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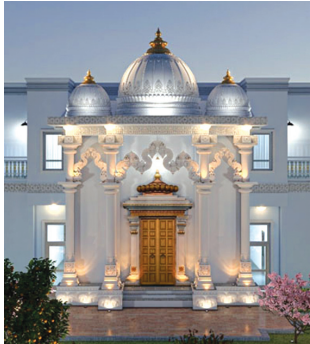
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A new spiritual landmark for Los Angeles

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Hrithik recalls first meeting with Sanjay Khan

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Mamdani takes over as New York mayor

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INDIA POST
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This week's question

Will Trump take over Greenland?

Last week's result

Will Indo-US relationship improve in 2026?

YES 11% NO 89%

TRUMP ILL ADVISED

"Trump ill-advised on India": Singer Mary Millben voices support for PM Modi

WASHINGTON DC: Internationally acclaimed singer Mary Millben has expressed concern over recent remarks made by the President of the United States regarding Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Millben shared her views after comments made by the US President during a media interaction aboard Air Force One drew attention in India and abroad.

While speaking to journalists, the US President stated, "They wanted to make me happy, basically... PM Modi is a very

good man. He's a good guy. He knew I was not happy. It was important to make me happy. They do trade, and we can raise tariffs on them very quickly."

Reacting to this, Millben expressed her belief that while the US President holds respect for Prime Minister Modi, his current approach toward India may be misguided. "Trump in his heart respects the PM, but sadly is being ill-advised on his approach to India. I am praying for the President on this," she wrote.



Mary Millben

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Ind-Am Pulkit Desai sworn in as NJ City mayor

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Ind-Am investor among top MAGA Inc donors

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Indian nationals advised to avoid Iran travel

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External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visits an exhibition, 'Ce qui se trame-woven stories between India and France,' during his visit, in Paris on Sunday. (@DrSJaishankar X/ANI Photo)

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Hrithik recalls Sanjay Khan meeting

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Malaika: Pranayama 'heart' of yoga

 In her most recent Insta update, Malaika provided a glimpse into her Pranayama session, which comprised Bhastrika, Kapalbhati, Anuloma Viloma, Bharamri, and Udgeet

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\$600 bn in tariffs

 President Trump says US h will soon receive more than \$600 billion through tariffs, arguing the policy has strengthened the country financially

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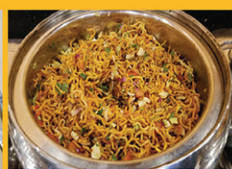
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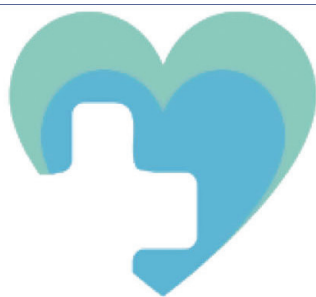
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TRUMP ILL ADVISED

"Trump ill-advised on India": Singer Mary Millben voices support for PM Modi

WASHINGTON DC: Internationally acclaimed singer Mary Millben has expressed concern over recent remarks made by the President of the United States regarding Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Millben shared her views after comments made by the US President during a media interaction aboard Air Force One drew attention in India and abroad.

While speaking to journalists, the US President stated, "They wanted to make me happy, basically... PM Modi is a very good man. He's a good guy. He knew I was not happy. It was important to make me happy. They do trade, and we can raise tariffs on them very quickly."

Reacting to this, Millben expressed her belief that while the US President holds respect for Prime Minister Modi, his current approach toward India may be mis-



File photo: Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets African-American singer Mary Millben during the community event, at Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington DC, USA. (ANI Photo)

guided. "Trump in his heart respects the PM, but sadly is being ill-advised on his approach to India. I am praying for the President on this," she wrote.

Millben also came out strongly in defense of Prime Minister Modi, emphasizing that he is under no obligation to respond to every statement or criticism, whether from political opposition within India or from international leaders. Highlighting Modi's diplomatic maturity, she wrote, "Countering the remarks by the opposition in India, PM @narendramodi doesn't need to respond to every comment or threat the

US President makes. The only person or persons the PM needs to make happy are the Indian people. Period. The PM understands long game diplomacy."

Further reinforcing her stance, Millben suggested that India's leadership should remain focused on its national priorities rather than engaging in unnecessary geopolitical tension. She also downplayed the relevance of certain US political voices criticizing India, stating that they do not represent the views of many Americans.

Millben pointed out that global leaders are closely watching political developments in the United States ahead of the upcoming midterm elections, which could significantly influence future foreign policy decisions. According to her, a shift in the US political landscape may open the door to renewed dialogue and a recalibration of international relationships.

Concluding her remarks, Millben voiced support for Prime Minister Modi's leadership and governance, underscoring that his primary responsibility lies with the people of India. "You continue to serve in the best interest of India. That's what you were elected to do," she stated. ANI

"Indian nationals are advised to avoid non-essential travel to Iran until further notice": MEA

NEW DELHI: India issued a travel advisory for its nationals in Iran amid ongoing protests, urging caution and restraint in travel as the situation in the country continues to remain volatile.

In an advisory issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Indian nationals were cautioned against non-essential travel. "In view of recent developments, Indian nationals are advised to avoid non-essential travel to the Islamic Republic of Iran until further notice," the MEA stated.

The advisory also outlined safety precautions for those already in Iran. It said, "Indian citizens and PIOs currently in Iran should exercise due caution, avoid areas of protests or demonstrations, and closely monitor news as well as the website and social media handles of the Embassy of India in Tehran."

In addition, the MEA advised Indian nationals residing in Iran to ensure they are registered with the Indian mission. "Indian nationals living in Iran on resident visas are advised to register with the Indian Embassy, if not already done so," the statement said.

The advisory comes as sporadic protests have erupted in Iran's capital,

Tehran, and several other cities, with local media reporting intensifying clashes in parts of the country, particularly in the west.

The demonstrations, which began in late December, initially saw shopkeepers staging strikes over economic grievances before expanding in scale and scope. Protesters later raised political demands, Al Jazeera reported.

Iranian authorities have maintained that the unrest has not yet taken on a nationwide character. "From time to time and sporadically we witness protests, such as last night in Tehran, Kazerun, and other cities," a correspondent told Al Jazeera, adding that at least 14 people, including members of the security forces, have been killed since the protests began.

Warning of potential escalation, the correspondent added, "There might be further escalations if the government cannot come up with concrete and practical actions," according to Al Jazeera.

Protests held recently in Tehran, were described as "limited" by the semiofficial Fars news agency, which said demonstrations were "generally made up of groups of 50 to 200 young people." ANI

The advisory also outlined safety precautions for those already in Iran. It said, "Indian citizens and PIOs currently in Iran should exercise due caution, avoid areas of protests or demonstrations"

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India's Consul General in Shanghai visits Tiger Hill Pagoda to mark Buddha relics exhibition launch

SUZHOU: The Consul General of India in Shanghai, Pratik Mathur, visited the Tiger Hill Pagoda in Suzhou, China, to mark the inauguration of the grand exhibition "The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One" in India, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week, said Indian embassy in Shanghai.

Tiger Hill Pagoda, located in the ancient city of Suzhou, is the oldest and largest Buddhist pagoda south of the Yangtze River. The site holds an important place in Buddhist architecture, history and art.

During the visit, the Consul General interacted with Buddhist monks and members of the local community, including Friends of India. He highlighted the return of the sacred Piprahwa Ratna of Lord Buddha to India after 127 years, calling it a moment of pride for India's spiritual and civilizational heritage.

The event also featured presentations and cultural performances based on the teachings of Lord Buddha. These performances reflected the deep cultural connect and strong resonance surrounding the Piprahwa Relics exhibition, the Indian Embassy in Shanghai added.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics, titled "The Light & the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One," at the Rai Pithora Cultural Complex.

The exhibition marks a historic moment with the reunification of the Piprahwa gem

relics of Lord Buddha, repatriated after 127 years. The display also features relics, gem relics, and reliquaries unearthed during the 1898 excavation and the subsequent 1971-1975 excavations at the Piprahwa site.

PM Modi had posted pictures from the

tional Museum, New Delhi and the Indian Museum, Kolkata. This Exposition is in line with our commitment to further popularizing the noble thoughts of Bhagwan Buddha. It is also an effort to further deepen the bond between our youth and our rich culture. I would also like to appreciate ev-



exhibition and exhorted visitors to experience the exposition.

"This Exposition brings together: The Piprahwa relics repatriated after more than a century. Authentic relics and, archaeological materials from Piprahwa that are preserved in the collections of the Na-

everyone who worked towards the repatriation of these relics," he said.

The event has drawn attention from historians, cultural enthusiasts, and Buddhist followers from across the country and abroad, showcasing India's efforts to preserve and celebrate its ancient heritage. ANI

Bangladesh Hindu Leader Gobinda Pramanik to challenge cancellation of election nomination

DHAKA: Hindu leader Govinda Chandra Pramanik, Secretary-General of a faction of the Bangladesh National Hindu Mahajot, announced he will appeal against the Election Commission's decision to cancel his nomination paper for the upcoming elections.

Pramanik had submitted his nomination to contest the Gopalganj-3 constituency, a key electoral area represented by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. According to election rules, independent can election Commission found discrepancies. Several signatures could not be confirmed, leading to the invalidation of his nomination paper. Candidates in this constituency must submit a consent letter signed by at least 3,086 voters. However, during verification, officials from the Bangladesh Election Commission found discrepancies. Several signatures could not be con-

firmed, leading to the invalidation of his nomination paper.

"I will appeal against this decision by the Election Commission," Pramanik told ANI, expressing confidence that the process could be rectified.

The decision comes amid a tense period for the Hindu community in

being set on fire on New Year's Eve. The attackers allegedly assaulted him with sharp weapons, poured petrol on his body and set him on fire. In an attempt to save himself, Das jumped into a nearby pond beside the road. Hearing his screams, local residents rushed to the scene, prompting the attackers to flee.

Pramanik had submitted his nomination to contest the Gopalganj-3 constituency, a key electoral area represented by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Bangladesh. Over the past weeks, there have been reports highlighting attacks and rising insecurity faced by minority groups. Notably, a recent tragic incident drew national attention when Khokon Das, a Hindu man, succumbed to injuries after

Locals rescued Das and initially took him to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital, where he received emergency treatment before being referred to Dhaka later that night as his condition deteriorated. He later succumbed to his injuries ANI

'If US attacks another NATO country, everything stops,' says Danish PM

OSLO: Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said if the US attacks another NATO country, everything stops.

In recent interview with Danish broadcaster DR, the Danish prime minister made the remarks in response to a question as to, what it would mean if the United States were to use force against another NATO member.

Frederiksen also slashed US President Donald Trump's renewed comments that the United States 'needs' Greenland, denouncing his remarks as 'unacceptable pressure' on the self-governing territory.

"Unfortunately, I think the American president should be taken seriously when he says he wants Greenland," she said, stressing that both Denmark and Greenland have repeatedly rejected any idea of Greenland becoming part of the United States.

She added that while she cannot account for US actions, "there is full support from Europe that borders must be respected."

European leaders have rallied behind Denmark after Trump again floated the idea of acquiring Greenland and called the Arctic territory critical to US defense.

"Borders cannot be changed by force," said French Foreign Ministry spokesman Pascal Confavreux in an interview with local media, expressing 'solidarity' with Denmark.

Stressing Denmark's status as a NATO member, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told, "The future of Greenland is for the Kingdom of Denmark and for Greenland themselves."

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepful noted that Greenland, as part of Denmark, would in principle fall under NATO's collective defense obligations, Xinhua news agency reported.

Recently Trump said in a telephone interview with The Atlantic that the United States 'absolutely' needs Greenland.

In response, Frederiksen said in a statement that the United States has no right to annex Greenland, urging Washington to stop making threats against a close ally and the Greenlandic people. IANS

Amnesty warns Pakistan's 27th constitutional amendment threatens judicial independence

LONDON: Amnesty International recently raised serious concerns over Pakistan's Twenty-Seventh Constitutional Amendment, warning that it poses a "grave threat" to the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law in the country.

In a statement, Amnesty said the amendment undermines judicial autonomy by establishing a Federal Constitutional Court that lacks sufficient safeguards for independence. The organization said the new court weakens judges' security of tenure and shields the president as well as the heads of the armed, naval, and air forces from accountability.

Amnesty noted that the amendment was rushed through parliament without meaningful consultation with civil society or opposition parties. According to the organization, the speed and secrecy of the process reflect a broader pattern of weakening democratic institutions. "Despite its far-reaching consequences, the amendment was steamrolled through parliament," Amnesty said, adding that the lack of debate raised serious rule-of-law concerns.

The human rights group also highlighted the immediate backlash within the judiciary. Amnesty pointed out that two senior Supreme Court judges resigned on the day the amendment became law, followed by the resignation of a Lahore High Court judge two days later, describing these resignations as a clear sign of institutional alarm.

Amnesty noted that the amendment was rushed through parliament without meaningful consultation with civil society or opposition parties. According to the organization, the speed and secrecy of the process reflect a broader pattern of weakening democratic institutions

Amnesty further said the amendment expands executive influence over judicial appointments by giving the president and prime minister the power to appoint the first chief justice and initial judges of the Federal Constitutional Court. In Amnesty's view, this move "further erodes judicial independence," which had already been

weakened by the Twenty-Sixth Constitutional Amendment passed in October 2024.

Referring to that earlier amendment, Amnesty recalled that it altered the composition of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan by adding members of parliament, thereby reducing judges to a minority within the body responsible for judicial appointments. Amnesty cited concerns from the International Commission of Jurists and the UN Human Rights Committee, which had warned that these changes risk politicizing judicial appointments and undermining independence.

The organization also criticized expanded powers granted to the Supreme

Judicial Council to remove judges for "inefficiency," saying such vague grounds could be misused to pressure the judiciary. Amnesty said these cumulative changes, including the replacement of the Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench with a separate Federal Constitutional Court, represent a systematic restructuring that concentrates power in the executive's hands.

Amnesty concluded by urging Pakistani authorities to reverse measures that weaken judicial independence and to ensure that any constitutional reforms are carried out transparently, with broad consultation and in line with international human rights standards. ANI



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Mamdani takes over as New York mayor resolving to rule 'audaciously' as 'democratic socialist'

NEW YORK: Zohran Kwame Mamdani has taken over as mayor of the largest US city that is the center of finance with a firm promise to rule "expansively and audaciously" as a "democratic socialist".

At the formal inauguration of his Mayorality on New Year's Day, radical Democratic Social Senator Bernie Sanders gave him the oath of office, declaring that his victory was over "the Democratic establishment, the Republican establishment, the president of the United States and some enormously wealthy oligarchs".

After taking the oath of office on the steps of City Hall, Mamdani vowed to implement the socialist policies he had

His administration will be one that "never flinches in the fight against corporate greed, and refuses to cower before challenges", he said.

He repeated his campaign pledges of free buses, free childcare from six months up, government-run shops, and a freeze on rent increases in housing regulated by the city.

"The billionaire class in this city and country have to get to understand that in America, they cannot have it all," said Sanders who is among his mentors. "That America, our great country, must belong to all of us, not just a few. And that lesson begins today in New York City."

be bold enough to run and brave enough to win not by abandoning conviction but by standing firmly with it".

In a show of his socialist credentials, he arrived at the ceremony in an ordinary taxi, although he was also under the protection of the police, whom he had reviled "racist" and a "major threat to the people".

Mamdani took the oath of office on two Korans, one belonging to his grandfather and the other to an African American writer, which his wife, Rama Duwaji, held as he repeated the words after Sanders.

