Indian-American community and help youth connect with their culture and roots. She has actively worked to give victims of crime and domestic violence a voice by making resources available, making documentaries, and creating awareness in society through her YouTube channel.

The Hall of Fame will induct six retired professional athletes at the ceremony.

Details on page 18

Know what foods to avoid in diabetic meal planning

DR. INDRAJEET TYAGI AND DR. IRANNA HIRAPUR

Common dietary and lifestyle causes of diabetes in Ayurveda are excessive consumption of kapha aggravating foods (sweet, salty and sour in taste), continuous eating, lethargic lifestyle, lack of physical activities and exercises, excess sleeping, genetic factor, stress, fear and long-standing illness. Since diet plays a significant role in management of diabetes, here are some foods you should avoid when you are preparing a meal planning for yourself or for someone in your family who has diabetes.

There are certain food items that may not lead to sugar spikes, but can lead to poor insulin sensitivity, increase in cholesterol and slow down the metabolism. There are certain foods that people with diabetes are advised not to consume like simple carbs, beverages with added sugar, packaged foods and deep-fried foods.

Details on page 19

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

16 India Post

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February 7, 2025



Festival of Globe (FOG) celebrates Republic Day



India Post News Service

FOG Republic Day event was a huge success. Jo Sharma (Jyotsna) FIA/FOG Cultural Chair organized and coordinated cultural with all the 80 dance-companies, with dance competitions and performances, with the support of 12 cultural team volunteers, with a full house. Jo Sharma thanked Dr. Romesh Japra (FOG Founder) and Rajesh Verma (FOG President) for distributing prizes to winners. Parents were happy; the event was smooth with kids' prizes.

The cultural team leads, Ramya and Shubadha, leading to manage backstage volunteering.



Hemangini and Banani were judges for the dance competitions.

More volunteers helped the event namely Raghu, Mayura, Sri Sailaja, Pramoda, and the Sindhu team.

Highlights of the event were cultural dance competitions with Classical and Bollywood categories of all age groups. Special performances by many renowned dance companies

Jo Sharma (Jyotsna) is also FOG Telugu Chairperson, and her team represented Telugu state dance performance.



AAPI - MSRF organizes MSRF & Premed Medical Scholars Summit

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, AAPI - MSRF organized annual MSRF & Premed Medical Scholars Summit at the Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ from January 25-26, 2025," said Dr. Satheesh Kathula, President of AAPI,

The AAPI - MSRF is a national organization representing medical, dental, and podiatry students and resident physicians of Indian origin in North America, founded with the objective of providing a channel of

Presentations, Mentorship and Networking Lunch; Residency Program Directors' Panel, Medical School Admissions Panel, Fellowship Program Directors' Panel; MCAT Success: Tips and Tricks were some of the exciting topics that were appreciated by the participants at the Summit.

On January 25, the Summit began with a session on Leadership in Medicine by Mihir Gupta, MD, while the session on Public Health Practice in Medicine was presented by Jaya Satagopan, PhD. Novel

AAPI said, "Since its inception in 1982, AAPI has been at the forefront, representing a conglomeration of practicing of Indian origin physicians in the United States, seeking to be the united voice for the physicians of Indian origin. We serve every 7th patient in the US. We are proud of our achievements and our contributions to the healthcare industry and the millions of people we serve."

Dr. Raj Bhayani, Secretary of AAPI pointed out that, "In addition to several programs in the United States and in India,

rooted in every corner of the nation. AAPI's mission has evolved in the past 45 years, adapting to the changing needs of our times."

Dr. Uppal said, "Our summit is genuinely one of a kind, bringing together South Asian high schoolers, undergraduates, medical students, residents, fellows, and attendees. It offered a unique networking opportunities where our trainees get to connect with and learn from colleagues across different specialties and stages of their careers."



networking, support, and open communication among its members.

According to Dr. Priya A. Uppal, AAPI MSRF President 2024-2025, "We had over 100 attendees at the two-day event

This year, the event had High School attendees encouraging young scholars to start their pre-medical journeys early. The research symposium, consisting of oral and poster presentations and arts and humanities, was excellent. There was cutting-edge research and parent AAPI judges who provided informative and insightful feedback to propel our students' research forward.

"The 2-day-long Summit was packed with academic sessions that were interactive, with participants having an opportunity to actively engage in discussions and enhance their knowledge on a wide range of topics relevant to Medical Students and Residents, who seek guidance on ways to pursue their careers most effectively," said Dr. Sunil Kaza, Chair of APPI BOT.

Scientific Research Symposium Oral

Technologies in Orthopedic Surgery was presented by Selene Parekh, MD, MBA. Functional Medicine was jointly presented by Subbarao Bollepalli, MD, & Chanakya Bavishi, DO.

Niraj Kothari, MD presented his insightful session on Pioneering Advanced Practices in Medicine, while Deepen Modi offered insights on Financial Wellness. Samir Pancholy, MD led a session on Service Project Pursuing Graduate Medical Education. Global Medicine and India: Lessons, Opportunities, and Challenges for the Next Generation of Physicians was presented by Dr. Kumar Belani, MD.

As the President-Elect of AAPI, Dr. Amit Chakrabarty said, "I strongly believe that acquiring new knowledge is crucial for professionals, especially for the physicians in a changing healthcare environment. This Medical Scholars Summit provided insights on pursuing a career and how best to utilize the resources and, help out next generation of Physicians of Indian origin achieve their goals."

Dr. Meher Medavaran, Vice President of

AAPI has been in the forefront, advocating for the interests of the medical fraternity and organizing regular CME programs, health & wellness events, and financial workshops for its members and outreach, public health education, and advocacy activities for the community both locally and internationally."

According to Dr. Shirish Patel, Treasurer of AAPI, "AAPI is strong representing over 120,000 Indian American physicians, 130 local Chapters, who make up of 10% of total physicians in the US and nearly 50% of International Medical Graduates,

Dr. Kathula, who has been an educator and mentor for medical students, said "My priority has been to engage the second-generation physicians and foster mentorship to ensure AAPI's continued relevance and vitality." Towards this end, AAPI is in the process of appointing a committee of accomplished academicians to help mentor young physicians from India and the United States, who are aspiring to get into residencies. Dr. Kathula said, "We will continue the noble mission and strengthen our efforts to make AAPI reach greater heights."

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ries, and creating awareness in society through her YouTube channel.

The Hall of Fame will induct six retired professional athletes at the ceremony.

Leigh Steinberg is an American sports agent, philanthropist, and author.

Bill Cartwright is an American former professional basketball player and former head coach of the Chicago Bulls of the NBA.

Donna de Varona is an American former swimmer, Olympic champion, ac-

tivist, and television sportscaster.

John Paye is a former professional football player who was a quarterback and a retired high school basketball coach. He is elder brother to Kate Paye, the head coach of the Stanford Cardinal women's basketball team.

Chris Mullin is an American former professional basketball player, executive, and

coach.

Brad Gilbert is an American former professional tennis player, tennis coach, tennis commentator, and analyst for ESPN.

Mike Felder, a former Major League Baseball player, will receive the Curt Flood Platinum Award. Mike's knowledge and support of Curt's sacrifice make him an ideal recipient of this prestigious award.

This promises to be a historic and

celebratory evening, as we will be joined by iconic players from across professional sports and industry disciplines. The no-host cocktail hour begins at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m., and the ceremony at 8:00 p.m. All times are prompt. General tickets are \$175.00; Tables of 10 are available as well.

MESHOF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring athletes from all corners of the globe who have made significant contributions to the world of sports and broadening the public's understanding of the contributions people of color have made to professional sports, and to provide educational life skills and mentorship opportunities for deserving youth-proceeds from this event to benefit MESHOF's overall youth after school and mental health initiatives.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.multiethnicsportshof.com.



'Two Sexes Only!'

