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China agent gets four years in US jail

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INDIA POST

SURVEY
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This week's question

Are the recent elections in Bangladesh fair?

Last week's result

Can US and Iran successfully negotiate the nuclear deal?

YES 14% NO 86%

COUNTRY OF THE YEAR

India designated 'Country of the Year' at BIOFACH 2026

NUREMBERG: India has been designated as the Country of the Year at BIOFACH 2026, the world's leading trade fair for organic products, scheduled to be held from February 10 to 13, 2026, at Nuremberg, Germany.

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, is organizing India's participation at BIOFACH 2026 with a prominent and high-impact presence.

According to the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, India's participation will highlight the country's rich agricultural heritage and its strength as a major global sup-

plier of organic products.

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India's participation at BIOFACH 2026 marks a significant scale-up compared to previous editions, reflecting the expanding footprint of Indian organic exports, increased global demand for organic products, and growing participation from exporters, associations, and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

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French President Macron to visit India next week

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Sidharth, Tamannaah, dance sequence

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The Indian Navy has assumed command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154, a key multinational training task force under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). The change of command ceremony was held at CMF Headquarters in Manama, Bahrain. (@indiannavy/ANI Photo)



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HIGHLIGHTS

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Tel: 510-396-9140 • Fax: 510-790-2806 • e-mail: info@indiapost.com

E-SUBSCRIPTIONS & EDITORIAL: Vidya Sethuraman: Tel: 510-491-4867 • e-mail: vidya@indiapost.com
ADVERTISEMENT: Naresh Sodhi: Tel: 510-938-8667 • e-mail: naresh@indiapost.com or nareshsodhi@gmail.com
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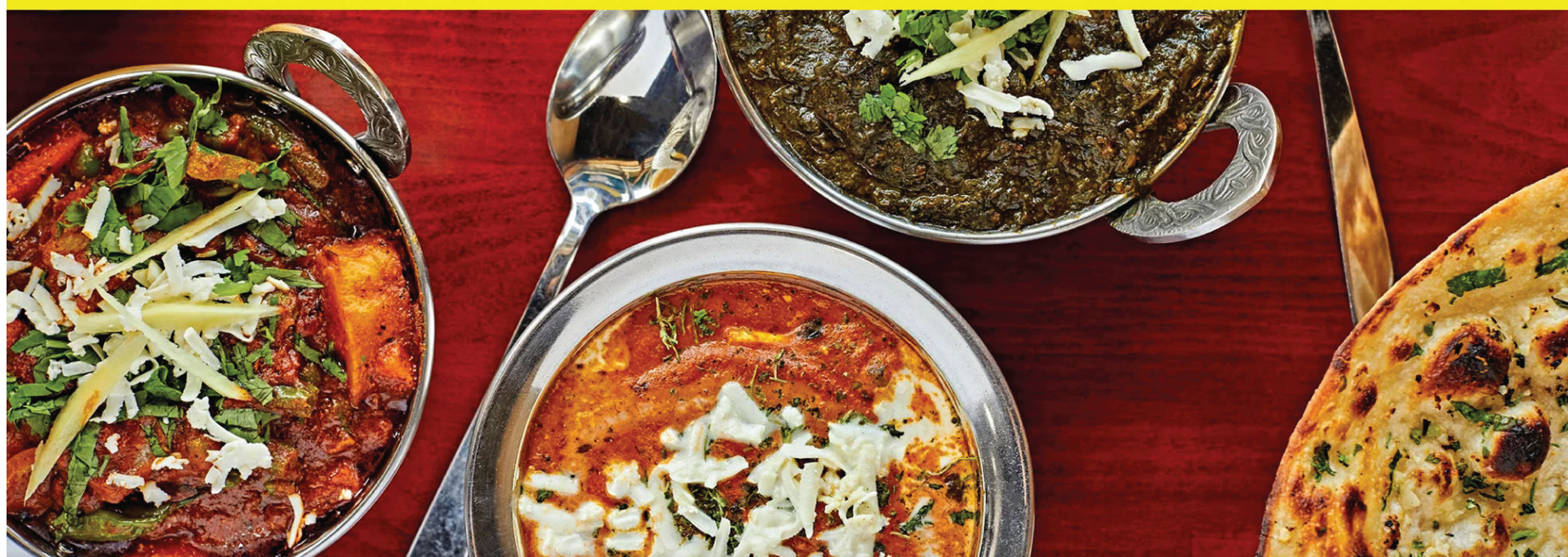
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COUNTRY OF THE YEAR

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marks a significant scale-up compared to previous editions, reflecting the expanding footprint of Indian organic exports, increased global demand for organic products, and growing participation from ex-



porters, associations, and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

After a span of 14 years, India's organic farming sector is set to take center stage once again at BIOFACH 2026.