After the ceremony, a block party was organized on Broadway with entertainment and dancing to continue the celebrations.

City officials estimated that 40,000 people were expected to attend, braving the frigid temperatures of minus 2 degrees Celsius.

Earlier at midnight, while hundreds of thousands of people celebrated the dawn of a new year in Times Square, five kilometers away. Mamdani was first sworn into office by New York State Attorney General Letitia James, a nemesis of President Donald Trump, in a private ceremony at an abandoned, but ornate, metro station below the City Hall.

The ceremony at the stroke of midnight to technically establish his control of the city was witnessed only by his family, a select group of loyalists and the media in contrast to the jubilant celebration in the heart of the city.

Meanwhile, at Times Square, where the temperature dipped to around minus 1 degree Celsius, crowds belted out "New York, New York", as the iconic ball embedded with crystals dropped on a pole atop a building marking the annual ritual of turning the calendar.

The ball-drop also marked the end of the mayoralty of Democrat Eric Adams, the city's second African American mayor, who fell afoul of former President Joe Biden for complaining about the burden of illegal immigration and was hounded by his

After taking the oath of office on the steps of City Hall, Mamdani vowed to implement the socialist policies he had espoused, vowing to bring back big government.

"I will not abandon my principles for fear of being deemed radical", he said. He promised to bring back "the era of big government" to "improve New Yorkers' lives"

espoused, vowing to bring back big government.

"I will not abandon my principles for fear of being deemed radical", he said.

He promised to bring back "the era of big government" to "improve New Yorkers' lives".

"We will replace the frigidity of rugged individualism with the warmth of collectivism", said Mamdani, who belongs to the Democratic Socialists wing of the Democratic Party.

Mamdani, who won the election last November, is the city's first Muslim and South Asian mayor. A native of Uganda, he is also the firstborn in Africa.

He is the son of movie director Mira Nair, and Ugandan academic Mahmood Mamdani, who claims Indian heritage.

The formal inauguration of his mayorality began with a prayer to Allah by Imam Khalid Latif, who said in a speech that it would be a "different" New York where "a young immigrant democratic socialist can



Zohran Kwame Mamdani

Justice Department.

Mamdani, a Shia Muslim, scored an upset in the party's primary election to select the candidate and later at the general election.

Both times, he defeated former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo by riding on a wave of discontent over the cost of living and the traditional political machine. *IANS*

"We set the terms": US Homeland Security Advisor, claims sweeping control and cooperation in Venezuela

WASHINGTON DC: US Homeland Security Advisor Stephen Miller has outlined the administration's position on Venezuela.

Miller said, "President United States has asked Secretary Rubio, who also helped his lead National Security Advisor, to direct enforcement of the President's post guidance and direction to be the lead on this process. But obviously there's many other elements involved. You have energy policy, Treasury policy, financial policy, military

policy. It's a big team, a group of people."

"We have an oil embargo on Venezuela for them to do any kind of commerce they need our permission. We have our massive fleet, our Armada still present there. This is an active and ongoing US government, military operation. So of course, we set the terms and conditions," he added.

According to Miller, US leverage over Venezuela is extensive. He asserted that Washington maintains an oil embargo requiring US approval for Venezuelan commerce and claimed that American naval

forces remain deployed in the region.

"We are very much getting full, complete and total cooperation from the Government of Venezuela. And as a result of that cooperation, the people of Venezuela are going to become richer than they ever have before. And of course, the United States is going to benefit from this massively in terms of economic, security and military cooperation, Counter Narcotics, counter terrorism, and every other division of our security. This is a President Trump achieved with this brilliant, deci-

sive military operation in Venezuela these last several months, culminating, of course, in the assault force to capture Maduro. It's one of the greatest strategic shifts, rebalancing of power and military victories that have happened in the history of our country," he said.

Miller credited President Trump with what he called a "brilliant, decisive military operation in Venezuela," claiming it culminated in an "assault force to capture Maduro." *ANI*

FAIFA urges govt to roll back steep tax hike on tobacco products

NEW DELHI: The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA) has urged the government to roll back the notified excise rates on tobacco products and revise them to revenue-neutral rates, to disincentivize smuggling, and support domestic agriculture.

A stable taxation framework, FAIFA noted in a statement, is necessary to sustain farmer incomes, protect employment across the value chain, and align economic policy with long-term public health goals.

The Ministry of Finance notification 'Chewing Tobacco, Jarda Scented Tobacco and Gutkha Packing Machines (Capacity Determination and Collection of Duty) Rules, 2026' has imposed an excise duty of Rs 2,050-Rs 8,500 per 1,000 sticks, depending on cigarette length, effective February 1.

FAIFA said such a steep hike in taxes would force domestic manufacturers to raise prices of finished goods, which will lead to a drop in sales, hurting farmers' supplies in return. This could cause a glut in the tobacco crop market in the near term, it added. *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.
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Physically possible to restore full body functionality with Neuralink: Elon Musk

NEW DELHI: Billionaire Elon Musk said, his brain-computer interface company Neuralink can possibly restore full body functionality.



Elon Musk

The breakthrough focuses on the motor cortex, restoring "full body functionality" for people with severed spinal cords.

"I am confident at this point that restoring full body functionality is possible with Neuralink,"

the Tesla and SpaceX founder shared in a post on the social media platform X.

"Neuralink can essentially help bridge communications from the cortex, past the point in the neck or spine, where the nerves are damaged. It is possible from a physics standpoint to physically restore full body functionality," he said in a video post.

The motor cortex technology feature was announced by Musk in 2022, and the testing began in humans in the same year.

The device includes a chip that replaces a small piece of bone and is connected to the brain via a series of thin, threaded electrodes. The company's N1 implant includes 1,024 electrodes distributed among 64 threads, according to the company's website.

In September, the company

announced that it had implanted its device in 12 patients.

Meanwhile, on January 1, Musk's California-based neurotechnology firm announced taking major steps toward restoring vision, with a brain implant that allows the visually impaired, even those blind from birth.

"Neuralink will start high-volume production of brain-computer interface devices and move to a streamlined, almost entirely automated surgical procedure in 2026. Device threads will go through the dura without the need to remove it. This is a big deal," he shared on X.

"Neuralink can essentially help bridge communications from the cortex, past the point in the neck or spine, where the nerves are damaged. It is possible from a physics standpoint to physically restore full body functionality"

Blindsight, Neuralink's brain chip aimed at restoring vision, received "breakthrough device" designation from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in September 2024. The company is expected to begin high-volume production of the device this year.

According to Musk, Blindsight will help people who have lost both eyes, and they will be able to see. He also claimed that, provided the visual cortex remains intact, the device can restore vision even in people who have been blind since birth. *IANS*

Study shows heart disease deaths surge in patients with cancer

NEW DELHI: Patients with cancer are more likely to die from cardiovascular diseases, according to a study.

The study, published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, showed that the risk may be related to altered expression of inflammation-related and coagulation-related proteins.

The researchers from the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences stressed the need to manage endocrine, kidney, and inflammation-related risk factors in people with cancer.

"Our study found an elevated cardiovascular death in patients with cancer," said the team.

"Patients with cancer need to pay attention to the risk of cardiovascular mortality, particularly among younger individuals and those diagnosed at an early stage; in clinical practice, it is recommended to emphasize the management of endocrine, kidney, and inflammation-related risk factors in the population with cancer," they added.

Previous studies have identified a link between cancer and cardiovascular disease; however, the underlying genetic and proteomic mechanisms remain unclear.

Therefore, the new study aimed to investigate the association between cancer diagnosis

and cardiovascular mortality and to explore the potential mechanisms involved.

The team studied a total of



3,79,944 participants without cardiovascular disease at baseline, including 65,047 individuals with cancer.

Genome-wide association studies, phenotype-wide association studies, and proteomic analyses were applied to investi-

gate the underlying genetic and proteomic mechanisms.

The results revealed only a limited number of shared genetic

variations between cancer and cardiovascular conditions, such as hypertension and cardiac dysrhythmias.

The researchers also identified nine independent risk factors for cardiovascular death, including age, sex, smoking, BMI, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, HbA1c, cystatin C, and neutrophil count.

Interestingly, the probability of survival from CVD was comparable between participants with and without cancer during the first 10 years of follow-up but declined more sharply thereafter among patients with cancer. *IANS*

India rises from 123rd to 8th globally in WHO pharmacovigilance contributions: Nadda

NEW DELHI: India has risen to 8th position globally from 123rd in the World Health Organization's (WHO)



J. P. Nadda

pharmacovigilance contributions, said Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare J. P. Nadda.

He was speaking at the release of the Indian Pharmacopoeia 2026 (IP 2026) -

the 10th edition of India's official book of drug standards, at an event held at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

"The Indian Pharmacopoeia serves as the official book of standards for drugs in the country and is a cornerstone of India's regulatory framework for pharmaceuticals," he said, adding that the 10th edition reflects scientific advancements, global best practices, and India's growing leadership in pharmaceutical manufacturing and regulation.

Nadda also highlighted the remarkable progress of the Pharmacovigilance Programme of India (PvPI) under the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC).

"India, which was ranked 123rd globally in terms of contributions to the World Health Organization's pharmacovigilance database during 2009-2014, has now risen to 8th position worldwide in 2025," the Health Minister said.

He also highlighted that the Indian Pharmacopoeia 2026 incorporated 121 new monographs, increasing the total number

of monographs to 3,340.

"The coverage has been significantly strengthened across key therapeutic categories, including anti-tubercular, anti-diabetic and anti-cancer medicines, as well as iron supplements, thereby ensuring more comprehensive standardization of medicines used under various National Health Programs," Nadda said.

"In recent years, the Indian Pharmacopoeia standards have also gained international acceptance as it has become a focused agenda under the health diplomacy of the Government of India. He also noted that the Indian Pharmacopoeia is now recognized in 19 countries of the global south," he added.

Further, the Minister highlighted signifi-

"India, which was ranked 123rd globally in terms of contributions to the World Health Organization's pharmacovigilance database during 2009-2014, has now risen to 8th position worldwide in 2025," the Health Minister said

Commending the IPC and the PvPI team for this significant achievement, the Health Minister Nadda stated that the strengthened pharmacovigilance ecosystem reflects India's sustained commitment to patient safety, quality assurance, and robust regulatory vigilance.

cant regulatory advancements and underscored the first-time inclusion of 20 blood component monographs about transfusion medicine in the Indian Pharmacopoeia 2026, in accordance with the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics (Second Amendment) Rules, 2020. IANS

Can regular intake of fast foods lead to illnesses and death?

NEW DELHI: Regular eating of fast foods, ranging from deep-fried snacks served as street food to quick-service restaurant chains, can cause serious damage to health, which can, in the long run, lead to several diseases, including cancer and cardiovascular conditions, contributing to death, said experts.

The doctors said this as social media was recently flooded with viral posts claiming that an 11th-grade student from Amroha district in Uttar Pradesh, admitted at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi in December, died due to excessive consumption of junk food.

While the girl's family asserted that she was suffering from an intestinal infection that ultimately led to her death, media reports revealed that the girl was facing multiple health issues, including severe typhoid and complaints of tuberculosis.

Doctors at the AIIMS declared that her death resulted from cardiac arrest.

"While habitual excessive consumption leads to obesity, fatty liver, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia, it is definitely not a cause for perforation of the intestine," Dr. Rajeev Jayadevan, Ex-President of IMA Cochin and Convener of the Research Cell, Kerala, told IANS.

"While habitual excessive consumption leads to obesity, fatty liver, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia, it is definitely not a cause for perforation of the intestine,"

"In a young Indian adult, in the absence of trauma, the main causes of intestinal perforation are duodenal ulcer, typhoid, tuberculosis, or severe appendicitis. The two main causes of ulcers of the stomach and duodenum are Helicobacter pylori infection and excessive intake of painkillers," he

added.

Eating fast food is known to increase weight gain, cause inadequate nutritional intake, digestive issues, energy crashes, and mood swings. These can contribute to obesity, diabetes and hypertension, and poor mental health, and more -- all of which can lead to mortality in the long term. IANS

Ayush exports jump 6.11 pc to \$689 million in 2024-25: Govt

NEW DELHI: Exports of Ayush and herbal products have registered a growth of 6.11 percent, increasing from \$649.2 million in 2023-24 to \$688.89 million in 2024-25, the government said recently.

Following the establishment of Ayush Export Promotion Council (AYUSHEXCIL), this growth has accelerated; reflecting enhanced global outreach and rising international demand for India's traditional medicine and herbal products, according to Commerce Ministry.

The Ayush Export Promotion Council (AYUSHEXCIL) observed its 4th Establishment Anniversary today in New Delhi in India's efforts to promote exports of traditional systems of medicine and wellness products.

Since its formation, AYUSHEXCIL has undertaken several initiatives focused on capacity building of exporters, facilitation of export procedures

and regulatory compliance, and the organization of B2B meetings, international exhibitions, seminars, and outreach programs in key overseas markets.

According to the ministry, India's traditional medicine systems (AYUSH) have also received formal recognition in bilateral trade agreements, including the India-Oman CEPA and the India-New Zealand FTA, with dedicated annexes on health-related services and traditional medicine.

AYUSHEXCIL has been entrusted with anchoring the Ayush Quality Mark program of the Ministry of Ayush, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 2nd WHO Summit on Traditional Medicine (December 17-19, 2025), marking a key milestone in strengthening quality assurance and global recognition of AYUSH products. IANS

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Study warns of growing global threat of brain eating amoebae in water, environment

NEW DELHI: The free-living amoebae, also known as brain-eating amoebae, are becoming a growing global public health threat, warned a new study.

Climate change, ageing water infrastructure, and gaps in monitoring and detection are making the dangerous group of pathogens lurk freely in water and the environment, warned the team of environmental and public health scientists, in

strong disinfectants like chlorine, and even live inside water distribution systems that people assume are safe," Shu added.

Amoebae are single-celled organisms commonly found in soil and water. While most are harmless, some species can cause devastating infections. Among the most notorious is Naegleria fowleri, often referred to as the brain-eating amoeba, which can trigger a rare but almost always

and viruses inside their cells, amoebae can protect these pathogens from disinfection and help them persist and spread in drinking water systems. This so-called Trojan horse effect may also contribute to the spread of antibiotic resistance.

Climate warming is expected to worsen the problem by expanding the geographic range of heat-loving amoebae into regions where they were previously rare. Recent outbreaks linked to recreational water use have already raised public concern in several countries.

The researchers called for a coordinated One Health approach that connects human health, environmental science, and water management. They urge stronger surveillance, improved diagnostic tools, and the adoption of advanced water treatment technologies to reduce risks before infections occur.

"Amoebae are not just a medical issue or an environmental issue," Shu said. "They sit at the intersection of both and addressing them requires integrated solutions that protect public health at its source." IANS

Type 2 diabetes quietly rewires heart, raises risk of failures: Study

NEW DELHI: Type 2 diabetes quietly changes the heart structure and how it produces energy, thus increasing the risk of heart failure, according to a study.

Researchers at the University of Sydney, Australia, studied donated human hearts and found that diabetes disrupts how heart cells produce energy, weakens the muscle's structure, and triggers a buildup of stiff, fibrous tissue that makes it harder for the heart to pump.

These effects were most pronounced in patients with ischemic cardiomyopathy-- the leading cause of heart failure.

The findings, published in the journal EMBO Molecular Medicine, can help explain why people living with diabetes face a much higher risk of developing heart failure.