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

In a roundtable discussion, speakers at EMS news brief discussed the policy implications of President Trump's executive order, the impact on their lives, and attempts to push back. The executive orders issued by President Trump so far include restricting gender-affirming healthcare for transgender people under the age of 19; banning transgender people from joining the military; canceling DEI programs (diversity, equality, etc.) in government, military and other institutions. The President's executive order has deep, adverse impacts for the nation's 1.6 million transgender people. It essentially erases transgender people's

existence in legal matters, healthcare, and education sites. The move comes amid a rise in hate crimes against transgender people.

Jordan Willow Evans, Executive Committee, MassEquality said she is a transgender Republican. She said that

these executive orders of Trump were formed under the promotion of a small group of people and do not represent the opinions of Americans.

Ilan H. Meyer, Ph.D., Williams Distinguished Senior Scholar of Public Policy at the Williams Institute and Professor Emeritus of Sociomedical Sciences at Columbia University believes that the

Trump administration's executive order targeting LGBTQ+ is "cruel." He said anyone who knows transgender people knows their journey is an extremely stressful experience because of the harassment they can experience.

Bamby Salcedo, President and CEO of the TransLatina Coalition said they can implement whatever policies

they want and can, but they are not going to defeat who we are as people. We hope to empower, above all, young people who feel afraid and insecure and I remind them that we stand on the men of warriors with great strength and we are going to prevail and continue being who we are.

The President's executive order has deep, adverse impacts for the nation's 1.6 million transgender people. It essentially erases transgender people's existence in legal matters, healthcare, and education sites

Ode To The Fresh Produce Garden

INDRAJEET

In my little garden
I sow seeds with care
I rake the hard ground
Make it loose and soft

The big round yellow sun
Shines and warms everything
The rain clouds in the sky
Wish to come down slowly

The birds start to sing
Little seeds wake up soon
And lift their sleepy heads
Their sprouts bring out leaves

Little plants grow tall and tall
In their little warm earth beds
They fill my heart with love
Flooding scents of their own

I walk throughout my garden and
See delightful taters, maters, cukes
Each one is worth all the toil
To have a plethora of food in sight

Nutrition and minerals set up
Fill my soul with enduring joy
My heart sings songs loud
Within the banks of a garden.

I keenly watch my garden grow
All of the fresh produce bestow
The rich harvest of a garden
Looping me in the circle dance

Flowers in the garden bloom and
Bring a light to brighten the gloom
Through their soft touch bring gladness
Every flower has something to share

Our time is short just like a season
Autumn advances with abundance
We all have the gifts of heaven
Enjoy them with peace and love



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Simple Diet and Lifestyle Tips for Your Healthy Life

Know what foods to avoid in diabetic meal planning

DR. INDRAJEET TYAGI AND DR. IRANNA HIRAPUR

Common dietary and lifestyle causes of diabetes in Ayurveda are excessive consumption of kapha aggravating foods (sweet, salty and sour in taste), continuous eating, lethargic lifestyle, lack of physical activities and exercises, excess sleeping, genetic factor, stress, fear and long-standing illness.

ucts are known to raise blood sugar, with rice-based products having the greatest effect. Replacing white bread with high-fiber bread will significantly reduce blood sugar level.

2) Artificial sweeteners: Artificial sweeteners are synthetic compounds that stimulate the sweet taste receptors on the

in loss of water that leads to a higher concentration of these nutrients. Unfortunately, the sugar content also becomes more concentrated. Sticking with low-sugar fruits like berries or an apple can provide tremendous health benefits while keeping your blood sugar in the target range. The National Institute of Dia-

increase cholesterol and triglycerides. Therefore, it is best to avoid curd by people with diabetes, obesity, cholesterol and poor insulin sensitivity. Instead of curd, one can consume occasionally buttermilk, which is prepared with more water.

7) White salt: While white salt does



Since diet plays a significant role in management of diabetes, here are some foods you should avoid when you are preparing a meal planning for yourself or for someone in your family who has diabetes.

There are certain food items that may not lead to sugar spikes, but can lead to poor insulin sensitivity, increase in cholesterol and slow down the metabolism. There are certain foods that people with diabetes are advised not to consume like simple carbs, beverages with added sugar, packaged foods and deep-fried foods among many others, as they raise

tongue, without any added calories. Eating carbohydrates increases the blood sugar levels and insulin is released to bring them back to normal. Artificial sweeteners are said to interfere with this process. Although short-term use of artificial sweeteners will not raise blood sugar levels, but long-term effects in humans are unknown.

3) Sugar-free products: Sugar-free does not necessarily mean carbohydrate-free or calorie-free. Although some sugar substitutes do not have calories, many of them do. If you eat many 'sugar-

betes, Digestive, and Kidney Diseases recommends that people with diabetes include fruits in a balanced diet. Even fruit juices have high sugar content. Avoiding dried fruits can help reduce the risk of blood sugar spiking.

5) Energy bars: Energy bars are not an exception, as you need to read the labels. They may appear to be a healthy snack choice, but many energy bars contain high levels of added sugar and high glycemic carbohydrates that can lead to a sharp increase in blood sugar levels.

not directly lead to sugar spikes, it can increase risk of blood pressure for people with diabetes, which could further cause heart complications, kidney disease or stroke and other diabetes complications. Limiting regular salt or switching to rock salt/Himalayan pink salt can definitely help you prevent or control high blood pressure, heart disease and other diabetic complications.

8) Jaggery: While Jaggery is considered a safer alternative as compared to sugar for diabetics; it can still cause sugar spikes, even though Jaggery is



risk of elevated sugar levels and can cause several health complications in long run. Just because these foods are bad for diabetes does not mean you can never eat them. You can consume them occasionally in moderation.

What foods people with diabetes should avoid?

1) White Rice, Bread and Flour: White bread, rice and refined-flour foods have high levels of carbohydrates. Eating such foods will significantly increase your blood sugar level. Moreover, gluten-free prod-

free' foods that may contain sweet tasting substances like sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, isomalt, and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates. These 'sugar alcohols' are technically not sugar, but are high in carbohydrates. These foods affect your blood glucose just as sugar-containing foods would, in proportion to the number of carbohydrates in each serving of the food.

4) Dried fruits: Fruit is a great source of several important vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C and potassium. When a fruit is dried, the process results

6) Curd: Curd can increase Kapha Dosha in the body, making one gain more weight and slowing down the metabolism and you become lazy. Curd as per the Ayurveda can also affect nutrient absorption and increase cholesterol levels. According to Ayurveda, curd is heating in nature and not cooling, as people believe it. It is also heavy (guru) to digest and slimy (sticky) in nature. It increases kapha Dosha in body.

Kapha also blocks your channels, which can lead to poor absorption of nutrition (nutrition deficiency) and even

made with natural process without chemicals and is nutrition rich. Therefore, you must consume Jaggery it in moderation and do not overeat.

Diet & lifestyle changes can help to control diabetes but for a long-term solution, consult a doctor to get the best holistic treatment for diabetes.

(Authors: Dr. Indrajeet Tyagi, M. R. Medical College, Kalaburagi, Karnataka and Dr. Iranna S. Hirapur, MD, DM (Cardiology) Interventional Cardiologist at Heart Foundation, Kalaburagi, Karnataka)

Know the health benefits of Aloe Vera

MADHUMATI TYAGI AND SUNIL KUMAR D.

Aloe Vera is a medicinal plant that grows in hot climates and contains more than 75 active ingredients, including enzymes, amino acids, vitamins, and minerals, some of which could make it useful for treating diseases. It is used as a home remedy to treat burns and other skin conditions and heal wounds. As per several studies, Aloe juice

1. Helps digestion: Aloe Vera has laxative properties and when consumed in small quantities may aid in digestion. An unhealthy gut is commonly linked to weight gain; a healthy digestive system turns to proper metabolism of food and an optimal discharge of waste from the body that helps in losing weight.

2. Helps in improving and controlling

ments for its rich protein content.

5. Helps detoxify the body: Aloe Vera gel contains a complex carbohydrate known as acemannan, which facilitates the absorption of nutrients by the cells, nourishes them and helps detoxify them.

6. Controls acne: Pimples are formed when oil, dead skin cells, and bacteria clog up hair follicles, which then get inflamed

reduce redness, itching, and pain. Aloe Vera gel feels soothing on sunburned skin and moisturizes skin while it heals.