The India Country Pavilion, set up by APEDA, will span an area of 1,074 square meters and will feature 67 co-exhibitors, including exporters of organic products, Farmer-Producer Organizations (FPOs),

cooperatives, organic laboratories, state government organizations, and commodity boards. The pavilion will showcase a wide range of organic products such as rice, oilseeds, herbs, spices, pulses,

cashew, ginger, turmeric, large cardamom, cinnamon, mango puree, and essential oils, among others.

Exhibitors from more than 20 States and Union Territories are participating in the India Pavilion, reflecting the country's vast agricultural and regional diversity. These include Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Arunachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand.

The participation highlights region-specific organic produce and value-added food products, demonstrating India's year-on-year expansion in international organic trade engagement.

In addition to product displays, visitors to the India Pavilion will be offered curated food tastings showcasing the flavors and aromas of Indian organic products. Live sampling of aromatic biryani prepared using premium organic basmati rice and spices will be organized. ANI

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Washington issues updated India-US trade framework fact-sheet; drops pulses, agriculture; says India 'intends' to buy 500 bn USD of US products

WASHINGTON, DC: The White House has updated its factsheet on the India-US trade framework a day after its initial release, softening several key assertions related to India's commitments on purchases, tariffs, and digital trade.

The revisions come after last week's announcement of a framework for an interim reciprocal trade agreement aimed at boosting bilateral commerce. The framework for the Interim Agreement was finalized following a phone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump.

In the original version of the factsheet, it was stated, "India committed to buy more American products and purchase over USD 500 billion of US energy, information and communication technology, agricultural, coal, and other products."

The revised factsheet now says India "intends" to buy more American products and omits the term "agricultural" from the list of product categories.

Changes were also made in the tariff section. The earlier document noted, "India will eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, certain pulses, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products."

394 international observers, 197 foreign journalists to monitor Bangladesh election

DHAKA: At least 394 international election observers and 197 foreign journalists have arrived in Bangladesh to observe the country's 13th general election and the referendum on the July National Charter, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing said in a recent statement.

Of the international observers, 80 represent various international organizations.

A total of 240 observers are from bilateral countries, including independent European observers.

Another 51 are individuals affiliated with different global institutions.

"The number of international observers for the upcoming polls is more than double that of the controversial general election held on January 7, 2024. By comparison, the 12th, 11th, and 10th general elections were monitored by 158, 125, and just four international observers, respectively," the statement added.

Key organizations sending observer missions include the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), with 28 observers, and the Commonwealth Secretariat, with 27.

The US-based International Republican Institute (IRI) has deployed 19 observers, while the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has sent one.

Other organizations include the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), with two observers, the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), with two, and the European External Action Service, with one.

In addition to the European Union, observers are arriving from 21 countries.

These include Pakistan (8), Bhutan (2), Sri Lanka (11), Nepal (1), Indonesia (3), and the Philippines (2). ANI

The updated version removes the reference to "certain pulses" from this list.

On digital trade, the initial factsheet mentioned, "India will remove its digital services taxes" and "committed to negotiate a robust set of bilateral digital trade rules that address discriminatory or burdensome practices and other barriers to digital trade."

The current version drops the claim that "India will remove its digital services taxes" and retains only that "India committed to negotiate a robust set of bilateral digital

trade rules."

Under the proposed arrangement, the US will reduce tariffs on Indian goods to 18 percent from the current 50 percent.

As part of the broader engagement, US President Donald Trump has removed the 25 percent tariffs imposed on India in August last year over purchases of Russian oil, noting that New Delhi has committed to stopping direct or indirect imports of oil from Moscow and has undertaken "significant steps" in this direction. ANI

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Canada: 10 dead, including shooter, in Tumbler Ridge school shooting in British Columbia

VANCOUVER: A tragic shooting at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School in rural northeast British Columbia has left 10 people dead, including the suspect, CBC News reported, marking one of the deadliest incidents in the region's recent history.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) confirmed that six people were found dead inside the high school. Another person died on the way to hospital, and two more were discovered at a residence

Additional RCMP officers, including those from the Major Crime Unit, are being deployed to assist with the investigation. Authorities are working with the local school district to reunite students with their parents and guardians.