"We've long seen a correlation between heart disease and type 2 diabetes, but this is the first research to jointly look at diabetes and ischemic heart disease and uncover a unique molecular profile in people with both conditions," said Dr. Benjamin Hunter, from the School of Medical Sciences. IANS

Climate change, ageing water infrastructure, and gaps in monitoring and detection are making the dangerous group of pathogens lurk freely in water and the environment, warned the team of environmental and public health scientists, in the article published in the journal Biocontaminant

fatal brain infection after contaminated water enters the nose during activities such as swimming. Naegleria fowleri has also contributed to several deaths in Kerala in the recent years.

The authors also emphasized that amoebae act as hidden carriers for other harmful microbes. By sheltering bacteria

"What makes these organisms particularly dangerous is their ability to survive conditions that kill many other microbes," said corresponding author Longfei Shu of Sun Yat sen University, China.

"They can tolerate high temperatures,



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India pushing ahead to diversify exports amid US tariff turmoil: Report

NEW DELHI: When India reached a free-trade agreement with New Zealand in a record time of nine months towards the end of December, this was a clear signal of New Delhi's plan to diversify the country's exports away from the US and this approach is expected to gather pace going ahead, according to an article in the South China Morning Post.

The article highlights that ever since US President Donald Trump imposed penal import tariffs of 50 percent on India last year, New Delhi has maintained a resolute approach to the punitive levies, even as it has kept the door open to negotiations.

The article points out that the trade deal with New Zealand last month was the third such deal that came close on the heels of the free trade agreements with the United Kingdom and Oman.

The US is India's largest export market, receiving about 18 percent of its total goods exports, including items such as garments and leather products, with a vast diaspora readily snapping up products shipped from their homeland. *IANS*

Tata Group hunting for new CEO to head Air India

NEW DELHI: The Tata Group has started looking for a new Chief Executive Officer to head Air India as the airline is going through a turbulent phase following the Ahmedabad plane crash and has not been able make a financial turnaround at the required pace after it was taken over from the government as part of the privatization process.

Tata Group Chairman N. Chandrasekaran has already held preliminary discussions with potential CEO candidates who have experience in managing large airlines, according to people familiar with the issue. *IANS*



US to receive \$600 bn in tariffs: Trump

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump says the US has taken in, and will soon receive, more than \$600 billion through tariffs, arguing that the policy has strengthened the country financially and bolstered national security.

The President also accused the country's media of downplaying the issue ahead of a key Supreme Court decision.

In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said: "We have taken in, and will soon be receiving, more than 600 Billion Dollars in Tariffs, but the Fake News Media refuses to talk about it because they hate and disrespect our Country, and want to interfere with the upcoming Tariff decision, one of the most important ever, of the United States Supreme Court."

The President, in his social media post, asserted that framed trade measures are directly linked to the nation's global standing.



"Because of Tariffs, our Country is financially, AND FROM ANATIONAL SECURITY STAND-POINT, FAR STRONGER AND MORE RESPECTED THAN EVER BEFORE," Trump wrote.

Soon after coming to power in January 2025, Trump and his team used tariffs as a national security and foreign policy tool, imposing massive tariffs on

countries around the world on imports of their products.

He has imposed a 50 percent tariff on the import of products from India.

India pushing ahead to diversify exports amid US tariff turmoil: Report

According to an article in the South China Morning Post. New Delhi plans to diversify the

country's exports away from the US, and this approach is expected to gather pace ingoing ahead.

The article highlights that ever since US President Donald Trump imposed penal import tariffs of 50 percent on India last year, New Delhi has maintained a resolute approach to the punitive levies, even as it has kept the door open to negotiations.

The US is India's largest export market, receiving about 18 percent of its total goods exports, including items such as garments and leather products, with a vast diaspora readily snapping up products shipped from their homeland.

While it remains unclear whether the two countries can negotiate a trade deal given India's firm position on opening sensitive sectors such as agriculture and dairy to US products, experts are skeptical that Washington will significantly roll back its tariffs, the article states. *IANS*

2026 looks harder for Pakistani investors amid growing uncertainty

NEW DELHI: After an exceptional year in which gold prices surged and the Pakistan Stock Exchange delivered near-record returns, investors are now entering 2026 with growing uncertainty.

With interest rates expected

For many Pakistanis, the challenge ahead is not how to make quick money, but how to protect hard-earned wealth in a more difficult and less forgiving investment environment

to ease, taxes rising on savings, property markets losing momentum and equities no longer cheap, the easy gains of the past three years appear to be behind.

For many Pakistanis, the

challenge ahead is not how to make quick money, but how to protect hard-earned wealth in a more difficult and less forgiving investment environment.

As investors now look towards 2026, attention is shifting to which asset classes still make

sense in a changing economic environment.

Many Pakistanis continue to keep their money in current accounts, often due to habit or religious considerations.

However, these accounts of-

fer zero return, while banks use the same funds to earn double-digit returns by investing in government securities, according to a report by Dawn.

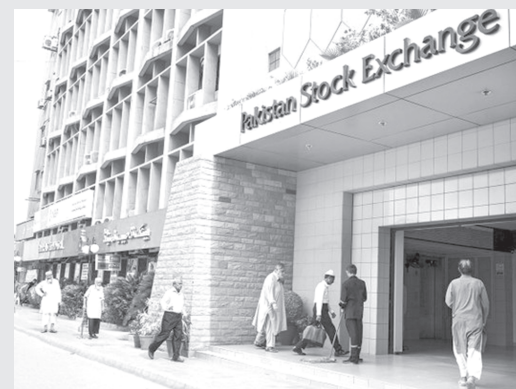
Savings accounts are a step ahead, but returns remain modest. Typically, they offer returns slightly below the State Bank of Pakistan's policy rate, translating to around 9 percent annually at present.

Recent tax measures have further reduced post-tax returns, especially for those with higher savings balances.

More financially aware investors often turn to low-risk fixed-income mutual funds. These funds invest in government securities and bank deposits, offering daily liquidity and professional

management.

While returns are slightly better than savings accounts, they are adjusted for management fees.



Investors seeking higher growth often look beyond fixed income. Balanced mutual funds, which invest a portion of money in equities and the rest in fixed-

income instruments, offer a middle path.

These funds are suitable for individuals who can tolerate some short-term volatility in ex-

change for better long-term returns, especially during periods of falling interest rates.

Pension funds remain one of the most overlooked investment tools, particularly for salaried individuals.

Contributions not only help build long-term retirement savings but also provide valuable tax credits. *IANS*

China concerned about significant economic interests in Venezuela after US action: Report

NEW DELHI: The US capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has raised questions about how the resulting political instability could affect China's significant economic interests there, as it is Venezuela's largest creditor and, by far, its



largest buyer of oil, accounting for more than 80 percent of crude exports, according to a new report.

Before his capture by the US, Maduro met Qiu Xiaoqi, China's special representative for Latin American Affairs, at the

Miraflores Presidential Palace, and described the relationship between Beijing and Caracas as "the perfect union to the test at all times, always victorious and at full speed", The Straits Times reported.

The report said that China and Venezuela elevated bilateral relations to an "all-weather strategic partnership" in 2023 when Maduro met President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

"Venezuela is the only country in Latin America with this designation, which is meant to reflect high political trust and mutual support in international issues," the report stressed.

Professor Jiang Shixue of Shanghai University was quoted as saying in the report that "China's greatest concern would be that its investment in Venezuela would be adversely affected by the current political crisis caused by the US".

Beijing is a major investor in mining and infrastructure under Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative.

In 2024, bilateral trade in goods reached \$6.4 billion, a year-on-year increase of 52.5 percent.

According to reports, Venezuela has nearly \$12 billion in outstanding debts with China as part of an oil-for-loans program by the China Development Bank. Forbes recently reported that the amount "is the

Professor Jiang Shixue of Shanghai University was quoted as saying in the report that "China's greatest concern would be that its investment in Venezuela would be adversely affected by the current political crisis caused by the US"

largest single-country commodity-backed position in Beijing's portfolio, out of the \$60 billion extended since 2007".

In May last year, private firm China Concord Resources Corp signed a rare 20-

year deal to develop two Venezuelan oilfields, in a project with a planned investment of \$1 billion.

Meanwhile, China's Foreign Ministry has expressed "serious concern" over the US detention of Maduro, adding that US actions "clearly violate international law and the basic norms governing international relations".

According to a spokesperson, China calls on the US to ensure the personal

safety of President Maduro and his wife, immediately release him and his wife, cease its efforts to subvert the Venezuelan regime, and resolve the issue through dialogue and negotiation. *IANIS*

Gujarat's stride towards 'Atmanirbhar Bharat': Pulses production doubles in six years

GANDHINAGAR: Gujarat has emerged as one of India's leading pulse-producing states, recording a sharp rise in output over the past six years and strengthening the country's push towards agricultural self-reliance.

Driven by better irrigation facilities, higher support prices and improved seed varieties, the state's annual pulse production has crossed 20 lakh metric tons, nearly double the levels recorded in 2019-20.

Data from the agriculture department shows that between 2019-20 and 2024-25, the area under pulse cultivation in Gujarat expanded from 9 lakh hectares to 14.39 lakh hectares.

During the same period, productivity increased significantly from 1,173 kg per hectare to 1,495 kg per hectare, reflecting improvements in farming practices and crop management.

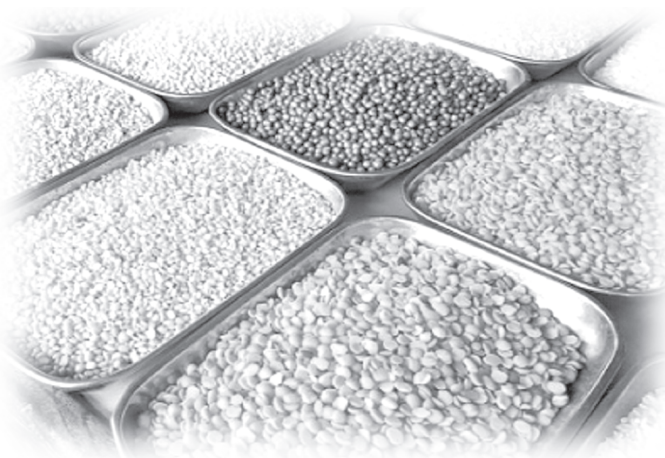
As a result, total pulse production rose from 10.58 lakh metric tons to 21.52 lakh metric tons.

Chickpea continues to dominate Gujarat's pulse basket, accounting for

more than 70 percent of the state's total pulses output.

Chickpea production witnessed a steep rise from 6.36 lakh metric tons in 2019-20 to 15.63 lakh metric tons in 2024-25.

Gujarat has also made notable gains in pigeon pea (tur/arhar) cultivation, with pro-



duction increasing by around 45 percent over the same period, from 2.10 lakh metric tons to 3.08 lakh metric tons.

Other pulses such as urad, moong and moth bean have also gained ground across different agro-climatic zones of the state.

In 2024-25, urad was cultivated over 1.14 lakh hectares with an output of

around 90,000 metric tons, while moong covered 1.38 lakh hectares, yielding nearly 1.26 lakh metric tons.

Moth bean, suited to dry and semi-arid regions such as Kutch and parts of north Gujarat, along with other minor pulses, was grown over about 72,000 hectares, producing more than 64,000 metric tons.

Officials attribute this transformation to a combination of policy and infrastructure interventions.

Irrigation initiatives have ensured greater water availability for rabi and summer crops, encouraging farmers to diversify into pulses.

At the same time, increases in minimum support prices -- ranging between 11 and 31 percent in recent years -- have made pulse cultivation economically attractive.

The adoption of improved seed varieties developed by state agricultural universities has further boosted yields.

The growing export potential of pulses from Gujarat has added another layer of incentive for farmers, leading to expansion in cultivated area as well as higher productivity. *IANIS*

India's pharma sector bullish on pushing up exports

NEW DELHI: India's pharmaceutical exports reached \$30.47 billion in FY 2024-25, registering a 9.4 percent year-on-year growth, and are on track to surpass last year's performance in the current financial year, the Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL) informed Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal recently.

PHARMEXCIL also highlighted India's position as the third-largest pharmaceutical producer globally by volume and a trusted supplier of affordable, quality-assured medicines to over 150 countries, which reflects the potential for long-term export-led growth.

The leadership of PHARMEXCIL held a series of high-level meetings with senior officials of the Centre to deliberate on strategic priorities, policy alignment, and growth opportunities for strengthening India's pharmaceutical exports, according to a statement issued by the trade body.

In a separate meeting with Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Manoj Joshi, the PHARMEXCIL highlighted the performance and growth trajectory of the pharmaceutical sector.

India's domestic pharmaceutical market, currently valued at approximately \$60 billion, is projected to grow to \$130 billion by 2030, the trade body said. *IANIS*

In Brief

Nepal implements online system to track foreign nationals

KATHMANDU: Nepal has implemented the Foreign Nationals Management Information System (FNMIS) to ensure the safety of foreign nationals visiting the country and to control potential crimes involving foreign nationals.

Developed by the Department of Immigration, the FNMIS is a nationwide digital database designed to collect real-time information on foreign nationals from the moment they apply for a visa until they leave the Himalayan nation.

All entities - including hotels, airlines, travel and trekking agencies, money exchange counters, and other service providers offering services to foreign nationals - are required to register in the system to ensure its effective implementation.

Although the department stated that the system would be mandatorily implemented at star-rated hotels within the Kathmandu Valley starting in the first phase; many other service providers had also registered with the system recently. "As many as 1,416 tourism service providers, including hotels, travel companies, and money exchangers, joined the system by Thursday afternoon," Tikaram Dhakal, a Director at the department, told IANS.

As per the plans announced earlier by the immigration authority, the system will be implemented across all star-rated hotels nationwide, airlines, tour and travel companies, and money exchangers in the second phase, starting from March 1. It will then be progressively extended to all types of hotels, guest houses, and services provided by other public and private institutions. IANS

Immigration

POST

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Since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina, violence has engulfed the nation, and this has put the Indian agencies on a state of high alert

Intel warns of rising infiltration attempts via Nepal border ahead of Bangladesh elections

NEW DELHI: There has been a surge in the number of Bangladeshis who are trying to infiltrate India through the Nepal border. The year 2025 witnessed multiple such instances in which Bangladeshis trying to illegally cross over into India have been apprehended by the Indian security forces.

Officials say that this is a new trend and more such attempts would be made by touts in Bangladesh. The touts who are in cahoots with their Indian counterparts are increasingly using the Nepal route because security is tight along the Indo-Bangladesh border, officials say.

Since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina, violence has engulfed the nation, and this has put the Indian agencies on a state of high alert. Many attempts had been made to infiltrate into the northeastern states and West Bengal during this period, but most of the attempts have been foiled by alert Indian forces. This has prompted the touts to look at the Nepal route through which they have been attempting to send illegal immigrants into India.

The infiltration route through Nepal that the touts have been using is near Raxaul in the East Champaran district of Bihar. These touts are still testing the waters, and hence the numbers have been lower. Once they figure it out, they will do it in larger numbers, officials have warned.



There are other routes too, which these touts have tried to use to send in illegal immigrants into India. As per Intelligence agencies, apart from Raxaul, the touts have tried to send in illegal immigrants through Bahraich,

Gonda and Balrampur districts. The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), which mans the Indo-Nepal border, has sounded a high alert and has deployed 1,700 per-

sonnel to curb this menace.

These personnel are carrying out intensive combing operations in the forest areas near Nepal to prevent large-scale illegal immigration. In addition to this, the SSB has deployed 9,000 personnel across Pilibhit, Bahraich, Shravasti,

The year 2025 witnessed multiple such instances in which Bangladeshis trying to illegally cross over into India have been apprehended by the Indian security forces

Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, and Maharajganj. An Intelligence Bureau official says that the Nepal border is a matter of concern. "We have

learnt that a large number of Bangladeshis have taken shelter in the border areas of Nepal and are waiting to enter India illegally," the official said. These people have been staying in Nepal for a long time and are waiting for the right moment to cross over into India.