10. Reduces heartburn: Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) is a painful condition where stomach acid travels up the esophagus and causes heartburn. Aloe Vera may help with reflux by lowering inflammation in the esophagus and reduc-



Aloe Vera Nutrition: 8-ounce serving of pure Aloe Vera juice includes:

Calories: 10g	Protein: 0 g	Fat: 0 g	Carbohydrates: 2 g	Fiber: 1 g
Sugar: 0 g	Calcium: 74 mg	Sodium: 60 mg	Potassium: 110 mg	

extract is effective in increasing insulin sensitivity and reducing fasting blood glucose and promoted as a natural remedy for diabetes, heartburn, and inflammatory bowel syndrome (IBS). Its laxative properties can help aid digestion and boosts metabolism. Research has found that intake of Aloe Vera gel can aid in reducing body fat accumulation by stimulating energy expenditure.

Aloe vera plant is used extensively for various purposes. The sword like plant with long, spiky and prickly leaves of Aloe Vera plant store a powerful gel loaded with amazing nutrients that are useful for skin health as it is enriched with vitamin A, B, C and E, digestion, detoxification, weight loss and various disorders.

How much aloe vera should you use?

Aloe vera creams, gels, and liquids contain different amounts. For example, some creams for minor burns have just 0.5% Aloe Vera; others used for psoriasis may contain as much as 100% aloe vera. Oral supplements have no set dose. The suggested amount to use varies by the product:

Leaf gel cap: 50 to 200 milligrams/day

Liquid: 30 milliliter

Tincture: 15 to 60 drops a day mixed with juice or water

Topical: Apply three to five times a day

High oral doses of aloe vera extract or aloe vera latex can be dangerous. These are not official doses. Ask your doctor for advice on how to use aloe vera and how much to take.

How aloe vera helps in weight loss?

blood sugar level: Aloe Vera juice keeps the blood sugar under control by stimulating the secretion of insulin. By preventing sudden rises and falls in blood sugar levels, Aloe Vera also helps to control food cravings and keeps hunger pangs away. Researchers say the medicinal substances in Aloe Vera repair damaged cells in the pancreas that make insulin - the hormone that helps control blood sugar levels. Aloe Vera might also lower blood sugar by helping the body's cells respond better to insulin.

3. Combats water retention: Water retention condition can lead to weight gain. The laxative properties of Aloe Vera juice

The sword like plant with long, spiky and prickly leaves of Aloe Vera plant store a powerful gel loaded with amazing nutrients that are useful for skin health as it is enriched with vitamin A, B, C and E, digestion, detoxification, weight loss and various disorders

are ideal for fighting water weight. However, it is important to avoid over consumption of aloe vera juice.

4. Boosts metabolism: Aloe Vera to help in boosting metabolism, which further enables the body to burn fat. Aloe Vera's fat burning abilities are credited to the presence of vitamin B, which converts the fat stored in the body into energy and aids weight loss. Aloe vera is also extensively used in many dietary and fitness supple-

and form small bumps. Aloe Vera is enriched with vitamin A, B, C and E, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties that help boost skin health and reduce acne problem when combined with the acne medicine tretinoin that improved breakouts of acne with fewer side effects.

7. Lowers cholesterol: This plant extract might help lower the unhealthy low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and fats called triglycerides while boosting heart-healthy high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol that reduces the amount of bad cholesterol that the intestines absorb.

8. Improves constipation: Aloe Vera contains a substance called barbaloin that

act as laxatives by increasing the amount of water in the intestine, which could make poop easier to pass and help digested foods move more easily through the intestines. Aloe Vera juice and latex are use as constipation drugs.

9. Heals burns: Aloe Vera's antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects make it useful for treating burns. Applying a layer of aloe vera to minor burns and sunburned skin might help the skin heal faster, and

ing stomach acid.

11. Aloe vera for IBS symptoms: Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) causes symptoms such as diarrhea and belly pain. Aloe Vera may help with IBS by improving the good and bad bacteria in the gut, and by reducing inflammation in the intestines.

Ways to consume aloe vera gel for weight loss: Always be sure to remove the latex layer.

The gel and leaves of the Aloe Vera plant can be consumed in a variety of recipes, including smoothies, soups, salsas, salads, and stir-fries. Drinking Aloe Vera juice stimulates your metabolism, helping your body burn calories more quickly. You can also reduce the amount of time food stays in your system by drinking aloe vera juice, which helps move food through your digestive system, giving your body less time to absorb calories from the foods you eat

Take a spoonful of Aloe Vera juice about 14 minutes before your meal every day to lose weight.

You can take Aloe Vera juice by mixing it with vegetable juice. If you are not able to drink aloe vera juice easily because of its taste.

Take a spoonful of Aloe Vera juice in a glass of warm water every morning on an empty stomach to get most of its benefits.

Aloe vera juice can be consumed by mixing it with honey to reduce weight faster and making its taste better as well.

Consume Aloe Vera with a few drops of lemon for quicker and better results. You must consume in moderation as a part of healthy diet.

Know the health benefits of Lakshman Phal

MADHUMATI TYAGI AND SUNIL KUMAR D.

Lakshman Phal also known as sour sop or *Annona muricata* is an amazing tropical fruit that is native to the Caribbean, Central America and India. The term *Annona* means 'annual harvest' in Latin. This bushy tree can grow up to 6 meters tall with broad, oblong leaves and a heart-shaped green fruit covered in small thorns on its outer skin. The Lakshman phal is bright green, spiny,

some Lakshman Phal?

The most common way to consume a fresh ripen Lakshman phal is to cut in half and the creamy white pulp can be scooped out and eaten directly as fresh fruit remove the black seeds before eating the fruit with a fork or your own teeth. 2) You can blend the pulp of the fruit with water to make a refreshing smoothie. 3) You can use the fruit pulp to make ice

cream, sorbet, or desserts such as pies, tarts, or as a topping for cakes and pastries. 4) The leaves of the Lakshman phal tree are often boiled to make tea due to their inherent medicinal benefits. The tea is packed with essential nutrients and antioxidants; this juice promotes good health, metabolism, bones, and boosts your immune system. The tea helps kill cancer cells, fight bacteria, improves gastrointestinal health and stabilize blood

tion to a breast cancer diet by preventing the proliferation of malignant cells. 2) Prevents Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs): The abundance of Vitamin C in Lakshman phal helps maintain the acidic environment in urine, thus reducing the likelihood of bacterial growth that leads to UTIs. Therefore, regular consumption of this fruit may prevent UTIs, particularly among women who are more susceptible

energy levels, owing to its rich nutritional profile, including vitamins and minerals.

9) Keeps Bones Healthy: The calcium and magnesium present in Lakshman phal are essential for maintaining strong bones. Regular consumption of this fruit can enhance bone density and reduce the risk of fractures and osteoporosis.

10) Improves Sleep: Lakshman phal is believed to have calming properties



spherical, sweet, sour, creamy, and delicious. It resembles Sitapahal/custard apple as it has creamy pulp inside with blackish brown seeds. There are nearly 119 different species of this fruit across the globe. However, only seven species and one crossbreed of this fruit are cultivated for consumption. Apart from the fruit, its leaves, stem, flowers, etc. have amazing natural compounds and medicinal benefits to cure many diseases. Lakshman

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to such infections.

4) Prevents Osteoporosis: This fruit is rich in minerals like calcium and magnesium - vital for bone health. Regular intake of Lakshman phal can help prevent osteoporosis.

5) Prevents Constipation: The high dietary fiber content in Lakshman phal aids digestion and promotes regular bowel movements. Regular consumption of this fruit can alleviate constipation and

that may help improve sleep quality, promote relaxation and reduce anxiety, facilitating better sleep patterns.

11) Maintains Good Cholesterol: The fiber content aids in reducing LDL (bad cholesterol) while promoting HDL (good cholesterol), supporting cardiovascular health.