While the route has changed, the script almost remains the same, officials say. They are being sent in to create demographic changes. Moreover, with the ISI sprucing up the terror infrastructure in Bangladesh to be used against India, many of these illegal immigrants are being sent in to be part of the modules in Bihar, West Bengal and the northeastern states, officials also warn. IANS

Trump welfare figures highlight India's distinct profile

WASHINGTON: A set of data tables shared by US President Donald Trump on Truth Social ranking immigrant welfare recipient rates by country of origin has drawn attention in Washington, with India absent from the two-page list - a gap that underscores

the distinct economic profile of Indian immigrants within the broader US immigration landscape.

The figures are presented across two tables and together form a single dataset. They show the share of immigrant households in the United States receiv-

ing government assistance. The rates range from above 80 percent to just under 40 percent.

Bhutan tops the list at 81.4 percent. It is followed by Yemen (North) at 75.2 percent, Somalia at 71.9 percent and the Marshall Islands at 71.4 percent. Several

other countries also record high levels of welfare participation.

The Dominican Republic and Afghanistan are each listed at 68.1 percent. Congo appears at 66 percent, Guinea at 65.8 percent, and Iraq at 60.7 percent. A number of Central American,

Caribbean and African countries feature prominently in this group.

Guatemala is shown at 56.5 percent, Sudan at 56.3 percent, and El Salvador at 55.4 percent. Honduras appears at 52.9 percent. Bangladesh is listed at 54.8 percent. IANS

China's aviation crisis deepens with empty airports suspended international routes: Report

BEIJING/NEW DELHI: The aviation sector in China is facing a significant crisis with empty airports, suspended international routes, and mounting airline losses, according to a media report.

The situation "has become a symbol of the country's broader economic and political isolation" by the global community, the Ceylon News wire reported. It attributed the crisis to the mismanagement of domestic as well as foreign policies.

"The eerie emptiness of China's airports today is not merely a logistical issue but a telling indicator of deeper structural problems. Once bustling hubs of international travel, facilities such as Beijing's Daxing International Airport now resemble ghost towns. Social media posts from travellers reveal shuttered shops, deserted terminals, and flights operating with only a handful of passengers," the report said.

"This collapse in air traffic is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a wider trend that underscores the fragility of China's economy and the limitations of its governance model under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)," it added.

The report called out the CCP's cost-cutting measures that led airlines, mainly state-owned Air China, China Eastern, and

China Southern, to reduce services, install hard seats, and even strap cargo onto passenger seats, eroding "consumer trust".

It noted that the government's domestic policy of prioritizing infrastructure expansion without addressing consumer confidence also left airlines overextended and unable to adapt.

At the same time, high-speed rail with cheaper and more reliable alternatives led

carriers, including Virgin Atlantic, Scandinavian Airlines, and El Al, suspended flights to China by December 2024.

"Even Beijing's unilateral visa-free policy for citizens of 38 countries has failed to reverse the decline. Inbound travel recovery rates remain dismal: only 45.2 per cent from the US, 56.2 per cent from Germany, 57.9 per cent from the UK, and 53 per cent from France as of mid-2025," the report said.



to stiff competition and further weakened aviation's appeal.

These challenges were compounded by China's strained relations with Western nations, exacerbated by the ongoing US-China trade war and geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea. These discouraged international airlines from maintaining routes.

As per the report, more than 30 foreign

This led to severe financial loss of more than 4.7 billion yuan (\$645 million) collectively for Air China, China Eastern, and China Southern.

"The CCP's policies, both domestic and foreign, have failed to inspire confidence, leaving the aviation industry as a cautionary tale of what happens when political priorities overshadow economic pragmatism," the report said. *IANS*

Delhi Police apprehends 2 Nigerian nationals for illegal stay

NEW DELHI: The Delhi police said the South-West District team has apprehended two African nationals who were found illegally staying in India without valid visas.

The accused have been identified as Miracele Onyeka and Moses Chinoso, both residents of Nigeria. The necessary legal proceedings for their deportation have been initiated through the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) in RK Puram.

According to Delhi Police, the operation was carried out by the Operations Cell of the South-West district as part of a focused drive against illegal foreign nationals. Dedicated teams were instructed to gather intelligence and take strict action against individuals residing in the country without valid documentation.

During night patrolling on the occasion of New Year's, the police team received secret information about the movement of some illegal African nationals in the South-West District area. *ANI*

IGI Airport police arrest over 130 in visa passport fraud crackdown in 2025

NEW DELHI: In a major crackdown on visa and passport fraud, the IGI Airport unit of Delhi Police arrested more than 130 people in 2025, including travel agents and facilitators involved in illegal immigration, officials said.

According to a press release issued by the IGI Airport Police, the action marked a significant shift in investigation strategy, with a strong focus on financial probes to trace proceeds of crime. For the first time, police initiated detailed financial investigations against agents suspected of running fraud networks.

Despite challenges posed by large cash transactions, investigators identified over 100 bank accounts linked to agents with suspicious financial activity. These accounts have been frozen for debit. In one case, police have already moved a competent court seeking attach-

ment of property suspected to have been acquired through criminal proceeds. Similar proceedings are being initiated against other accused agents as well.

To prevent accused persons from fleeing the country, police also secured the issuance of 140 Look Out Circulars (LOCs)

Despite challenges posed by large cash transactions, investigators identified over 100 bank accounts linked to agents with suspicious financial activity. These accounts have been frozen for debit

against absconders during the year. Additionally, 119 Proclaimed Offenders, including individuals wanted in decade-old cases, were arrested in 2025.

The IGI Airport unit also intensified action against touts and theft at the airport. More than 300 cases of touting were registered, leading to the arrest of over 400 people. In separate operations, over 60 individuals were arrested in cases related to theft from passenger baggage and cargo. As part of these investigations, ground-handling staff of concerned airlines were also questioned. *ANI*

Four members of Kerala family killed in accident in Saudi Arabia after returning from Umrah

MALAPPURAM: Four members of a family from Manjeri in Kerala's Malappuram district were killed in a tragic road accident in Madina, Saudi Arabia, plunging their relatives and the local community into deep grief.

The victims were identified as Abdul Jaleel (52), a native of Vellila in Manjeri; his mother Maimunath Kakkengal (73); his wife Thasna Thodengal (40); and their 14-year-old son Aadhil Jaleel.

All four died on the spot due to the impact of the collision, according to preliminary reports received from Saudi Arabia.

The accident occurred while the family was travelling by car from Mecca to Jeddah after completing Umrah, the Islamic pilgrimage. Their vehicle reportedly collided with a truck on the highway near Madinah, resulting in severe damage.

The exact cause of the accident is yet to be officially confirmed by Saudi authorities. Three other members of the family -- Ayisha, Hadiya and Noorah, the daughters of Abdul Jaleel, sustained serious injuries in the crash. They are currently undergoing treatment at different hospitals in Saudi Arabia and are said to be in critical condition.

Hospital sources indicated that the injured girls are under close medical observation, and further updates on their condition are awaited.

Abdul Jaleel was employed in Jeddah and had been living in Saudi Arabia for several years. His family members had recently travelled to the country on a tourist visa with the sole purpose of performing Umrah.

The pilgrimage, considered a deeply spiritual journey for Muslims, had been completed shortly before the fatal accident occurred. News of the tragedy has sent shockwaves through Manjeri and nearby areas, where the family is well-known.

Relatives, neighbors and community members gathered at the family home in Vellila as messages of condolence poured in from across the district and from the Kerala diaspora in the Gulf.

Efforts are reportedly underway to coordinate with Saudi authorities regarding legal formalities and the repatriation of the bodies. *IANS*

Indian nationals held in US cocaine trafficking case

WASHINGTON: Two Indian nationals have been arrested in the United States after authorities discovered more than 300 pounds of cocaine hidden inside a semi-truck in Indiana, according to the US Department of Homeland Security.

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, said it lodged arrest detainers on January 4 against Gurpreet Singh, 25, and Jasveer Singh, 30. The two men were arrested by local authorities in Putnam County, Indiana, on charges related to narcotics trafficking.

Law enforcement officers found 309 pounds of cocaine concealed in the sleeper berth of the semi-truck the men were operating. The drugs were discovered during a routine truck inspection, DHS said, adding that the quantity seized was enough to kill more than 113,000 people.

According to DHS, both Gurpreet Singh and Jasveer Singh were issued Commercial Drivers Licenses by the state of California. The licenses allowed them to drive commercial vehicles across state lines.

ICE said it lodged detainers to ensure the two men remain in custody and are transferred to federal immigration authorities after local criminal proceedings conclude.

"Thanks to Gavin Newsom's reckless policies, these two criminal illegal aliens were granted commercial drivers licenses by the state of California and were arrested for trafficking a whopping 300 pounds of cocaine inside a semi-truck," Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement.

"Gavin Newsom and his fellow sanctuary politicians even refused to honor an arrest detainer on one of these criminal illegal aliens in December," she said. "Sanctuary policies put American lives at risk."

According to DHS, Gurpreet Singh illegally entered the United States on March 11, 2023, near Lukeville, Arizona. He was released into the country under the Biden administration, the department added. *IANS*

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

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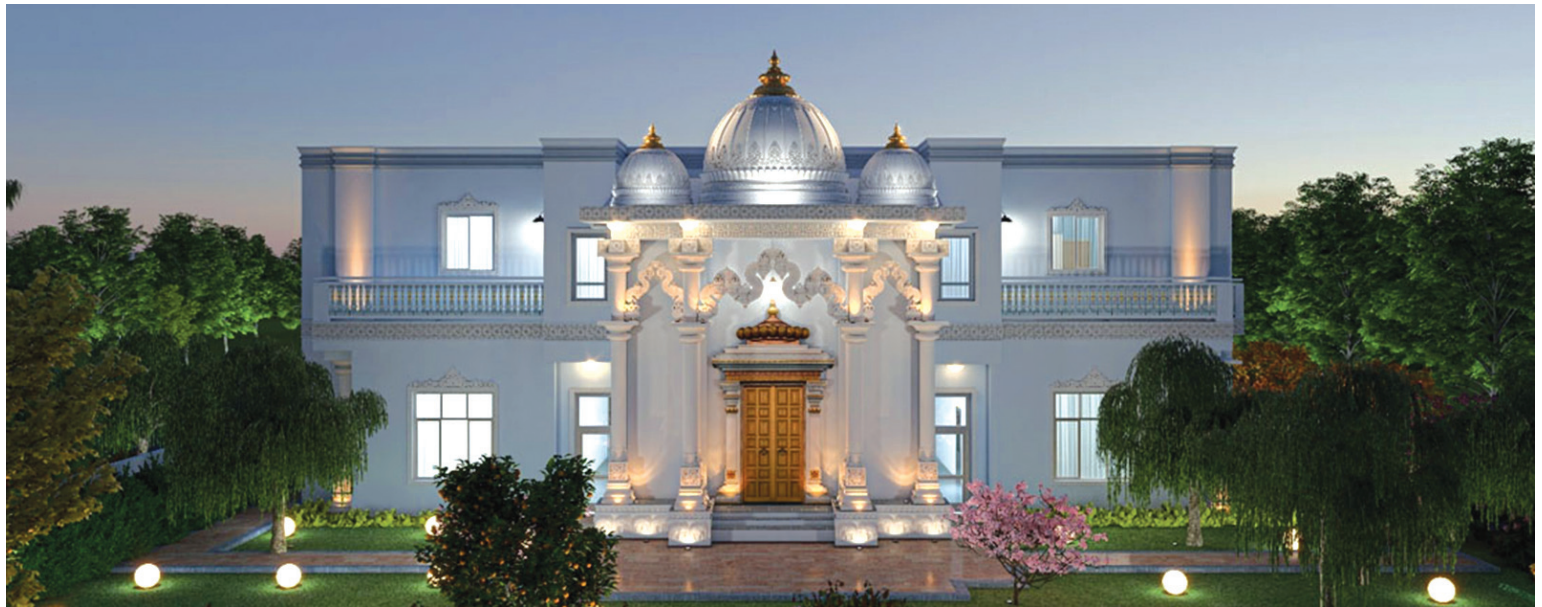
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Indian American Khanna to succeed Krishnamoorthi as top Democrat on China panel

A new spiritual landmark for Los Angeles *Radha Krishna Dham inauguration on January 14-18, 2026*



A serene evening view of the new Hindu mandir shows its illuminated white façade and graceful domes

India Post News Service

Radha Krishna Dham, a new spiritual landmark dedicated to the devotional practice of Bhakti Yoga, is set to open in Tarzana. Located in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley, the temple is part of Jagadguru Kripalu Parishat (JKP), a global network established by Jagadguru Shree Kripalu Ji Maharaj to share his spiritual teachings and charitable mission.

Shree Kripalu Ji Maharaj revealed the true essence of the Vedic scriptures (Sanatan Dham) in a beautifully simple way that resonates with people from all walks of life. He describes the goal of each soul to attain eternal happiness through bhakti - a simple path that has profound impact and is especially effective in the modern world. His teachings transcend boundaries of faith, background or country, embracing all of humanity. In recognition of his unmatched wisdom, he was honored by India's most respected body of Vedic scholars with the title of Jagadguruttam (supreme among Jagadgurus) on January 14,

1957. Notably, Radha Krishna Dham will be inaugurated on this very same date in 2026.

The Radha Krishna Dham temple represents the Bhakti Yog tradition in Southern California, aspiring to be a welcoming home for all who wish to learn about the path of devotion, love, and service. Architecturally, the temple reflects classical Indian aesthetics infused with thoughtful modern design. It offers a serene refuge for reflection, connection,

The Radha Krishna Dham temple represents the Bhakti Yog tradition in Southern California, aspiring to be a welcoming home for all who wish to learn about the path of devotion, love, and service

and spiritual growth. Whether one comes for a few moments of peace or to participate in activities, the temple offers a sense of calm and belonging.

Radha Krishna Dham-Inspiring Devotion, Seva, and Community

Radha Krishna Dham stands as more than a temple-it is a living center for spiritual learning,

cultural celebration, and community service. Its mission is to share the joy of Bhakti Yog and encourage devotion and selfless service.

Regular satsangs, kirtan, aarti, and scriptural classes will offer ongoing opportunities for spiritual development. The temple will host educational programs, seva (volunteering), and cultural events throughout the year. Major festivals such as Janmashtami, Holi, and Diwali

will be celebrated joyfully. Weekly yoga classes led by certified instructors will nurture physical well-being, while vegetarian prasad meals on Sundays will foster community togetherness. For families, the temple's Shiksha Program will teach the philosophy of India's great scriptures and devotional music in an engaging way-nurturing pride in

cultural identity and love for tradition.

Grand Opening Celebration - January 14-18, 2026

The Grand Opening begins on Wednesday, January 14, with sacred Vedic rituals and a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the temple's official inauguration. Over five days, a full schedule of devotional and cultural events will uplift hearts and reconnect souls to the Divine.

Adding to the celebration's spiritual depth, discourses will be delivered by five leading preachers from Jagadguru Kripalu Parishat (JKP):

- Sushree Diwakari Devi, President of Radha Madhav Dham, Austin, TX

- Sushree Gopeshwari Devi Ji, respected JKP preacher and spiritual guide

- Sushri Siddheshwari Devi, Founder of Radha Madhav Society, USA

- Swami Maheshvaranand Ji, Founder of Radha Govind Society, New York

- Sushri Rameshwari Devi, senior JKP preacher from Canada

Cont'd on page 25

Fremont Hindu Temple celebrates 2nd anniversary of Ayodhya Ram Temple with fervor and devotion

RITU MAHESHWARI
India Post News Service

FREMONT: Over thousand devotees gathered on the occasion of Ayodhya Ram Temple inauguration's second anniversary on 30th December. This follows in the foot steps of a large celebration and emotional event held last year when Ayodhya temple was inaugurated.

The program was a spontaneous outpouring of devotees' emotions and devotion and their connection with the oldest Hindu temple in the Bay Area. Families with elders and children gathered to immerse in the melodious songs praising lord Ram and remembering the most his-



toric day of Ram temple being inaugurated after hundreds of years of struggle and hard work.

Tens of Bay Area's famous singers brought their best compositions to celebrate Lord Ram. The evening focused on prayer, devotional music and community service dedicated to Lord Ram.



Enthralling Ram Dhun and bhajans created an environment that transformed the whole temple into a gathering mesmerized into Lord Ram's devotion.

Several devotees came forward to sponsor and serve Priti Bhoj, offered as Lord's prasad,

The Fremont Hindu Temple Bay Are's



first Hindu temple that leads in providing with community religious, cultural and, social connection and services.

Chandru Bhambhra, organizer of the event said "We are very fortunate that Ayodhya temple was inaugurated in our life

time. It has raised a lot of devotion and Astha in Bay Area community as can be seen by today's participation".

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PERSONAL PROFILE

An experienced CPA and a Chartered Accountant. I have worked with many big 100 Fortune Companies in diversified industries at various management levels. I have extensive experience in Tax Filings and Tax related matters and practicing in Los Angeles and S.F. Valley since 2006.

FIELD OF EXPERTISE

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- Standard Payroll reports.
- Quarterly/Yearly Payroll Tax returns.

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- Inventory control and management.
- Formation of Partnerships and Corporations.
- Other advisory services.

EAM Jaishankar visits Paris exhibition showcasing Indian heritage, deep cultural ties

PARIS: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar visited an exhibition in Paris titled 'Ce qui se trame - woven stories between India and France' which showcased India's textile heritage, expertise and craftsmanship, underscoring the strong cultural connection between the two nations.

"Visited exposition 'Ce qui se trame - woven stories between India and France' in Paris this evening. The exhibition showcases India's textile heritage, savoir-faire and creativity. It is also a reminder of the strong India-France cultural connect," EAM posted on X recently.

EAM Jaishankar is on an official visit to France and Luxembourg from January 4-9. During his visit to France, the EAM will meet French leadership and hold talks with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jean Noel Barrot.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, "They will discuss the progress made under the India-France



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Delegate for Europe and Foreign Affairs Eleonore Caroit, and Roman Pinösch visit the 'Ce qui se trame' exhibition in Paris. (@DrSJaishankar X/ANI Photo)

Strategic Partnership and matters of global importance. EAM will also address the 31st edition of the French Ambassador's Conference as the Guest of Honor." During his visit to Luxembourg, EAM

Jaishankar will hold talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Xavier Bettel and the senior leadership. He will also interact with the members of the Indian community in Luxembourg.

In November last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in South Africa.

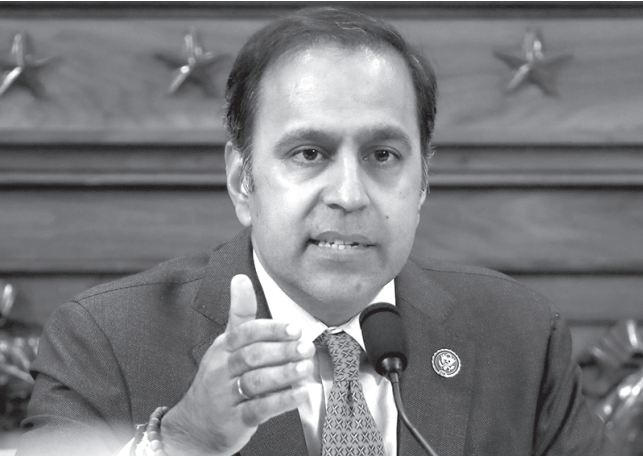
The two leaders also held a phone conversation in September and August last year, exchanging views on efforts towards bringing an end to the conflict in Ukraine while reiterating India's consistent support for a peaceful resolution of the issue and early restoration of peace and stability in the entire region.

During their conversations over the past few months, the two leaders have reviewed and positively assessed the developments in bilateral cooperation across different sectors, including economic, defense, science, technology and space.

They had reaffirmed their commitment towards further strengthening of the India-France Strategic Partnership, in line with the Horizon 2047 Roadmap, the Indo-Pacific Roadmap and the Defense Industrial Roadmap. IANS

Indian American lawmakers criticize Trump over Venezuela

WASHINGTON: Indian American lawmakers sharply criticized President Donald Trump's decision to use military force in Venezuela and his statement that the United States would "run" the country. The six Indian American lawmakers - all from the opposition Democratic Party - warned that the move bypassed Congress, risked long-term instability, and un-



Raja Krishnamoorthi

dermined constitutional limits on presidential power. Raja Krishnamoorthi, a senior member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said Maduro's record did not justify unilateral military action. "Nicolás Maduro is an illegitimate dictator who has inflicted immense suffering on the

Venezuelan people," Krishnamoorthi said, "but that reality does not give any president a blank check to use military force without Congress."

He said acting without authorization and asserting US control over another sovereign nation amounted to an abuse of power. "By acting without congressional authorization and publicly asserting US control over another sovereign nation, President Trump is abusing presidential power and undermining the Constitution's separation of powers," he said.

Krishnamoorthi called on the administration to immediately brief lawmakers. "The Administration must immediately account for the safety of US personnel, disclose whether there were any casualties, and fully and immediately brief Congress," he said, adding that Trump's statement that the US would run Venezuela committed the country to "open-ended responsibility" without approval. He warned the move would "erode the rule of law, embolden Moscow and Beijing to push boundaries elsewhere, weaken America's credibility, and ulti-

mately make Americans less safe." Suhas Subramanyam, Ranking Member of the Military and Foreign Affairs Oversight Subcommittee, said the operation contradicted Trump's stated opposition to new wars. "President Trump said he'd be the 'Peace President' and wouldn't start any new wars, and yet here he is illegally invading another country and kidnapping its President," Subramanyam said. While describing Maduro as "a violent ruler who oppressed democracy in his

Venezuela," arguing that repeated US interventions had failed. "What will we say now if Xi Jinping wants to capture Lai of Taiwan or Putin tries to capture Zelenskyy in Ukraine?" Khanna asked. Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal accused Trump of breaking a central promise. "Trump promised to get the US out of wars - he lied," she said, adding that the action was "all about oil, greed, and power." In a separate post, she questioned Washington deciding Venezuela's leader-

Krishnamoorthi called on the administration to immediately brief lawmakers. "The Administration must immediately account for the safety of US personnel, disclose whether there were any casualties, and fully and immediately brief Congress

country," Subramanyam said the manner of his capture would not achieve US goals. "His capture in this manner will not stop the flow of drugs or promise anything other than more instability in Venezuela, and potentially another forever war started under false pretenses," he said. Progressive lawmakers also framed the operation as a warning sign for global norms. Ro Khanna said Trump had "betrayed his MAGA base today launching a war of choice to bring regime change in

ship rather than its people. Ami Bera, the longest-serving Indian American Congressman, said Maduro was illegitimate but warned the decision to strike without congressional input was "deeply concerning and illegal," citing the absence of a "clear and credible strategy for governance or democratic transition." Congressman Shri Thanedar said, "Only Congress has the ability to declare war," calling Trump's actions "totally unconstitutional and unacceptable." The backlash from Indian American

Indian American Khanna to succeed Krishnamoorthi as top Democrat on China panel

WASHINGTON: House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries announced that Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna will take over as Ranking Member of the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, while commending outgoing panel leader Raja Krishnamoorthi for his leadership over the past three years.

In a statement, Jeffries praised Krishnamoorthi's tenure, saying he had led the committee "with grace and resolve" during a period of heightened scrutiny of U.S.-China relations.

He said that throughout his time as Ranking Member, Krishnamoorthi "worked diligently and in a bipartisan way to strengthen our global competitiveness and to advance American economic and national security interests."

"Our nation is safer and more secure because of Raja's commitment to public service," Jeffries said, thanking him "on behalf of House Democrats" for his leadership and continued dedication to the work of the committee

"Our nation is safer and more secure because of Raja's commitment to public service," Jeffries said, thanking him "on behalf of House Democrats" for his leadership and continued dedication to the work of the committee.

Krishnamoorthi had earlier announced his decision to step down from the post later this month, informing Jeffries of his intention to relinquish the role.

In his statement, he reflected on building the committee during its formative years and expressed pride in what he described as a credible, bipartisan body focused on strengthening U.S. economic and national security while keeping American competitiveness at the center of its mission.

Jeffries said Khanna will assume the role of Ranking Member for the remainder of the Congress.

"I am grateful to Congressman Ro Khanna for his willingness to take on the role of leading House Democrats on the Select Committee as Ranking Member for the duration of the Congress," he said.

Praising Khanna's record, Jeffries said that "through his work on the Committee and across the Congress, Rep. Khanna

has proven to be a fighter for our nation and the health, safety and well-being of the American people."

He added that House Democrats thank Khanna for his "continued determination, strong sense of purpose and commitment to the work needed to safeguard our economy, defend our national security and protect human rights around the world."

The leadership transition comes as the committee continues to focus on issues tied to U.S. competitiveness and security in the context of China's global role.

During Krishnamoorthi's tenure, the panel emphasized bipartisan cooperation, with members working across party lines on matters affecting economic resilience, innovation, and national security.

In his farewell remarks, Krishnamoorthi described the challenge posed by China as "among the defining tests of our time,"

saying it spans economic, technological, and military domains and defies easy answers.

He said meeting that challenge requires "nuance and seriousness," along with practical and enforceable policy solutions and a resolve to strengthen American competitiveness "without succumbing to fear or prejudice."

Krishnamoorthi also voiced confidence in the committee's future leadership, saying he was confident Jeffries would make "an excellent decision" in appointing his successor and adding that he looked forward to continuing to work closely with the committee's Democratic leadership.

The House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party was established to examine long-term strategic challenges posed by China and to recommend policy responses aimed at strengthening U.S. economic competitiveness and national security.

Since its creation, the panel has played a prominent role in shaping congressional debate on U.S.-China policy, with an emphasis on bipartisan engagement and sustained oversight. *IAN*



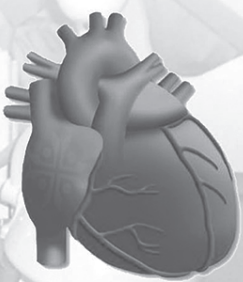
Indian-American Congressman
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Indian-American investor among top MAGA Inc donors

WASHINGTON: Indian-American Silicon Valley investor Asha Jadeja Motwani has emerged as one of the largest diaspora contributors in the current US election cycle, donating more than \$5 million to the pro-Trump super PAC MAGA Inc., according to federal campaign finance filings.

The filings, which list contributors of \$100,000 or more, show Jadeja reported a \$5 million contribution from California in November 2025, placing her among a small group of ultra-wealthy donors backing the political action committee. Her election-to-date total stands at just over \$5.1 million, according to the disclosure.

Jadeja's name appears alongside some of the most influential figures and entities in American technology, finance, and investment. At the top of the list is Foris DAX Inc., the operator of the Crypto.com platform, which has contributed \$20 million in a single reported entry and \$30 million to date in this election cycle. OpenAI president and co-founder Greg Brockman is listed as having con-



Asha Jadeja Motwani

tributed \$25 million.

Konstantin Sokolov, an executive at IIS Investments LLC, is listed with \$11 mil-

lion, while several additional contributions run into the multi-million-dollar range.

In addition to Jadeja, there are only two

other donors at the \$5 million level: Blackstone chairman and chief executive Stephen A. Schwarzman and investor Benjamin Landa. Both are based in New York.

The donor list also reflects a strong presence of technology- and crypto-linked firms. Gemini Trust Company, a major cryptocurrency exchange, is listed with nearly \$1.5 million in contributions and more than \$4.4 million election-to-date. Financial institutions such as JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. and advisory and investment firms also feature prominently.

Jadeja's contribution stands out as one of the largest known political donations by an Indian-origin individual in the current filing, underscoring the growing financial and political engagement of sections of the Indian American community in US electoral politics. Her donation places her in the same donor bracket as some of the most powerful corporate and individual backers of MAGA Inc.

The filings also list contributions from individuals, limited liability companies and political action committees, with donations ranging from \$1 million to several hundred thousand dollars. The disclosures underline the scale of money being raised by the super PAC in the current election cycle.

Under US law, super PACs such as MAGA Inc. are allowed to raise unlimited funds from individuals and corporations. They are barred, however, from coordinating directly with a candidate's campaign, a distinction that has reshaped how elections are financed.

Indian Americans have become more visible in US politics in recent years, both as candidates and as donors. Although the community has traditionally been associated with the Democratic Party, recent election cycles have seen political contributions spread more widely across the spectrum.

US-India relations, including cooperation on technology, trade and strategic issues, remain a key area of interest for policymakers in Washington, making the political engagement of India-linked donors closely watched on both sides of the relationship.

A Silicon Valley-based investor, Jadeja has been involved in the US technology sector for several decades, including early-stage technology ventures and advisory roles. *IANS*

Indian woman found stabbed in US, ex-boyfriend fled to India

WASHINGTON: A young Indian, healthcare professional, was found stabbed to death inside an apartment in the US state of Maryland, police said, as authorities launched an international search for her ex-boyfriend, who left the country for India hours after reporting her missing.

Howard County police said that Nikitha Godishala, 27, of Ellicott City, was found deceased on January 3 inside an apartment in Columbia belonging to her former partner, Arjun Sharma, 26. Sharma, also from India, is now wanted on first- and second-degree murder charges, and US authorities are working with federal agencies to trace and arrest him after confirming he fled to India.

According to Howard County Police, Sharma reported Godishala missing on January 2 and told police he had last seen her on December 31 at his apartment in the 10100 block of Twin Rivers Road. Authorities later determined that Sharma departed the United States for India later that same day, according to an official release.

Howard County Police said its detec-

tives executed a search warrant at the apartment on January 3, where they discovered Godishala's body with stab wounds. Police believe she was killed shortly after 7 p.m. on December 31, New Year's Eve. Investigators said the inquiry



Nikitha Godishala

remains ongoing and that no motive has been identified so far, a media release said.

Howard County police said an arrest warrant has been issued following the dis-

covery, charging Sharma with both first- and second-degree murder. In a statement, the department said it is coordinating with US federal law enforcement agencies as efforts continue to locate and apprehend the suspect.

According to her LinkedIn profile, Godishala was a highly qualified healthcare and data analytics professional, with a background spanning pharmacy, clinical research, health information technology and data management. She was driven by a passion for using data-driven insights to improve healthcare systems and patient outcomes, with expertise in analytics, regulatory compliance and healthcare quality systems, her profile reflects.

She held a master's degree in Health Information Technology from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University in India. Her skills included data analytics, dashboard development, healthcare regulations such as HIPAA, and tools such as SQL, Tableau, Power BI and Python. *IANS*

Indian American Pulkit Desai sworn in as New Jersey City mayor

WASHINGTON: Pulkit Desai, a US Marine veteran and technology professional, has been sworn in as mayor of Parsippany, New Jersey, becoming the township's first Indian American mayor after a razor-thin election victory.

Desai, a Democrat, won the mayoral race after provisional and vote-by-mail ballots overturned an earlier lead held by Republican incumbent James Barberio. Final counts showed Desai ahead by a narrow margin, with Democrats also winning two council seats and securing control of the township council. The swearing-in took place on 3rd January.