12) Soothes Mouth Ulcers: The anti-inflammatory properties of Lakshman phal can be instrumental in treating mouth ul-

Nutritional value of Lakshman Phal per 100 g

Water 81.2 g	Energy 66 kcal	Sugar 13.5 g	Protein 1 g
Carbohydrate 16.8 g	Fibre 3.3 g	Calcium 14 mg	Iron 0.6 mg
Magnesium 21 mg	Phosphorus 27 mg	Potassium 278 mg	Sodium 14 mg
Vitamin C 20.6 mg			

fruits are a lesser-known fruit and not as common as apples or bananas, however, these fruits from the Annonaceae family are rich in nutrients and offer unique flavors.

What are the nutritional values of Lakshman Phal?

Lakshman Phal fruit is not just visually unique but also offers a delightful taste with its creamy white pulp filled with black seeds. The fruit's flavor can be best described as a delicious blend of pineapple and strawberry. It is commonly used to make fruit nectar, refreshing smoothies, revitalizing juice and even used in the ice creams.

What are the different ways to Con-

sugar levels.

What are the health benefits of Lakshman Phal?

1) Kills Cancer Cells: Lakshman phal leaves contains compounds like acetogenins which have been observed to inhibit or slow down the growth of cancer cells in case of colon, breast, prostate, lung cancer, and pancreatic cancers. Unlike a chemotherapy session where a patient suffers nausea, hair loss and weight loss, eating Lakshman phal kills cancer cells in the body without any of these side effects. The antioxidants and phytochemicals present in the fruit may help reduce the risk of developing breast cancer, making it a valuable addi-

foster overall digestive health.

6) Prevents Leg Cramps: The potassium content in Lakshman phal can be beneficial in preventing leg cramps. Potassium is crucial for muscle function and helps regulate fluid balance in the body, subsequently reducing the occurrence of cramps during physical activity.

7) Prevents Water Retention: Lakshman phal can also aid in preventing water retention, due to potassium content that helps balance sodium levels in the body, mitigating bloating and excess fluid accumulation.

8) Increases Stamina and Energy: Regular consumption of Lakshman phal can contribute to increased stamina and

cers by soothing affected areas and speeding up the healing process.

13) Helps Manage Anemia and Migraines: Lakshman phal is rich in iron and plays a crucial role in preventing anemia. Additionally, its antioxidant properties may help alleviate migraine symptoms by reducing inflammation and oxidative stress in the body.

What precautions to keep in mind?

Concisely, it is vital to consume it responsibly. Be aware of potential allergic reactions like itching, swelling or trouble breathing after eating it. Consultation with a healthcare professional is advisable, especially for those with existing health conditions or pregnant and nursing women.



Nestled amidst Nilgiri hills, Ooty, also known as Udagamandalam, is a hill station in Tamil Nadu, which serves as a top-rated tourist destination. Once regarded as the summer headquarters of the East India Company, the Queen of the hills is a picturesque getaway.

Dotted with tea gardens, serene waterfalls, winding country lanes, and charming colonial architecture, Ooty is the perfect respite everyone.

Popular among couples and honeymooners, Ooty allures its visitors with the panoramic views of the Nilgiri Mountains.

The Nilgiri mountain railway is

in the Nilgiris District. Serene and away from the maddening crowd, the lake and its surroundings are much cleaner and offer a perfect place to enjoy a leisurely time in the vicinity of nature and quietude.

Pykara Lake: Pykara Lake is a popular getaway that is at a distance of about 20 kilometers from Ooty, in the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu, India. The Pykara village, along with a beautiful river by the same name, also houses a dam and a power plant. Because of the construction of the dam, the backwaters have formed an enormous lake, which is now known as the Pykara Lake and has become a significant tourist attraction that is visited by large numbers of people all year round.

It has everything that a person on vacation can ask for, right from ambience and comfort to scenic beauty. Nature lovers, photographers and adventure seekers should definitely not miss out on this unique and fun-filled place. The best time to visit the lake is of course during the monsoons, in the months of July and August.

Ooty Botanical Gardens: Ooty Botanical Gardens lie on the lower slopes of the Doddabetta peak; the Government Botanical Garden is a splendid garden in Udagamandalam, near Coimbatore in the state of Tamil Nadu. Sprawled over an area of 22 hectares, the garden is divided into several sections that are trimmed beautifully to present an endearing sight.

Dolphin's Nose: Located about 12 km away from Coonoor is the Dolphin's Nose about 1,500 meters above sea level. The tip of the peak of this enormous rock resembles a dolphin's nose and this is one of the most visited tourist spots in The Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu.

Ooty

"Queen of the Nilgiris"

the steepest track in all of Asia. Remember the hit song 'Chaiyya Chaiyya' where Shahrukh Khan and Malaika Arora matching steps on top of a train? Remember the breathtaking locales as the train chugged its way across lush greenery? Yes, that was the Nilgiri Mountain Railways, and the Nilgiri Mountains all along.

PLACES TO VISIT IN OOTY

Nilgiri Mountain Railway: Nilgiri Mountain Railway, also known as Toy Train in Ooty, is one of the key attractions of the popular hill station Ooty. Such is the train's popularity and history that it was declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2005. Started in the year 1899, it has continued to charm its visitors over the past many years winding its way through the best of nature.

The Toy Train covers a distance of total 46 km in a span of 5 hours and takes one through a truly spectacular journey filled with picturesque views en route. Another fascinating feature of the train is that its youngest X-class locomotive is over 50 years old and the oldest is 80 years old.

Ooty Lake: Ooty Lake is one of the most refreshing and beautiful places to visit in Ooty. It lies at a distance of approximately 2 km from Ooty city in the green hills of the Nilgiris district. The stunning lake is spread over an area of 65 acres and its foundation was laid by John Sullivan who was collector of Coimbatore in 1824.

Emerald Lake: Emerald Lake is situated in Emerald Village, around 20-22 kilometers from the main city of Ooty and is a part of the Silent Valley National Park