In his first interview after taking office, Desai told IANS that his administration would focus on controlling growth while strengthening local services. "Our main priority is to make sure Parsippany is developed in a smart way," he said. "The overcrowding that has happened, we want to stop that, but we want to do smart development for commercial. We want to bring businesses in".

He said schools and public services would remain central to town policy. "If there is anything for the school, for the education board of education, we want to make sure we give them all the funding that's necessary," Desai said. He also pointed to "public infrastructure" and



Pulkit Desai

be "no backroom deals" and "nothing hidden" in township government.

Parsippany has a large Indian American population, and Desai acknowledged the significance of that representation while stressing equal treatment. "I have to treat everybody equally," he said, adding that he also sees himself as a representative voice for Indian Americans in the township. He described the election of himself and council member Diya Patel as "a pretty good monumental achievement."

Desai traced his journey to public office back to his early years in the United States. "I came here at a very young age," he said. After completing his education, he joined the US Marine Corps and served for six years, including during Desert Storm. He later spent three decades working in the technology sector, moving from mainframe systems to cybersecurity roles.

His entry into local politics, Desai said, began with a dispute over voting rights while serving as president of a local lake association. He said residents were once required to pay an additional fee to vote. "Nobody should have to pay extra money just to vote," he said, calling the charge a poll tax. That fight, he said, pushed him toward broader civic involvement and eventually the mayor's office.

Parsippany is Morris County's largest township and has undergone significant demographic change in recent years. Local media have described the new administration as historic, noting that Asian Americans now form the largest ethnic group in the community and that the current council includes the first elected leaders of Indian descent. IANS

A new spiritual landmark for Los Angeles

Cont'd from page 20

Their inspiring talks will illuminate the path of Bhakti, guiding listeners toward unconditional divine love.

During the inauguration week, visitors will be able to receive darshan (spiritual viewing) of the beautiful deities of Shri Radha and Shri Krishna, join in kirtan-devotional chanting that awakens inner joy and participate in aarti ceremonies where lamps are offered in gratitude and love.

Cultural Festival and Community Celebration

Throughout the week, visitors can enjoy complimentary chai and vegetarian Indian meals. Free yoga classes by certified instructors will also be offered. All events are open to the public, and families are warmly encouraged to attend.

On Saturday, January 17, the public is invited to the Grand Cultural Program, a colorful celebration of Indian dance, music, and art highlighting India's profound spiritual heritage. Classical and folk performances will bring to life stories of devotion, joy, and divine love.

A detailed schedule and RSVP information are available at RadhaKrishnaDham.org.

A Joyous Invitation

The inauguration of Radha Krishna Dham marks a momentous occasion for Southern California's spiritual landscape. As the temple opens its doors, all are invited to join in five days of celebration of the spirit of peace and devotion that Radha Krishna Dham embodies.

For event details and RSVP, please visit RadhaKrishnaDham.org.

"public safety" as ongoing priorities.

Desai said transparency would guide his leadership. "The most important thing is transparency and accountability," he said. "I want to be honest with the people of Parsippany with everything that I do." He added that residents should know how decisions are made, saying there should

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Ohio Governor candidate Ramaswamy opts out of social media amid 'racial slurs'

WASHINGTON DC: It is the start of the New Year, and it is customary for people across the world to make resolutions. Some falter those, while some persevere to abide by them.

Take, for example, US Ohio Governor candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, who, in an opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal, said that he would leave social media this year as a part of his New Year resolution.

"I plan to become a social-media teetotaler in 2026. On New Year's Eve, I deleted X and Instagram from my phone," he said in the opinion piece.

Ramaswamy then said that his team would use the social media platforms to campaign on his behalf. He would spend time with real voters himself, and said it would make him 'happier'.

"There's a fine line between using the internet to distribute your message and inadvertently allowing constant internet feedback to alter your message. That isn't using social media; it's letting social media use you," Ramaswamy opined in the Wall Street Journal.

Ramaswamy then explained how social media initially aimed to connect leaders with the voters, as it helped in getting



Vivek Ramaswamy

real-time feedback. But modern social media algorithm is skewed due to the extensive use of bots. As a person clicks on a post, similar posts pop up with the same viewpoint, alienating the leader from the masses.

"Social media offers a tempting alternative: free, abundant real-time feedback. It creates the impression that you're hearing directly from 'the people' and responding in kind. Modern social media is increas-

ingly disconnected from the electorate. The messages you're most likely to see are the most negative and bombastic, because they're most likely to receive rapid "likes" and "reposts"--and that drives revenue for social media content creators," he said.

"If you click on one post about a topic, suddenly that viewpoint appears everywhere you look, skewing your view of reality. That's harmless if you're a knitting hob-

byist who might overestimate how many fellow citizens know the difference between a knit and a purl stitch," he added.

Ramaswamy cautioned against mistaking online commentary for real world picture and polarization.

"On its own, random people saying outrageous things on the internet, and even making money from it, isn't a major problem. But when those in power mistake online commentary for real-world consensus, they make decisions based on a distorted picture of what those citizens really want," he said.

Ramaswamy explained how social media spewed the hatred poison against Republicans, inciting doubts that the assassination attempt of US President Donald Trump in Pennsylvania was staged.

"A recent report revealed that engagement with the X account of the now-notorious white nationalist Nick Fuentes shows signs of being 'unusually fast, unusually concentrated and unusually foreign in origin.' Another investigation showed that hundreds of bots drove the pro-Democrat #BlueCrew hashtag, amplifying false claims that the assassination attempt on President Trump in Butler, Pa., was staged," he said.

Ramaswamy delved into his personal experience, saying that after his speech in Turning Point USA's AmericaFest conference in December, he faced social media backlash after he said that the US is a nation defined above all by ideals, not shared bloodlines.

But on the spot, he received "a standing ovation from a politically engaged audience of well over 20,000 attendees," he wrote in the Wall Street Journal.

He said in the Wall Street Journal that he did not intend to sway people away from social media, but used the space to caution leaders against using it as a real-time tool to understand public opinion. Doing which, he says, is like "looking through a broken mirror."

Addressing the recent waves of racial slurs he got over being of Indian-origin, Ramaswamy said that the on-ground reality was the stark opposite.

"In 2025 I saw a spate of shocking racial slurs and worse on social media. Yet that same year I visited tens of thousands of voters across all of Ohio's 88 counties--from inner cities to farms, union halls to factories, Republican rallies to one-on-one discussions with protesters--and I didn't hear a single bigoted remark from an Ohio voter the entire year," he said. AN/

Vivek Ramaswamy raises \$9.88 million for Ohio Governor bid

WASHINGTON: Republican gubernatorial candidate Vivek Ramaswamy raised \$9.88 million during the second half of 2025, his campaign said, setting a fundraising record for an Ohio governor's race.

The campaign said the July-December haul surpassed the \$9.7 million it raised in the first two quarters of the year and marked the strongest single reporting period performance by a gubernatorial candidate in the state. The amounts do not include any personal investment from Ramaswamy, the campaign said.

"You simply don't see this level of support in a gubernatorial race in Ohio," said Jonathan Ewing, campaign manager for Vivek Ramaswamy for Ohio. "Raising \$9.88 million in a single reporting period and nearly \$20 million in the year before the election sends an unmistakable message: Vivek's campaign has historic momentum that no other campaign can match."

According to the campaign,

Ramaswamy raised more than \$19.57 million in 2025, more than doubling the previous Ohio gubernatorial fundraising record of \$8.4 million set by then-candidate Mike DeWine in 2017.

Since launching his campaign in late February 2025, Ramaswamy has held 112 campaign events that included a fundraising component, the campaign said. It added that the \$9.7 million raised earlier in 2025 came from 40,000 unique donors and that the \$9.88 million raised in the second half of the year similarly reflects contributions from supporters alone.

The campaign said Ramaswamy's early fundraising has already outpaced the total campaign receipts of several past Ohio gubernatorial candidates. In his first two filings, the campaign said, Ramaswamy raised more than the entire campaign totals of Republican John Kasich in 2010 and 2014, Republican Mike DeWine in 2022, and Democrat Richard Cordray in 2018.

Campaign officials also pointed to en-

dorsements as evidence of political momentum. The campaign said that since receiving President Donald Trump's endorsement on the first day of his campaign, Ramaswamy has secured backing from conservative lawmakers, community leaders, law enforcement officials, business leaders, and labor groups in Ohio that have historically endorsed Democrats.

The campaign said the fundraising pace puts Ramaswamy on track to surpass DeWine's total fundraising record of \$24 million from the 2018 gubernatorial race.

Details of the campaign's 2025 semi-annual finance report, covering activity from July 1 through December 31, 2025, are expected to be filed with the Ohio secretary of state by January 31, 2026.

The 2026 election will determine a successor to term-limited Republican Gov. Mike DeWine. If elected, he would be the third Indian American Governor after Bobby Jindal and Nikki Haley. IANS

Philosophy

RAMANA MAHARISHI

What is the nature of the mind? What is called 'mind' is a wondrous power residing in the Self. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind. Therefore, thought is the nature of mind. Apart from thoughts, there is no independent entity called the world.

In deep sleep there are no thoughts, and there is no world. In the states of waking and dream, there are thoughts, and there is a world also. Just as the spider emits the thread (of the web) out of itself and again withdraws it into itself, likewise the mind projects the world out of itself and again resolves it into itself.

When the mind comes out of the Self, the world appears. Therefore, when the world appears (to be real), the Self does not appear; and when the Self appears (shines) the world does not appear. When one persistently inquires into the

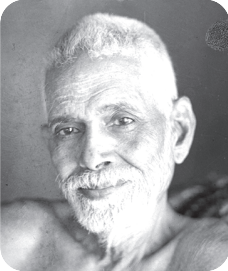
am I?' will destroy all other thoughts, and like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed.

When other thoughts arise, one should not pursue them, but should inquire: 'To whom do they arise?' It does not matter how many thoughts arise. As

each thought arises, one should inquire with diligence, 'To whom has this thought arisen?'

The answer that would emerge would be 'to me'. Thereupon if one inquires 'Who am I?', the mind will go back to its source; and the thought that arose will become quiescent. With repeated practice in this manner, the mind will develop the skill to stay in its source.

When the mind that is subtle goes out through the brain and the sense-organs, the gross names and forms appear; when it stays in the heart, the names and forms disappear. Not letting the mind go out, but retaining it in the Heart is what is called 'inwardness' (antarmukha). Letting the mind go out of the Heart is known



Ramana Maharishi

Apart from thoughts, no such thing as mind
In deep sleep there are no thoughts, and there is no world

nature of the mind, the mind will end leaving the Self (as the residue). What is referred to as the Self is the Atman. The mind always exists only in dependence on something gross; it cannot stay alone. It is the mind that is called the subtle body or the soul (jiva).

Path of inquiry

That which rises as 'I' in this body is the mind. If one inquires as to where in the body the thought 'I' rises first, one would discover that it rises in the heart. That is the place of the mind's origin. Even if one thinks constantly 'I-I', one will be led to that place.

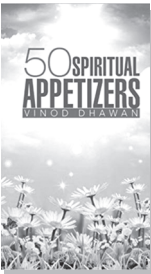
Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I'-thought is the first. It is only after the rise of this that the other thoughts arise. It is after the appearance of the first personal pronoun that the second and third personal pronouns appear; without the first personal pronoun there will not be the second and third.

The mind becomes quiescent by the inquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'Who

as 'externalisation' (bahirmukha). Thus, when the mind stays in the Heart, the 'I' which is the source of all thoughts will go, and the Self which ever exists will shine. Whatever one does, one should do without the egoity 'I'. If one acts in that way, all will appear as of the nature of Siva (God).

Excerpted from 'Who Am I? The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. The 147th birth anniversary of Ramana Maharishi was observed on December 30

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When Christmas becomes a test of India's Pluralism

E.D. MATHEW

When the bells tolled at New Delhi's Cathedral Church of Redemption on Christmas Day, what reverberated was a message of peace, compassion, and fraternity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the church, and the carefully staged image of him standing in prayer with members of the Christian community, were meant to project a plural India in which every faith is secure, dignified and equal. Yet this postcard of harmony sits uneasily beside a darker reality in which India is becoming a nation where militant majoritarianism is gaining political impunity at the cost of its beleaguered minorities.

In the days preceding the festival, congregations and public celebrations were disrupted across several states by groups linked to the Sangh Parivar, the right wing Hindu nationalist grouping. In Jabalpur, a BJP district vice-president allegedly assaulted a visually impaired woman inside a

lishments were quick to downplay these episodes as sporadic "local tensions." The data suggest otherwise. The Pew Research Center's 2022 Social Hostilities Index assigned India a score of 9.3 out of 10, the highest among 198 countries. This is not the profile of a plural democracy in robust health but that of a society in which faith is being steadily politicized.

Kerala Sent A Political Signal

Evangelical Fellowship of India documented at least 840 incidents against Christians in 2024, up from 601 the previous year. Such cases have been concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana, where militant majoritarian rhetoric has seeped into local governance. Churches have been vandalized, clergy assaulted, prayer meetings disrupted and pastors detained on dubious charges. In Chhattisgarh, nuns and pastors have repeatedly been stopped

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at railway stations and public transit points, accused of forced conversions or trafficking, allegations that are routinely unsubstantiated.

Within this national climate, the conduct of Kerala Lok Bhavan -- the residence of the state governor, a

church. A group of people vandalized a Christmas tree while chanting 'Jai Shri Ram' during festive celebrations at The Hub Mall in Indore. In Assam's Nalbari, Bajrang Dal activists stormed a diocesan school and destroyed its nativity crib. In Raipur, festive installations in a mall were vandalized. In Delhi, women wearing Santa hats were publicly harassed by vigilantes. Even Kerala, long considered a bastion of religious tolerance, witnessed carol singing interrupted in Palakkad. These were not random provocations. They formed a visible pattern, amplified by social media mobilization, loosely framed anti-conversion laws and a climate of political impunity.

guardian of the Constitution, no less -- has taken on particular significance. The decision to deny a Christmas holiday to staff of the Lok Bhavan and to compel attendance at official programs marking "Good Governance Day" on December 25 was more than a bureaucratic misjudgment. It sent a political signal. Insisting on compulsory official attendance on Christianity's most sacred day, in an institution representing a state with a substantial Christian population, asserted majoritarian precedence over religious accommodation.

(The writer is a former UN spokesperson and a contemporary affairs commentator) South Asia Monitor

Local administrations and police estab-

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Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

Delhi-NCR clocks highest yearly average residential price rise in 2025

NEW DELHI: Delhi-NCR recorded the highest yearly average residential price rise at 23 percent in 2025 -- from Rs 7,550 square feet in 2024 to about Rs 9,300 per sq ft in 2025, according to a new report.

On an annual basis, the collective average housing price rose by 8 percent in the top seven cities - from Rs 8,590 per sq ft by Q4 2024-end to around Rs 9,260 per sq ft at Q4 2025-end, according to Anarock Research data.

The other major cities recorded single-digit price appreciation, ranging between 4-9 percent in 2025 as against last year's 13-27 percent in 2024, the report mentioned.

Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Delhi-NCR, together, accounted for 90 percent of overall sales in 2025 across the top seven cities.

"MMR saw the highest sales with approx. 1,27,875 units sold in 2025; declining by 18% against 2024. Pune saw approx. 65,135 units sold in 2025 - a yearly decline of 20% over 2024. Bengaluru also saw just a marginal yearly decline of 5% in housing sales, with approx. 62,205 units sold in 2025," the report mentioned.

The top seven cities saw about 4,19,170 new units launched in 2025, against 4,12,520 units in 2024 - a 2 percent annual increase. The key cities contributing to new supply during the year were MMR, Pune, Bengaluru, and NCR, which together accounted for 79 percent of the total new unit additions. *IANs*

Real Estate POST

28 India Post

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January 9, 2026

Mumbai records over 1.5 lakh property registrations in 2025, highest in 14 years

NEW DELHI: Mumbai recorded 1,50,254 property registrations in 2025, the highest in 14 years, with stamp duty collections rising to Rs 13,487 crore, also a 14-year peak; a recent report showed. The report from Knight Frank India said the momentum held through year-end with 14,447 registrations in December that generated Rs 1,263 crore for the state exchequer, marking a 16 percent year-on-year rise in registrations and an 11 percent increase in stamp duty collections. *IANs*

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com



India's real estate sector set for measured yet sustainable growth in 2026

NEW DELHI: As India entered 2026, the real estate sector is positioned for measured yet sustainable growth across all major segments, industry experts said, adding that strong fundamentals, expanding premium housing, and adaptive retail and logistics ecosystems will continue to attract both domestic and international capital.

While 2025 brought several macroeconomic and geopolitical challenges, 2026 is expected to be a year of recalibration and renewed economic momentum.

"This outlook is supported by India's strong GDP growth of 8.2 percent in Q2 FY26, recorded despite global uncertainties and shifting trade dynamics. With this strong growth rate, the nation remains firmly on track to become the world's third-largest economy by 2030, with an estimated GDP of \$7.3 trillion," said Shrinivas Rao, FRICS, CEO, Vestian.

To reinforce economic development, the government implemented a robust mix of fiscal and monetary measures. Fiscal steps included the rationalization of GST rates and revisions in income tax slabs.

On the monetary front, the RBI reduced the repo rate to 5.25 percent and maintained a neutral stance, a move that is expected to bolster economic activity in 2026.



Overall, the year is poised to witness holistic sectorial growth, strengthened real estate activity, and improved investor sentiment, Rao mentioned.

The office market is projected to maintain its upward trajectory in 2026. According to Vestian Research, gross absorption is expected to reach 75-80 million square feet, driven largely by

pated to further consolidate their presence as occupiers prioritize agility and hybrid workplace models. Leasing activity will be led by Bengaluru, Chennai, and Hyderabad, with Mumbai and Pune expected to record an increased share, said Rao.

According to Prashant Sharma, President, NAREDCO Maharashtra, the year 2025 has

sustainable urbanization.

"Tier-II and Tier-III cities are set to play a larger role in India's real estate growth story in 2026. Improved connectivity, rising employment opportunities, and emerging industrial corridors will shift demand beyond metros," he mentioned.

According to Aniket Dani, Director, Crisil Intelligence, the outlook for fiscal 2027 is more optimistic, with demand recovery driven by rising incomes, lower interest rates, and continued infrastructure improvements.

In contrast, commercial real estate is projected to continue its growth trajectory this fiscal - with demand rising 5-7 percent and supply 9-11 percent - fuelled by strong leasing from global capability centers, flexible workspace operators, and the IT/ITeS and BFSI sectors, Dani noted. *IANs*

On the monetary front, the RBI reduced the repo rate to 5.25 percent and maintained a neutral stance, a move that is expected to bolster economic activity in 2026

sustained expansion from Global Capability Centres (GCCs).

The IT/ITeS and BFSI sectors will also remain key contributors. Flex space operators are antici-

been a landmark period for India's real estate sector, marked by significant policy reforms, robust demand across asset classes, and a renewed focus on

How PM Modi's PRAGATI drive is speeding up work on big infra projects

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal intervention to resolve issues stalling the progress of big ticket infrastructure projects in the country has played a key role in speeding up economic development in the

country.

The PRAGATI initiative (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) has played a decisive role in ensuring the timely completion of mega projects such as the Pune Metro Rail, the doubling of the

Bhubaneswar-Puri rail line, Lumding-Silchar Broad Gauge Railway Line and Rosa - Sitapur Cantonment - Burhwal Rail doubling project stand out as major examples of the decisive impact that has played in ensuring.

The Pune Metro Rail Project Phase-I represents a transformative leap in sustainable urban mobility for the Pune-Pimpri Chinchwad metropolitan region. Implemented under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs by Maharashtra

Metro Rail Corporation Limited (Maha-Metro), the project spans 33.28 kilometers across two corridors - PCMC-Swargate and Vanaz-Ramwadi - with 30 stations, developed at a total cost of Rs 13,656.22 crore. *IANs*

What should women look for when choosing hostels and PGs?

LIPIKA NANDWANI

Whether it is for higher education, a new job or simply to chase independence, moving to a new city is a defining moment for many young women. But with that freedom comes one of the biggest concerns, that is, safety. For female students and professionals leaving their hometowns, finding safe accommodation is no longer a matter of comfort but a necessity. The unfamiliarity with a new environment, the lack of local support systems, and rising instances of harassment or unsafe living conditions have made security the number one priority when renting hostels or PGs. From college girls moving into university hostels to fresh graduates starting their first jobs in metro cities, every woman entering a new city is asking the same crucial question: "Will I be safe here?" Over the past decade, India has witnessed a sharp rise in female migration for education and employment. According to the National Sample Survey (NSSO), over 30% of India's urban migrants today are women, many of them between the ages of 18 and 28. This growing mobility has driven a surge in demand for women-centric rental housing, especially in metro and tier-2 cities such as Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, and Delhi NCR. However, the rise in demand has also exposed several gaps in the rental ecosystem. From unverified PG operators to poorly maintained or unguarded properties, cases of theft, invasion of privacy, or misbehavior by staff have only deepened women's insistence on safety-first housing. What was once an optional checkbox is now the most important filter in any home search, which is proof that for women on the move, security is the new standard of living.

Location and neighborhood safety

When selecting a hostel or PG, the surrounding neighborhood often determines

returning from evening classes or late work shifts.

CCTV coverage and visible security

Neighborhoods with CCTV cameras installed in shops, societies or nearby buildings create a visible layer of surveillance.



It not only deters potential offenders but also gives residents a sense of being protected.

Proximity to police stations or security booths

If the PG or the flat being considered has access to a police station, women's helpline desk or security outpost nearby, ensuring quick help in emergencies could and should be a major factor in choosing that property over the others.

Access to public transport

Safety extends to the commute and the availability of good transport facilities as well. Thus, hostels located near metro stations, bus stops or shared auto stands make it easier for women to travel safely at different hours without depending on expensive or unsafe transport options.

Neighborhood activity levels

Busy residential or mixed-use areas, such as localities with cafes, shops, or of-

tenants or parents check the area's safety history. Websites, local residents and apps often share safety scores based on past incidents. This helps sort out crime-free and safer properties from unsafe ones much more easily.

routes' for women.

Secure accommodation infrastructure

Even if a hostel or PG is located in a safe and established neighborhood, the true measure of security lies in the infrastructure of the accommodation. For women tenants, a building's internal safety features are just as important as the rent, location or other amenities. A secure property ensures not only physical protection but also peace of mind, allowing women to focus on their studies or careers without constant worry. Modern hostels and PGs are now equipped with a range of security infrastructure facilities designed to safeguard residents. These include controlled entry systems such as biometric access, RFID cards or digital locks that allow only registered tenants to enter, effectively preventing trespassing or unwanted visitors. Round-the-clock security personnel and 24x7 reception desks further strengthen the safety net, ensuring that every entry and exit is monitored.

www.housing.com

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Women-friendly civic infrastructure

Sidewalks, street signage and emergency response systems like Dial 112 visibility add to the overall safety net. Local authorities in some metros also mark 'safe

India's office market posts all-time high net absorption in 2025

NEW DELHI: India's office real estate sector closed CY25 with its strongest performance on record, registering net absorption of 61.4 million square feet (MSF) across the top eight cities marking a robust 25 percent year-on-year (YoY) increase, as per recent report.

The report from commercial real estate services firm Cushman & Wakefield said the surge was driven by strong occupier confidence and the market's ability to deliver scale amid evolving business needs.

Bengaluru with 14.4 million square feet (MSF) of absorption and Delhi NCR with 10.9 MSF led the activity, followed by Mumbai (9.6 MSF), Hyderabad (9.1 MSF), Pune (8.2 MSF), Chennai (7.0 MSF), Kolkata (1.4 MSF) and Ahmedabad (0.8 MSF).

Chennai and Delhi NCR recorded the sharpest YoY growth at 187 percent and 82 percent respectively, underscoring strengthening market fundamentals and an increasing capacity to attract and absorb expanding office demand.

Gross leasing volume (GLV) stood near

a record of around 89 MSF, with fresh leasing accounting for nearly 80 percent of activity and Global Capability Centres hitting a new high of 29.3 MSF, or 33 percent of GLV, the report said.

"With GCC expansion accounting for nearly one-third of total leasing, alongside rising technology adoption, a diversified



occupier base and a vast talent pool, India is well positioned to maintain its leadership in the global office market through 2026 and beyond," said Anshul Jain, Chief Executive - India, SEA, MEA & APAC Office and Retail, Cushman & Wakefield.

IT-BPM remained the largest sector at 31 percent of leasing, posting its highest-ever annual leasing volume. IANS

From college girls moving into university hostels to fresh graduates starting their first jobs in metro cities, every woman entering a new city is asking the same crucial question: "Will I be safe here?" Over the past decade, India has witnessed a sharp rise in female migration for education and employment

how safe the entire experience feels. Here is what most women renting a flat or booking a PG and their families look for:

Well-lit streets

Streets and pathways around the property should have adequate lighting at night. Poorly lit lanes or isolated stretches are immediate red flags, especially for girls

fices nearby, are generally considered safer than isolated or underdeveloped ones because regular footfall means someone is always around, even late in the evening.

Crime record and reputation of the area

Before finalizing accommodation, most

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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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Do not allow politics to colonize our shared games

DR. GOLAM RASU

Bangladesh-India relations, long marked by both cooperation and tension, have now spilled into cricket. The BCCI's directive to remove Mustafizur Rahman from Kolkata Knight Riders ahead of the 2026 IPL season was no routine sporting matter; it was a political signal that has further complicated bilateral ties.

The fallout was immediate. In Dhaka, officials even considered banning IPL coverage and asked the ICC to schedule Bangladesh's World T20 fixtures outside India-evidence of how quickly cricket can become entangled in politics, transforming a player's exclusion into a symbol of national dignity and mistrust.

Cricket has long served as South Asia's soft diplomatic channel, allowing symbolic engagement even when formal dialogue was frozen. Politicizing participation-by making eligibility contingent on selective moral judgments-undermines this foundation

Using Sports For Political Signaling

The Board of Control for Cricket in India or BCCI's directive to release Mustafizur Rahman was widely perceived as reflecting political pressure. This raises a troubling question: what does the Indian government-or the political climate it shapes-gain by targeting a Bangladeshi player, particularly from a neighboring country it claims to prioritize under its Neighborhood First Policy?

Most troubling is that religious identity politics now sits at the center of these tensions. Political rhetoric amplified by media and social platforms increasingly shapes sporting decisions, turning games from neutral competition into instruments of political signaling. History shows such paths leave no one secure. The current crisis must therefore be

seen not as a passing flare?up but as part of a deeper political trend, taking the diplomatic tensions at the people and society level.

Cricket has long served as South Asia's soft diplomatic channel, allowing symbolic engagement even when formal dialogue was frozen. Politicizing participation-by making eligibility contingent on selective moral judgments-undermines this foundation. Rabindranath Tagore's observation that "sport is the joy of life made visible" reminds us that play, governed by fairness, allows societies to encounter one another without fear or suspicion. When sport is burdened with political sanction, that

joy-and its civic function-begins to disappear.

Unfortunately, today sports has become a casualty of politics. The politicization of the game is driven not only by bilateral tensions but also by deepening internal communal divisions. Strains in Hindu-Muslim relations, the rise of Hindutva politics, and growing concerns over minority security have together turned sport into a stage for political messaging. As The Indian Express reported, BJP leader Dilip Ghosh said "Bangladesh cricketers should not be allowed to play in our country."

The BCCI justified its decision by citing recent violence in Bangladesh, including the killing of Dipu Das, a young Hindu man in Mymensingh. The killing is undeniably tragic and demands exemplary punishment. The Bangladesh government acted

swiftly, arresting suspects, and must now follow through with transparent investigation and accountability. Yet in India, the tragedy was politicized, transforming grief into nationalist spectacle. Shah Rukh Khan, the owner of KKR, was publicly labeled a "traitor" by senior BJP leaders for signing a Bangladeshi player. Social media amplified this rhetoric, turning a professional sporting issue into a nationalist drama.

When Morality Is Applied Unevenly

Political philosophers have long warned against such trends. Hannah Arendt cautioned that condemning injustice abroad while normalizing it at home weakens the force of morality. Amartya Sen observed that "violence is fomented when people are forced into a singular and belligerent identity." These warnings show that when morality and human rights are turned into political weapons, the result is deeper division.

To single out Bangladesh while overlooking India's own record of communal violence-from Gujarat in 2002 to Delhi in 2020-is electoral morality, not justice. This does not strengthen minority protection; it erodes justice by turning it into a geopolitical tool. When morality is applied unevenly, it ceases to be universal and becomes strategic. Concerns over minority safety must never be dismissed, but when converted into political instruments they deepen division instead of advancing justice.

(The author is Professor and Chair of the Department of Economics, International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT), Dhaka. His research focuses on regional trade, sustainable development, and South Asian economic cooperation.) South Asia Monitor

For detailed story visit
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WHAT TO EXPECT FROM MAMDANI?

At the stroke of midnight, on January 1, Zohran Mamdani made a series of historic firsts, as Mayor of New York City by becoming the first Muslim, first South Asian and first, African-born person to hold the position. Underscoring these milestones was another historic choice, a centuries-old Quran picked by his wife, Rama Duwaji, from the New York Public Library. Mamdani took his oath at a decommissioned subway station beneath New York City Hall by placing his hand on two Qurans, a pocket-sized manuscript dating to the late 18th or early 19th century and one belonging to his grandfather. A third Quran belonging to his grandmother was used at his inauguration later in the day, when Mamdani took another oath alongside his wife. "This specific Quran, which Arturo Schomburg preserved for the knowledge and enjoyment of all New Yorkers, symbolizes a greater story of inclusion, representation and civic-mindedness," said Anthony W Marx, president and chief executive of The New York Public Library. The choice of the Quran is also significant as the Schomburg Centre just marked its 100th anniversary in 2025.

Zohran Mamdani picked a decommissioned subway station, beneath City Hall, as the venue for his private swearing-in ceremony as New York City's new mayor - a symbolic choice for a candidate who rode to victory on pledges such as free public transit. Many were honored that he chose the historic subway station and stated their subways connect them all, and they represent exactly what our next mayor is fighting for: a city every New Yorker can thrive. The next thing he chose to lineup and include were, welcome music from Grammy-winning singer Lucy Dacus, performing "Bread and Roses"; Mandy Patinkin and PS22 Chorus of Staten Island performing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow", and Babbulicious right at the end. Babbulicious, a Toronto-based artist, performed the Punjabi song "Gaddi Red Challenger" at the inauguration. Mamdani was seen grooving to the song along with wife Rama Duwaji and, hundreds of New Yorkers who turned up for his inauguration. It was a symbolic tribute to all South Asians, and the many voters who elected him to the Mayor's office.

While all of the above seem to have resonated with him, but with his comments on Umar Khalid, (a jailed University student in India, accused of instigating riots in Delhi), Mamdani seems to be interfering with the internal affairs of India.