BEST TIME TO VISIT OOTY

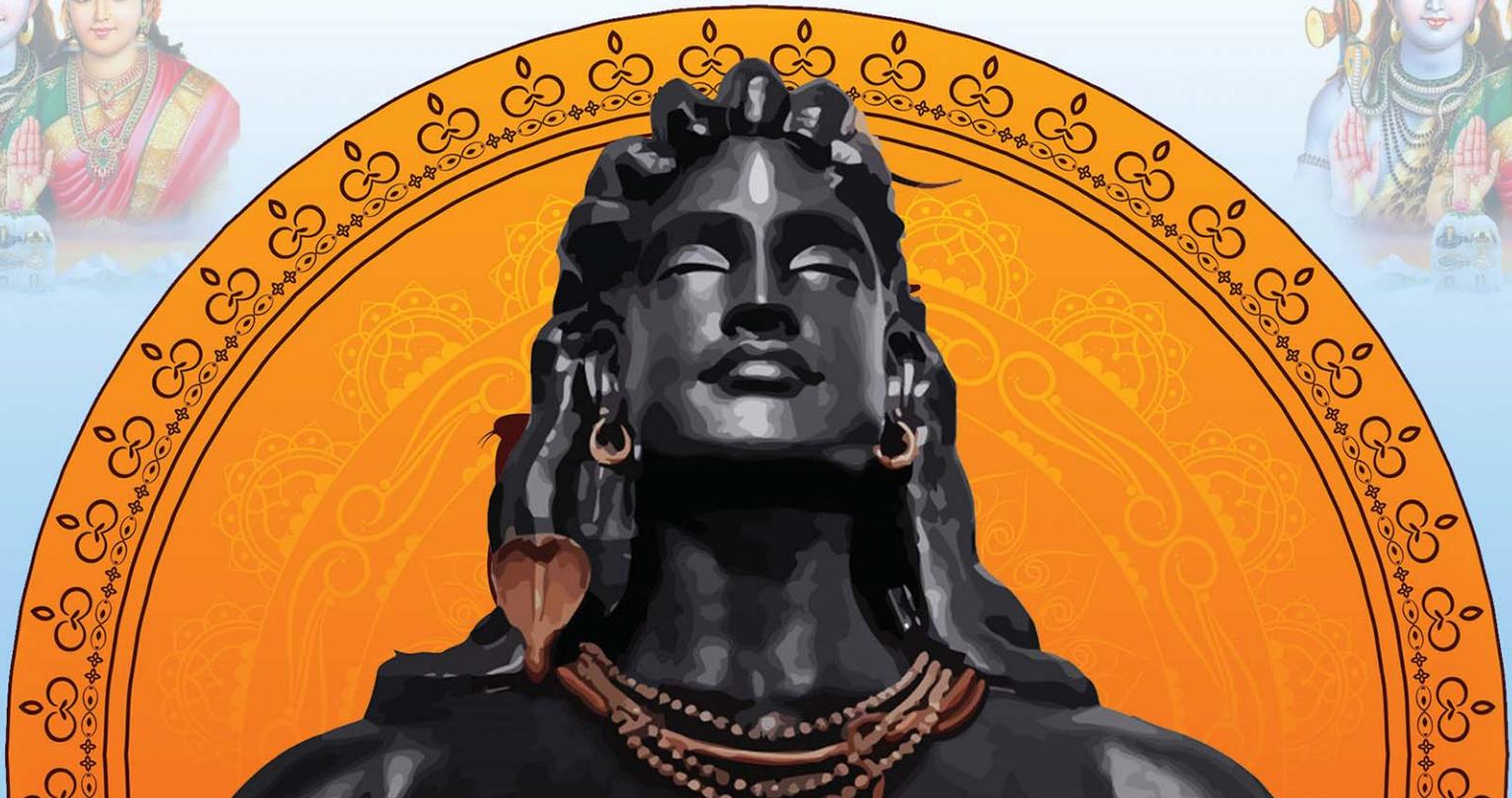
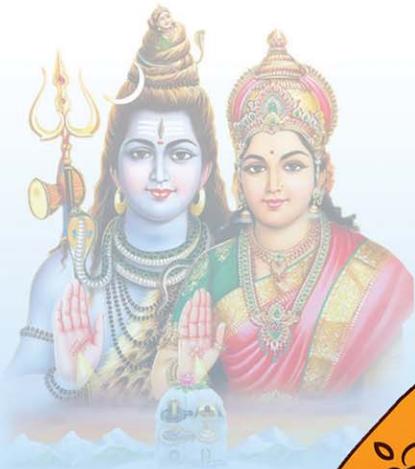
The best time to visit Ooty is throughout the year as the weather is pleasant and great for sightseeing. The temperature usually ranges from 5-15 degrees throughout the year with colder nights. However, the peak season is from October to June when the weather is pleasant and you can get involved in outdoor activities.

HOW TO REACH OOTY

The Coimbatore airport is the closest to the hills at 3.5 hours by road. The Mysore airport is about 4 hours away from Ooty by road and is serviced by a daily ATR service by Kingfisher Airlines and lies to the North of Ooty. The road trip is quite scenic from either airport. www.holidify.com

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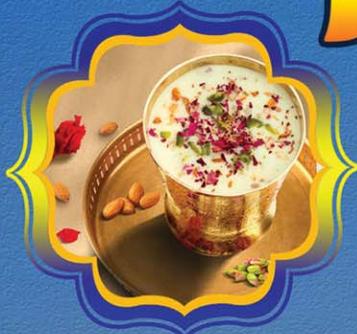
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Global Parkinson's disease market to grow to \$7.9 bn by 2033: Report

NEW DELHI: The global Parkinson's disease (PD) market is expected to grow to \$7.9 billion by 2033 from \$3.4 billion in 2023, according to a report.

The report by data and analytics company GlobalData showed that the growth -- projected to increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.9 percent -- will be particularly seen in seven major markets such as the US, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, and Japan.

Factors driving the growth include the introduction of 10 pipeline products and the increased adoption of novel levodopa delivery methods. The rising prevalence of Parkinson's due to the ageing population across the seven countries is also a contributing factor, the report said.

Further, it anticipates an increase in sales across most currently marketed Parkinson's drug classes. Specifically, levodopa therapies, catechol-o-methyltransferase (COMT) inhibitors, dopamine agonists, monoamine oxidase B (MOA-B) inhibitors, other antiparkinsonian agents, and Parkinson's dementia agents. *IANS*



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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February 7, 2025

85 pc increase in cancer cases, deaths expected by 2050 in S. E Asia: WHO

NEW DELHI: South-East Asia region is expected to witness an 85 percent increase in the number of new Cancer cases and deaths, said the World Health Organization (WHO), ahead of World Cancer Day.

Each year 4 February is commemorated as World Cancer Day.

"The theme this year United by Unique is a reminder of the collective commitment against cancer," said Saima Wazed, Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia.

"WHO acknowledges every patient's unique experiences and the value of people-centered care delivered jointly by healthcare providers, families, friends, and community," she

added.

In 2022, the WHO South-East Asia Region had 2.4 million new cases of cancer, including



56,000 children, and 1.5 million deaths.

"Among all the WHO regions, our Region had the highest

number of cancers of lips and oral cavity, uterine cervix, and childhood cancers. It is estimated that by 2050, there will be

an 85 percent increase in the number of new cases and deaths in the Region," said Wazed.

She also noted the progress made in countries in the Region in the last few years. This includes a reduction in tobacco consumption.

"The Region has seen the fastest rate of decline in tobacco use which is a major risk factor for several high burden cancers," Wazed said.

Wazed said six countries have dedicated national plans for cancer control, and two countries have included cancer as part of the national NCD plan to strategically guide cancer prevention and control activities.

Eight countries have introduced nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination.

The Regional Director said that 10 countries are implementing global initiatives for childhood cancer and seven countries have operational population-based cancer registries. In 10 countries, tertiary-level cancer care is generally available, reaching 50 percent or more patients in need.

However, some persisting challenges include scattered responses to cancer control. National cancer control programs and plans are not fully aligned with evidence or best practices resulting in their ineffective implementation.

Policies and guidance on control of cancer-causing agents prevalent in the Region, such as areca nut, are lacking.

Existing cancer prevention policies and programs are not fully implemented, leading to millions of avoidable cases, Wazed said. Late diagnosis and lack of national capacities to manage the increasing cancer burden also hinder cancer control. *IANS*

AB PM-JAY a significant intervention in India for advancing cancer treatments: Experts

NEW DELHI: The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) has emerged as a significant intervention in India's healthcare landscape, particularly for cancer treatment, said experts here on World Cancer Day.

World Cancer Day is observed every year on February 4. The theme this year is United by Unique, which highlights that every person has a distinct story, set of needs, perspectives, and circumstances that must be considered.

"The AB PM-JAY has significantly reduced the financial burden on patients, especially those from economically vulnerable backgrounds, who often face catastrophic health expenditures due to cancer. This scheme made evidence-based cancer treatment for

people of low socioeconomic section a reality by seeking care without financial stress," Dr. Abhishek Shankar, Assistant Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, Dr BR Ambedkar Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital at AIIMS, Delhi, told *IANS*.

A study published in The Lancet Regional Health - Southeast Asia showed that AB PM-JAY has increased the odds of timely initiation of cancer treatment in India by 36 percent, highlighting the positive impact of AB PM-JAY in enabling patients to access and afford cancer treatment.



AB PM-JAY, the world's largest publicly funded health insurance scheme, was launched in 2018 to provide health cover to 55 crore people, corresponding to 12.34 crore poor and vulnerable families.

Ayushman Bharat is a highly promising and beneficial scheme for underprivileged patients. The government covers up to 5 lakh rupees for treatment each year.

The scheme also offers nationwide portability, allowing beneficiaries to access treatment at any empanelled hospital across India.

As many as 31,077 public and private hospitals are empanelled under PM-JAY, according to the latest government data. *IANS*

Drinkers with depression experience same stimulation as those without depression: Study

NEW YORK: People with alcohol use disorder (AUD) and depression experience high levels of stimulation and pleasure when intoxicated, similar to drinkers who do not have depression, according to a new study.

The study by the University of Chicago Medicine in the US reveals that counter the long-held belief that the pleasure people experience when drinking alcohol decreases with addiction and that drinking to intoxication is mainly to reduce negative feelings as a form of self-medication.

"We have this folklore that people drink excessively when they're feeling depressed and that it's really about self-medicating," said Andrea King, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience.

In this study of natural environment drinking and smart phone-based reports of the effects of alcohol in real-time, participants with AUD and a depressive disorder reported feeling acute, sustained positive and rewarding alcohol effects - just



like their non-depressed counterparts.

The study, published in the American Journal of Psychiatry, challenged conventional notions about alcohol's effects in depressed people who drink excessively and could improve treatment approaches

by focusing medication and behavioral approaches more on alcohol's pleasure reward pathways and less on stress-responsive systems.

The effects of alcohol on the brain are complex, and improved understanding of the

factors that affect an individual's vulnerability to AUD and depression is critical to identify and initiate early, effective treatment.

The research followed 232 individuals across the U.S. between the ages of 21 to 35, corresponding to the period when most heavy drinking occurs in a person's lifetime.

Half of the study group met criteria for AUD in the past year and were evenly divided in terms of those who had or had not experienced a major depressive disorder in the past year. Individuals who had suicidal ideation were excluded for safety reasons, as were people who had severe alcohol withdrawal symptoms.

The researchers found that alcohol consumption reduced negative feelings, although the reduction was small and non-specific to their depression or AUD status.

The positive effects of alcohol were much higher in individuals with AUD than those without AUD and contrary to lore, similar in those with AUD and depression and those without depression. *IANS*



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Women with twins 2x more at higher risk of heart disease: Study

NEW DELHI: Women who give birth to twin babies are two times more at risk of facing a heart problem than those with singleton births, according to a recent study.

The research, published in the European Heart Journal, showed that the mother of twins is at higher risk of hospitalization due to heart disease a year after birth.

Notably, the risk is even higher in those who had a high blood pressure condition during pregnancy, also known as preeclampsia.

The study, led by researchers from Rutgers University in the US, comes as "the rate of twin pregnancies world-

tions in the first year after birth, even if they had a pregnancy that was not complicated by high blood pressure conditions, such as pre-eclampsia," she added.

The study analyzed data on 36 million hospital deliveries in the US from 2010 to 2020.

The results showed a higher proportion of readmissions for cardiovascular disease within a year of giving birth in women with twins (1,105.4 per 100,000 deliveries) than those with singleton pregnancies (734.1 per 100,000 deliveries).

Compared to singleton pregnancies with normal blood pressure, people with twins with normal blood pressure were around twice as likely to be hospitalized with cardiovascular disease.

For those with twins with high blood pressure during pregnancy, the risk was more than eight times higher. However, one year after birth, deaths from any cause, including heart disease, were higher among patients with singleton pregnancies who had high blood pressure conditions compared to patients with twins with high blood pressure conditions, the study showed.

This suggests that the risk to mothers of twins decreases in the longer term, while the mothers of singletons may have other

pre-existing cardiovascular risk factors.

Lin said that patients undergoing fertility treatments, especially those with advanced age, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease, should be advised that twin pregnancies may increase complications related to heart disease in the short term.

She also urged healthcare providers to continue follow-up for up to a year after birth for high-risk pregnancies. *IANS*



wide has risen in recent decades, driven by fertility treatments and older maternal ages".

"The maternal heart works harder for twin pregnancies than for singleton pregnancies, and it takes weeks for the maternal heart to return to its pre-pregnancy state," said lead author Dr. Ruby Lin, a maternal-fetal medicine fellow at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

"People with twin pregnancies should be aware of the short-term increase in cardiovascular disease complica-

Study decodes how drinking sugary beverages raises diabetes risk

NEW DELHI: A team of US researchers has decoded the role of gut microbes in increasing the risk of diabetes after consuming sugary drinks.

The study, published in the paper appearing in the journal Cell Metabolism, shows that metabolites produced by gut microbes might play a role.

In the study, the team identified differences in the gut microbiota and blood metabolites of individuals with a high intake of sugar-sweetened beverages. They found that high sugary beverage intake -- defined as two or more sugary beverages per day -- led to changes in nine species of bacteria.

Four of these species are known to produce short-chain fatty acids -- molecules that are produced when bacteria digest fiber. These are known to positively impact glucose metabolism.



The altered metabolite profile seen in sugary beverage drinkers was associated with a higher risk of developing diabetes in the subsequent 10 years, said the researchers.

"Our study suggests a potential mechanism to explain why sugar-sweetened beverages are bad for your metabolism," said Qibin Qi, an epidemiologist at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

"Although our findings are observational, they provide insights for potential diabetes prevention or management strategies using the gut microbiome," Qi added.

The researcher noted that more than in solid foods, added sugar in beverages "might be more easily absorbed, and they have a really high energy density because they're just sugar and water". *IANS*

World Cancer Day: People thank PM Modi for affordable treatment under Ayushman Bharat

JAIPUR: On the occasion of World Cancer Day, observed annually on February 4 to raise awareness about cancer, people in Rajasthan have lauded the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PM-JAY) for its transformative impact on cancer patients.

The initiative, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 23, 2018, has emerged as a lifeline for countless families, providing free treatment for serious illnesses in both private and government hospitals.

By easing the financial burden of healthcare, PM-JAY ensures that even the most economically disadvantaged citizens can access life-saving medical care.

Cancer patients in Rajasthan, especially those receiving treatment under this scheme, have expressed their gratitude for the support provided.

Rohitas

Kumar from Bikaner, whose father is undergoing cancer treatment at Acharya Tulsi Cancer Hospital, spoke to IANS about the benefits of the scheme.

"My father's treatment is being carried out under PM Modi's Ayushman Arogya Yojana,

which offers insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family. This has been a huge relief for us," he said.

He also highlighted the recent announcement in the Union Budget that exempts tax on more than 36 expensive cancer medicines, making treatment more affordable.

"I urge more people to enroll in this scheme so that everyone can benefit. The treatment here is excellent, and more awareness should be created about the program," he added.

Santosh Bishnoi, whose sister-in-law is battling cancer, echoed similar sentiments.

"She is receiving free treatment at Acharya Tulsi Devi Hospital under the Ayushman Yojana. We are grateful to the Prime Minister for making this possible," he said.

A cancer patient told IANS, "I thank PM Modi for this scheme. I also urge other people in need of the treatment to get their cards made. It is truly a boon for us."

Dr. Shankar Lal from Acharya Tulsi Cancer Hospital emphasized the scheme's significance in ensuring equitable healthcare. *IANS*

"My father's treatment is being carried out under PM Modi's Ayushman Arogya Yojana, which offers insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family. This has been a huge relief for us,"

Philosophy

MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI

To go to a field of greater happiness is the natural tendency of the mind. Because in the practice of transcendental meditation the conscious mind is set on the way to experiencing transcendental, absolute Being, whose nature is bliss-consciousness, the mind finds the way increasingly attractive as it advances in the direction of bliss.

A light becomes faint and dim as we move away from its source, and its intensity increases as we proceed towards its source. Similarly, when the mind goes in the direction of the absolute bliss of transcendental Being, it finds increasing charm at each step of its march. The mind is charmed and so is led to experience transcendental Being.

This practice is pleasant for every mind. Whatever the state of evolution of the aspirant, whether he is emotionally developed or intellectually advanced, his mind, by its very tendency to go to a field of greater happi-

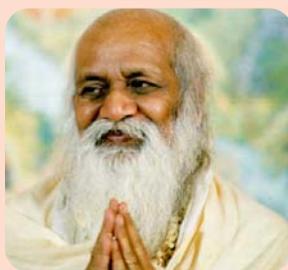
its own quality, it is extremely important for each man that a special quality of thought be selected whose physical influence will be beneficial and useful to himself and to the whole world.

The influence of a spoken word carried by waves of vibration does not depend upon the meaning of the word. It lies in the quality of the vibrations set forth. Where it is necessary to produce vibrations of good quality for an influence of harmony and happiness, it is also necessary for the quality of vibration to correspond to that of the individual.

An action performed by a particular individual in a particular place at a particular time may produce results favourable for the doer and his surroundings. The same action may produce a different influence under different circumstances.