He also spoke with President Donald Trump "directly" to register his opposition to the recent capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, by the U.S. military, as he termed the unilateral attack on a sovereign nation an "act of war"

Mr. Mamdani was briefed Saturday (January 3) morning, by his administration officials, including his chief of staff and the police commissioner, on the U.S. military capture of the Venezuelan president and his wife, as well as their planned imprisonment in federal custody, in New York City.

Mr. Mamdani said the "blatant pursuit of regime change" impacts New Yorkers, including Venezuelans who live in the city. It appears that even before he actually starts working for the people of NYC, he is already surrounding himself with controversies.

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

Saiyami Kher begins Vikram Phadnis project

Actress Saiyami Kher has started working on a new project, starring actor Tahir Raj Bhasin and directed by designer-filmmaker Vikram Phadnis.

Saiyami took to Instagram stories where she first shared a picture of a script booklet and wrote: "New year. New beginning. As always, Need all the wishes" as the caption.

She then shared a collage featuring a monochrome picture of her sitting with Tahir and Vikram from the reading session. It also had a picture of the upcoming project's clapboard.

The actress did not share any details about the project and simply wrote: "And today every silent prayer finds its way home."

She has recently wrapped up shooting for "Haiwaan" starring Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan. IANS



HRITHIK ROSHAN RECALLS FIRST MEETING WITH SANJAY KHAN

Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan, who was last seen in the box-office debacle 'War 2', has sent his best wishes to Sanjay Khan, the father of his ex-wife Sussanne Khan on his birthday.

The actor took to his Instagram, and shared a picture with Sanjay Khan. He also penned a heartwarming note in the caption, as he recollected his first meeting with the senior actor.

He wrote, "Today on your birthday Dad, I want to thank you for always being this giant loving and guiding presence in my life. Thank you for always making me feel more special than I think I am. Of every place I've ever known, the one corner. I was guaranteed unconditional love was when I was around you and mom. I still remember the first words you ever said to me when we met, 'your name begins with H. It means you are meant for great heights my son'".

He further mentioned, "I believed it dad. I believed it cause it came from you. Another golden one I remember was in my early years as an actor I was nervous about a shoot and you looked at me and said 'before each shot that moment when the clap covers your face, collect all of you, smile and whisper 'magic time' and then just let it all go'. That stayed with me dad and I use that till today. Works like magic. Everytime".

"You have been a pioneer for the Indian television industry. Making a well researched historical like 'Tipu Sultan' way before the internet made research easy - you raised the bar for Indian television long before OTT and the show continues to be a favorite for so many of us all these years later. IANS



TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

- 1 Gehra Hua: **Dhurandhar**
- 2 Ishq Jalakar - Karvaan: **Dhurandhar**
- 3 Dhurandhar - Title Track: **Dhurandhar**
- 4 Aawaara Angaara: **Tere Ishk Mein**
- 5 Sitaare: **Ikkis**
- 6 Saiyaara: **Saiyaara**
- 7 Sharaat: **Dhurandhar**
- 8 Lutt Le Gaya: **Dhurandhar**
- 9 Deewaniyat : **Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat**
- 10 Sahiba: **Sahiba-Aditya Rikhari**

Surbhi Chandna misses Mumbai's VADA PAO

Just like a true Mumbaikar, actress Surbhi Chandna is missing Vada Pao during her trip abroad.

In her latest Instagram post, Surbhi revealed that after spending 15 days away from the country, she is craving for the traffic Vada Pao and some other unique things the city has to offer.

She was seen giving her own twist to actor Suniel Shetty's dialogue from the 2006 romantic comedy, "Shaadi Se Pehle", starring Akshay Khanna, Suniel Shetty, Ayesha Takia, Mallika Sherawat, and Aftab Shivdasani.

In the video, Surbhi expressed her desire to go back to her city and enjoy all its wonderful offerings.

"Day 15 abroad and you are craving Traffic Vada Pao & Khadde," the text overlay on the clip read.

In the dialogue, Suniel Shetty's character is expressing his longing for the city.

"When it Finally Hits You...Mumbai (Pink heart emoji) Vada Pao Teri Yaad Aa Gayi (sic), " Surbhi captioned the post.

On another note, Surbhi recently opened up about her journey with "Naagin", revealing that she did not say yes to the show immediately.

As she appeared on actress Rashami Desai's talk show. IANS



KARTIK AARYAN WAS GUEST AT SIBLING'S WEDDING

Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan, who is receiving a good response to his work in the recently released film 'Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri', has shared that he wasn't a family member but a guest in his sister's wedding.

The actor graced the latest episode of the streaming sketch comedy show 'The great Indian Kapil Show' with co-star Ananya Panday, and opened up about the wedding festivities of her sister Kritika Tiwari.

He told the show host Kapil Sharma, "Everything was done by mother and my sister. I was the guest in my own family's wedding festivities. I also danced at the wedding for free, my sister didn't give me a single penny".

Elsewhere in the show, Kartik and actress Ananya called out red flags, green flags and relationship rules of this generation. The actors unraveled that Gen Z actually wants from love, with the episode promising bold opinions, relatable chaos and answers that might just divide the internet.

Actor and comedian Sunil Grover switched gears yet again to deliver a fresh dose of superstar satire, with viewers joking that even AI struggles to match his precision. The stage filled up fast with Kiku Sharda as Sona, the security lady, Krushna Abhishek as the dramatic Monalika, and Kartik Aaryan slipping back into Rooh Baba mode to face another bhoot. *IANS*

'PAHADAN' Yami Gautam's 'perfect combo' is ...

Actress Yami Gautam, who often takes pride in her pahadi roots, recently shared a glimpse of her simple winter indulgence with sister Surili calling it her "perfect combo".

Yami took to Instagram to share a serene moment from home, where she is seen engrossed in a heartfelt chat with her sister, sipping on hot tea and savoring panjiri laddoos, with the tranquil sylvan forest enveloping her in the background.

She highlighted what brings her comfort during the colder months and wrote: "Baatein + Panjiri Ladoo + Chai = Perfect combo #healthypanjiriladdoos #winterlove #pahadis."

Yami was recently seen in Haq, a courtroom drama film directed by Suparn Verma. It also stars Emraan Hashmi and Sheeba Chaddha in a pivotal role. The film is inspired by the landmark Supreme Court judgment of Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum, which dealt with matrimonial issues of Muslim households.

It reportedly draws elements from journalist Jigna Vora's book Bano: Bharat ki Beti, and has faced pre-release legal controversy over its portrayal of the Shah Bano case.

The actress last month penned a note for her husband Aditya Dhar and the team of Dhurandhar, calling them some of the "hardest working and finest people" she has known. *IANS*



DIANA PENTY: MOST IMPORTANT QUALITY OF AN ACTOR

Actress Diana Penty, who was recently seen in the streaming show 'Do You Wanna Partner', spoke about how it's imperative for a good actor to look beyond personal relationships with their co-actors, and deliver what's required from them.

The actress spoke with IANS during the promotions of 'Do You Wanna Partner', and said that though she had a great camaraderie with her co-star Tamannaah Bhatia while working on the show, she is quite clear in her head about her process which is detached from personal relationships.

The actress told IANS, "As a good actor, you're supposed to either way, whether you get along with somebody, you don't get along with what you bring to the screen and to the character should be independent of your personal equation. So, that is a basis of how good an actor or not you are. But in this case, I feel like we were also lucky that we got along and that it was just effortless off screen as well. So, it was much easier to bring that energy on screen and into all the scenes".

Talking about her camaraderie with Tamannaah Bhatia, she said, "So, I don't think we struggled with that at all. It just flowed very naturally and we were able to improvise a lot in the scenes as well because we had a great rapport and chemistry off screen".

"We were comfortable enough with each other to be able to take that liberty to say things to each other, you know, you know, whatever it was not like this formal equation where we have to be careful of what we're going to say to each other. So, I think that really helped and we were lucky that, you know, we had that equation. But it's very interesting", she added.

IANS



Jiya Shankar's team amidst mystery guy speculation

Actress Jiya Shankar is once again in the limelight due to her personal life. After dismissing the engagement rumors with 'Bigg Boss OTT 2' co-contestant Abhishek Malhan, she recently dropped a romantic photograph with a mystery man.

As the speculations surrounding who this mystery guy might be gain momentum, Jiya's team has issued a statement requesting privacy, claiming that the actress does not wish to be a part of 'publicity stunts or manufactured narratives'.

"We as representatives of Jiya have always maintained a clear and consistent stance, she does not engage in publicity stunts or manufactured narratives. IANS

Actress Chitrangda Singh has weighed in on the growing discussion around regulated shift timings on film sets, stressing that while actors are largely taken care of, the conversation must urgently widen to include the crewmembers who form the backbone of the film industry. Asked about her experience, how crucial is the change towards regulated shift timings on film sets for mental and physical well-being, the actress told IANS: "I think it definitely is important. Actors are still very well taken care of. There is a lot of, you know, regard for their time, for their comfort. Usually producers, as much as they can, and directors try to work around their time."

Drawing from her experience, Chitrangda highlighted that technicians such as light men, art department staff and set workers often put in far longer hours than those visible on camera.

"But I feel what we also need to discuss is probably the light men, the set guys, who, the art and all these guys, because for a nine o'clock shift, if I come at seven for hair and makeup, they are there from 5.30 in the morning or not, maybe five in the morning, and then they're the last ones to go and the first ones to come." IANS

Chitrangda Singh: "Look beyond actors in shift-timing debate"

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MALAIKA ARORA CALLS PRANAYAMA THE 'HEART' OF Yoga

MUMBAI: Malaika Arora continues to shell fitness goals in 2026 with her inspiring social media posts.

In her most recent Insta update, Malaika was seen providing a glimpse into her fruitful Pranayama session, which comprised Bhastrika, Kapalbhati, Anuloma Viloma, Bharamri, and Udgeet.

Along with a clip of her latest workout session, Malaika wrote on the photo-sharing app, "Pranayama your body has been asking for

1. Bhastrika
2. Kapalbhati
3. Anuloma viloma
4. Bharamri
5. Udgeet (sic)"

She further pointed out that Pranayama is not just an option if one aims to attain overall well-being, as it is the heart of yoga.

Previously, Malaika revealed that this year, she intends to focus equally on her physical and mental health.

Putting her goals for 2026 out there, Malaika shared a video on social media with a text overlay that read, "2026 Train hard, Protect peace, Build wealth."

The post further included a clip of her sweating it out with weights, doing Pilates, and yoga.

"2026 goals: move your body, protect your peace," Malaika shared the caption, stressing her long-term commitment to fitness.

Wrapping up the first quarter of the 21st century, Malaika looked back on this phase of her life, which, according to her, has been marked by change, growth, and constant reinvention.

Reflecting on her journey, Malaika told IANS, "Personally, it's been a journey of

reinvention for me, growing beyond glamour and dance into fitness, entrepreneurship, and now a published author."

During the exclusive conversation, she also stated the films and performances that have defined this era.

Malaika's list for the dramas that contributed to reshaping the Hindi cinema included some cinematic gems such as "Lagaan", "Dil Chahta Hai", "Queen", "Gully Boy", and "Andhadhun".

"As we close this chapter, films like Lagaan, Dil Chahta Hai, Queen, Gully Boy, Andhadhun etc... have truly defined the era," she said. IANS



Marvelous Mrs. India Season 3 Celebrates Beauty, Courage and Transformation in Regal Udaipur

UDAIPUR: Udaipur witnessed an evening of grace, emotion, and powerful storytelling as Nuke Preworkout presents Marvelous Mrs India Season 3 unfolded on 16th December. More than a pageant, the evening stood as a heartfelt celebration of womanhood -- where dreams were honored, identities reclaimed, and beauty redefined from the inside out.

The prestigious crown of Nuke Preworkout, Marvelous Mrs India Season 3, was won by Anjali Gorang Kothari whose poise, wisdom and life experience moved both the audience and the jury. Diti Thacker was announced as the First Runner-Up, while Dr Suyesha Khanijao claimed the title of Second Runner-Up, each embodying strength, authenticity and quiet confidence.

In another title category- Marvelous Ms India for Unmarried women over 35, Aditi Agarwal emerged victorious, with Eesha Agarwal securing the First Runner-Up position -- once again reinforcing that this platform celebrates diversity of journeys, not a singular definition of beauty.

The presence of distinguished dignitaries elevated the evening. Mrs Amrita Fadnavis, First Lady of Maharashtra and wife of Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Mr Devendra Fadnavis, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, lending warmth and encouragement to the participants. Nivritti Kumari of Mewar, representing a lineage of grace and legacy, attended as Guest of Honour, adding royal elegance to the night.

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Situated at an altitude of 2730 m above sea level, Gulmarg is a popular skiing destination located in Pir Panjal Range of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Surrounded by snow-covered lofty Himalayas, meadows of flowers, deep ravines, ever-green forested-valleys, Gulmarg also has the world's second-highest Gondola ride.

Gulmarg is one of the top honeymoon destinations in India. Gulmarg has also been developed as an adventure hub as the Indian Institute of Skiing, and Mountaineering is located here. A lot of courses on trekking, mountaineering, skiing, and snowboarding are offered by IISM. There are a lot of other private tour operators in Gulmarg as well, which provide similar courses and facilities for skiing and snowboarding. Known for its scenic beauty, Gulmarg has also been a popular destination for shooting various Bollywood films.

PLACES TO VISIT IN GULMARG

Gulmarg Gondola: Gulmarg Gondola is the second longest and second highest cable car in the world and the prime attraction Gulmarg is known for. Divided into two phases, it ferries almost 600 people per hour to and from the Apharwat Mountain, which is where most of the winter sports happen in Gulmarg.

Apharwat Peak: Situated at a height of 4200 meters above the mean sea level, Apharwat Peak in Gulmarg is one of the most breathtaking places. Remotely positioned near LOC with Pakistan, the region receives

heavy rainfall and is covered in snow for most of the year. Apharwat Peak is where winter sports in Gulmarg take place.

Kongdori Phase 1: Kongdori Phase 1 in Gulmarg is the initial stage of the Kongdori Gondola, one of the highest cable cars in the world. Situated in the Pir Panjal range,



this phase is the starting point for an exhilarating journey that provides breathtaking views of the snow-covered peaks. Visitors can access the Kongdori Phase 1 from Gulmarg and experience the charm of the meadows and dense forests during the ascent.



Gulmarg Biosphere Reserve: The Gulmarg Biosphere Reserve is a protected reserve situated 48 km from Srinagar. It is known for housing many exotic and rare species including musk deer, snow leopard, etc. The reserve boasts of its rich avifauna

population, which is a beautiful sight during the months of migration.

Drung Waterfall: The Drung Waterfall is an extremely popular tourist attraction located in the Tangmarg tehsil of Gulmarg, Baramulla. A cascading waterfall set amidst majestic mountains, located approximately 14 km from Gulmarg, it freezes completely during winter due to the extremely low temperature. This frozen waterfall is a must-visit in the area.

Snowglu: Situated in Baramulla district of Jammu & Kashmir, the Glass Igloo Cafe in Gulmarg is India's First Glass Igloo Restaurant. Surrounded by snow-capped mountains and meadows of flowers, the cafe has become a unique tourist destination. Although the cafe appears to be ordinary mirror glass, it is built with top-quality fabricated glass imported from Austria and can accommodate up to 8 people.

Alpather Lake: Alpather Lake is a high altitude lake set between the twin Apharwat Peak in Gulmarg. It is popularly known as the Frozen Lake as it remains completely frozen from November to June. It is popular for the one-day trek that starts from Gulmarg and covers a distance of almost 13km. www.holidify.com

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