It is beyond the capacity of the human mind to fathom the influence of an action at any level of creation. Therefore the problem of selecting a right thought for

*Universe is influenced
by every thought
A right thought is one which is
harmonious and useful to the
thinker and his surroundings*



Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

ness, finds a way to transcend the subtlest state of thinking and arrive at the bliss of absolute Being. This practice is, therefore, not only simple but also automatic.

IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT THOUGHT

A right thought is one which, in its nature, is harmonious and useful to the thinker and his surroundings. Every thought, like every spoken word, has some influence on the thinker and his surroundings. Just as a stone thrown into a pond produces waves reaching all the pond's extremities, any thought, word or action produces waves in the atmosphere, and these waves travel in every direction and strike against everything in the atmosphere. They influence every level of creation. The whole universe is influenced by every thought, word and action of each individual.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider carefully the quality of any thought. There may be a thought whose influence is detrimental to the thinker and to the rest of the universe. Likewise, there may be a thought whose influence is favourable and useful to the thinker and to the world at large. Because each personality has

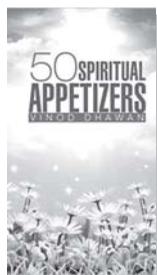
this practice of meditation is something which cannot be successfully decided by any individual for himself.

In order to facilitate the finding of a right word for each individual, teachers have been trained in the art of selecting a sound or word to correspond to the special quality of the individual. These trained teachers of meditation are found in almost every country of the world in the centres of the Spiritual Regeneration Movement.

Excerpted from 'The Science of Being and Art of Living.' The 107th birth anniversary of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is being observed on February 12

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Value-neutral journalism a threatened ideal in South Asia

NAZISH MEHMOOD

Journalism that aims to present facts without bias or influence is fundamental to democratic societies; it is value-neutral. Journalism that does not prioritize any particular ideology has long had a tough time operating in South Asia due to the region's complicated history, rich cultural diversity, and complex power dynamics. There is a fine line that journalists must walk in this region between exposing injustice and encountering opposition from public officials and organizations. This never-ending conflict makes one wonder how the media can maintain objectivity in this setting.

The media is crucial in countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan for influencing public opinion and ensuring that those in power are held responsible. Unfortunately, media neutrality has frequently been compromised due to its alignment with political

Just as the growth of nationalism in India has stifled dissenting opinions, it has done the same in other countries. Online harassment, threats of legal action, and social exclusion are common experiences for journalists who report on sensitive topics such as religious extremism, human rights violations, or government policies. This environment hinders news organizations' ability to conduct investigations and dissuade them from presenting fair stories. The media, on the other hand, tends to side with one political party or the other, making news coverage of both sides extremely rare.

Challenges to neutral journalism

Additionally, the challenges encountered by value-neutral journalism are illustrated by the situation in Bangladesh. The Digital Security Act and other government statutes have severely curbed press freedom. There is a high risk of detention, legal

action, or even death threats for journalists who publish stories critical of government agencies or the governing party. Because of this, people are so afraid that

The media is crucial in countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan for influencing public opinion and ensuring that those in power are held responsible. Unfortunately, media neutrality has frequently been compromised due to its alignment with political ideologies and power centers

ideologies and power centers. Reporters often face threats of retaliation if they do not support official narratives. This isn't just happening in one South Asian country; it's a pattern where national institutions and governments have a lot of sway over the media.

Clamping down on dissent

For example, journalists in Pakistan frequently encounter a climate where voicing dissent against the government or its policies can result in charges of being "anti-state." Reporters and editors, who speak out against official policies or the military, face harassment or censorship on a regular basis. This kind of behavior discourages journalists from covering sensitive topics objectively and sends a disturbing message to the media.

Meanwhile, some journalists have abused their positions to promote their own political or corporate agendas, which has further damaged public faith in the media's ability to report the news objectively.

they are repressing their opinions in order to stay alive. Despite courageous journalists who are still exposing truths, the media as a whole is fighting for objectivity in the face of increasing pressures.

Another angle on the issue is offered by Sri Lanka. Press coverage of racial and political tensions both during and after the civil war was frequently biased. Reflecting the viewpoints of their respective communities, Sinhala-majority and Tamil media outlets offered diametrically opposed narratives. This disagreement demonstrated how challenging it is to achieve value-neutral journalism in a historically and ethnically divided society. The media still struggles with being objective when covering post-war governance and reconciliation.

(The author is a Pakistani research analyst and writer at Modern Diplomacy and Eurasia Review, specializing in foreign affairs and global issues) South Asia Monitor

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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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India's rise a force for good in the Indo Pacific region

COLLINS CHONG YEW KEAT

India celebrated its 75th year as a sovereign democratic republic on January 26. It now emerges as the power that has come of age, with its fast rising power equation and recognition. It is now the third most powerful country in Asia, according to the annual Asia Power Index 2024 by Lowy Institute, surpassing both Russia and Japan. The 2024 edition, which covered six years of data, is seen as the most comprehensive assessment to date.

The Global Firepower Index 2025 has also listed India to be the fourth most powerful military, behind the US, Russia and China. India's position is largely

precede it. While India's rapid rise will lend confidence to current partners and future allies including Quad partners Washington and Tokyo, the fraught relationship with Beijing is expected to turn in Delhi's favor with Trump back in office.

Trump, a long time friend of Modi, has more to depend on India with its growing double-edged advantage to Washington, both in India's equation with Russia and China for Trump to solidify its carrot and stick approach to both powers. The same cannot be said of other allies especially Japan, where its waning power at least as reflected in the ranking, has been

cal prowess. Its youthful, dynamic workforce and an advantageous demographic is a driving force behind this expansion, positioning India as a hub for innovation and investment. Under Modi's reforms, ventures like "Make in India" and the push towards "Atmanirbhar Bharat" further catapulted India's status as an industrial and economic base.

In the defense arena, the new push to modernize the military has seen the new focus on advanced missile systems, nuclear capacities and an expanded naval footprint and power further reinforced its status as the primary power in regional security.

Charting itself as the growing power in new sectors including digital technology, space exploration, renewable energy and quantum capacity, initiatives under the vision of Modi have seen a booming start-up economy and advances in energy transition and the initiative of Digital India have further consolidated its primary leadership in these fields.

The demographic dividend remains the standout feature. By 2030, India is projected to have the world's largest working-age population, providing a long-term boost for its economic growth and innovation.

Challenges on India's road to superpower status remain. Despite India's new rise, systemic limitations persist that limit its ability to project power far beyond its near shore, especially the east of the Malacca Strait. However, the fact that its influence remains well below the level promised by its resources suggests it still has ample potential for further growth as a major power.

(The author is a Kuala Lumpur-based strategic and security analyst) South Asia Monitor

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The Global Firepower Index 2025 has also listed India to be the fourth most powerful military, behind the US, Russia and China. India's position is largely driven by a consistent spending rate on defense, modernization, and manpower

driven by a consistent spending rate on defense, modernization, and manpower. It is also the fourth largest military spender globally in 2023, and has spent 4.2 per cent higher than that of in 2022.

India has a holistic advantage both in emerging internal settings and external presence. Demographically, it is now the world's most populous nation, surpassing China. It also has the highest birth rate in the world, with 2651 babies born every hour, more than twice of China at 1016 and more than five times of the US which stood at 418.

Trump's return to India's advantage

For India under Modi, the path towards both defense and socio-economic reform has never been more profound and far-reaching in the decades that

attributed to its economic decline and continuing demographic stagnation, falling down to fourth place in most of the indicators in the power assessment.

India performs best in the future resources measure, placing 3rd behind only the United States and China. The Asia Power Index states that the United States is still dominant but faces rising military pressure from China, although China is now seen as plateauing in its power indicator.

Key drivers behind India's rise

India is one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, with ambitious new economic transformation led by sustained digital economic reform and modernization of its manufacturing and technologi-



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BUDGET FOR MIDDLE CLASS

The Union Budget in India for 2025-26 has mainly targeted the middle class, personal income tax slabs, as well as exemption to all those earning up to Rs 12 lakh per annum. There is also relief, which will extend to individuals of higher income brackets in the new tax laws. The Union Budget has been aimed at honest taxpayers and brings relief to middle-income taxpayers. It also encourages the honest taxpayers and trust factor. This is welcome.

Acknowledging the honest taxpayer and giving the relief is good politics meeting good economics. Indeed, Sitharaman underlined the Narendra Modi government's belief in the "admirable energy and ability of the middle class in nation building". That, in a way, was also an admission of the growing restiveness of a section, which has seen no real salary increase and a drying up of remunerative employment opportunities in recent times. At a time when welfare schemes targeting the lower end of the social and economic pyramid have become for all parties key to their political and economic discourse, the middle-class taxpayer imperative is stronger than ever. No wonder the word "middle-class" appears nine times in the latest budget speech, as against only three times in the last one presented just over six months.

The Indian economy today needs less fiscal stimulus and more monetary and reform stimulus. Creditably, there are no new fiscally imprudent scheme announcements in the latest budget. There is unfinished business, though. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has framed the budget as a "force multiplier" that will spur savings, investment, consumption and growth. To that effect, ensuring a higher disposable income in the hands of the taxpayer and staying away from fiscal adventurism are key but important challenges remain: Lack of investment and job creation, with knock-on effects on income and spending. The ongoing slowdown, contrary to the government's claims, predates the geo-economic fragmentation and retreat of globalisation gaining force with the return of Donald Trump and his ushering in of potential trade wars. Modi has already made some adjustments in allowing US made "Harley Davidson Motorcycles" by lowering tariffs before his upcoming meeting with Donald Trump.

The private sector has not been investing in building new capacities, despite the government cutting corporate tax rates back in September 2019 and companies sitting on huge cash piles. Even schemes such as production linked incentives have met with limited success. It has pinned hopes on the income tax-cut, leaving more disposable income in the hands of tax-paying households, which will revive sputtering consumption demand.

There should be a big push to small and medium businesses which comprises major portion of the Indian economy and incentivise corporations to invest in up-skilling their employees. Whether households choose to either spend or, simply save the tax bonanza, like corporates have done, will be known only in the months that follow. Another area that needs immediate attention is to push disinvestment with loss making Public Sector institutions. This will further give the government opportunity to spur growth. The Union Budget also put emphasis on developing semiconductor industry and solar energy, which will definitely give rise to employment amongst the youth.



Tamannaah Bhatia shares moment of SELF-TRANSFORMATION

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia recently opened up about a powerful moment of self-transformation during a challenging time on set.

During her recent appearance on a podcast, the actress recalled being in her caravan, overwhelmed by emotions, with tears welling up in her eyes. However, with a full face of makeup and a character to portray, she couldn't allow herself to cry. Bhatia revealed that in that moment of vulnerability, she chose to take control of her emotions.

The 'Baahubali' actress shared, "I've been in my caravan, and something really bad happened. I was really upset; my eyes were swelling with tears-but I had mascara on, a full face of makeup, and I was playing a character. I couldn't cry at that moment. So, I told myself, 'This is just one feeling, and I can turn it into whatever I want.' Right then, I chose to transform that intense feeling into happiness. I've done this looking at myself in the mirror, and it works."

On the work front, Tamannaah was recently seen in the Netflix thriller-action film "Sikandar Ka Muqaddar," which centers around a daring diamond heist and three main suspects.

IANS



Elnaaz Norouzi performs at a wedding despite high fever

Actress Elnaaz Norouzi recently performed at a grand wedding despite high fever. Bollywood star Ranveer Singh was also performing at the same event.

In an Instagram post, Elnaaz informed her fans that she has been battling a high fever for the past three days. She shared that doctors suspect it might be malaria or dengue, although she is still waiting for the test results. The actress also reassured her followers that she is resting and taking all the necessary precautions to recover. She also mentioned that while she focuses on her health, she will be stepping away from social media for a while.

Norouzi shared a note on her gram stories that read, "Hey everyone, I've been down with a high fever for the past three days, and the doctors suspect it might be malaria or dengue (waiting for results). I'm resting and taking all the necessary care, but I will be off social media for a bit. My team will continue to handle everything brand-related in the meanwhile. Sending you all love; I will be back soon."

Interestingly, despite her health scare, Norouzi performed at a wedding where Ranveer Singh also performed. A video that went viral showed the actor dancing to his popular track "Malhari," with the groom and his family members joining in and matching his energy and dance moves. IANS

Here's how Janhvi Kapoor 'burnt' herself

It seems Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor spent too much time in the sun as she got "sunburnt".

Janhvi took to her Instagram, where she uploaded a mirror selfie. In the image, the actress is seen wearing orange shorts and a grey-hued activewear crop top. Janhvi is flaunting her tanned back in the image.

For the caption, the actress wrote: "BURNT".

The actress did not reveal where she was. However, Janhvi visited the old city of Kochi and even visited some of the iconic spots such as Jew Street. The 27-year-old star along with Sidharth Malhotra are shooting for the romantic comedy "Param Sundari".

Sidharth had previously shared pictures and videos from Kochi on February 2. The video, captured from inside of a houseboat, shows the Chinese nets for catching fish in the Kumbalangi area of Kochi. IANS





Chitrangda on 'Khakee: The Bengal Chapter'

Actress Chitrangda Singh, who is all set to make her web-series debut with 'Khakee: The Bengal Chapter' by Neeraj Pandey, said that the show explores the murky underbelly of "Calcutta's political landscape".

The series was recently announced during Netflix's Slate Reveal. Chitrangda talked about her role, the experience of working with Neeraj Pandey, and why this project feels like a homecoming.

She said: "This is the first time I'm doing a web series. It's my OTT debut, and that too on Netflix-so it's pretty huge! The fact that I get to work with Neeraj Pandey is incredible, and considering how 'Khakee: The Bihar Chapter' became a massive success, being part of 'Khakee: The Bengal Chapter' feels surreal." *IANS*

'Pushpa Impossible' actress Indraxi Kanjilal on her struggle in Mumbai

Actress Indraxi Kanjilal, known for her role as Prarthana in the popular TV show "Pushpa Impossible" recently opened up about her initial struggling days in Mumbai.

She disclosed that she always dreamed of becoming an actress. Indraxi Kanjilal said, "I wanted to be an actress from a very young age. I used to watch a lot of television shows with my mom, and I admired the actors I saw in those shows. As I grew up, my passion for acting became stronger. I had always planned to start my career at 18 because I wanted to focus on my studies first. *IANS*



Malavika Mohanan on CHOOSING 'THANGALAN'

Malavika Mohanan has proved her mettle as an actress across industries, including Bollywood, Kollywood, and Mollywood. The diva was recently seen in the 2024 action-adventure drama, "Thangalaan", opposite Vikram.

Speaking about her decision to take up "Thangalaan", Malavika Mohanan revealed that she was eager to break away from the conventional image associated with her. She said, "I was actively looking at roles where people didn't see me the way they always see me, you know, which is see my pictures or see my photo shoots or the sort of notion of me existed. And I was very keen and looking for a way I could, break that. And I was looking for an interesting character. So when this came along, I was like, this is as opposite end as it gets, you know, when I'm not me.

She added, "And, whether I bring this character to life convincingly or not depends on pretty much every other aspect, except my looks, but looks in a different sense with the makeup and like the look of the character, but not me, and my hair doesn't have to be a certain way, it's not the quintessential way of how a heroine has to be on screen. And that's something that excited me, frightened me. But I saw it as an opportunity to do this exact thing that you mentioned, and I just grabbed it."

Up next, Malavika Mohanan will be seen in "Raja Saab". She will be sharing the screen with Prabhas in her next. Written and directed by Maruthi, the project will also feature Nidhi Agerwal, Riddhi Kumar, Bobby Deol, and Sanjay Dutt in important roles, along with others.

Furthermore, she will also be part of "Sardar 2", the sequel to Karthi's 2022 blockbuster "Sardar".

Malavika Mohanan's exciting lineup further included superstar Mohanlal's much-anticipated drama "Hridayapoorvam". *IANS*



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