"This was a rapidly evolving and dynamic situation, and the swift co-operation from the school, first responders, and the community played a critical role in our response," North District Chief Supt. Ken

The incident began when RCMP responded to an active shooter report at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School around 1:20 pm local time. An emergency alert described the suspect as a woman in a dress with brown hair, and police later confirmed this matched the person found deceased.

Tumbler Ridge, a small community of about 2,400 residents located roughly 660 kilometers northeast of Vancouver, has a secondary school with around 160 students.

School District 59 initiated a "hold and secure" lockdown at both the secondary and elementary schools.

CBC News quoted Tumbler Ridge Mayor Darryl Krakowka as saying he was sheltering in place and would provide updates as more information became available.

RCMP Staff Sgt. Kris Clark reiterated that the described suspect was the one found dead, though details on identity or age have not yet been released.

The District of Tumbler Ridge described the event as a "deeply distressing incident" and urged residents to follow official RCMP updates. *ANI*

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) confirmed that six people were found dead inside the high school. Another person died on the way to hospital, and two more were discovered at a residence believed to be connected to the incident

believed to be connected to the incident. The shooter was confirmed dead earlier this afternoon from what police described as a "self-inflicted injury."

CBC News reported that two people were airlifted to hospital with serious or life-threatening injuries, while another 25 are being assessed for non-life-threatening injuries at the local medical center.

Police stated they do not believe there are any other suspects or any ongoing risk to the public. Officers are searching other homes and properties in the community to check for anyone else who may be injured or linked to the incident.

Floyd wrote in a statement.

"Our thoughts are with the families, loved ones, and all those impacted by this tragic incident. This has been an incredibly difficult and emotional day for our community, and we are grateful for the co-operation shown as officers continue their work to advance the investigation," the statement added.

CBC News noted that the Tumbler Ridge Health Centre was placed on restricted access during the response, with non-urgent visits discouraged. Normal operations are set to resume tomorrow at 9 am MT.

French President Macron to visit India next week, attend AI Impact Summit

NEW DELHI: French President Emmanuel Macron will be on a three-day official visit to India from February 17-19 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Tuesday.

During the visit, Macron will also attend the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi on February 19. He will hold discussions with PM Modi on strengthening bilateral cooperation in various sectors as enshrined in the Horizon 2047 Roadmap, the MEA stated.

The India-AI Impact Summit 2026 announced by PM Modi at the France AI Action Summit is scheduled for February 19-20 in New Delhi.

"In addition, the leaders will discuss regional and global issues of mutual interest, including cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The two leaders will also be in Mumbai to jointly inaugurate the India-France Year of Innovation, which will be celebrated

throughout 2026 in both countries," the MEA statement detailed.

Macron's visit to India comes after PM Modi's visit to France in February 2025 and showcases the mutual trust and depth of Strategic Partnership, as well as the shared commitment of the two countries to deepen it further. On January 26, Emmanuel Macron extended warm greetings to Prime Minister Modi and the people of India on Republic Day. He even confirmed his visit to India in February, aiming to continue building the bilateral partnership.

Sharing a photo of himself and PM Modi from their visit to Jaipur in 2024 on X, Macron wrote, "What a wonderful memory of the Republic Day we shared together in 2024! My dear friend Prime Minister Narendra Modi, dear Indian friends, my very best wishes on this great day of celebration. See you in February to continue building together!" *IANS*

Balochistan conflict has roots stretching back to Pakistan's independence: Report

KABUL: The recent attacks in Balochistan highlight not only security challenges but also what critics describe as long standing political failures to address the province's grievances as the roots of growing violence in the province go back to Pakistan's independence, a report has highlighted.

An article in Afghanistan's leading news agency Khaama Press mentioned that the recent attacks in Balochistan highlight not only security challenges but also what critics describe as long standing political failures to address the province's grievances. Documented human rights concerns - particularly enforced disappearances and alleged extrajudicial killings - have created an environment where, according to activists, peaceful dissent faces criminalization and armed resistance appears to some as the only avenue for change.

On January 31, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) launched 'Operation Herof 2.0', carrying out coordinated attacks in 12 districts, including Quetta, Gwadar and Mastung. According to official figures, 17 police personnel and 31 civilians were killed during the operation. Pakistani forces claimed that 145 insurgents were killed in retaliation while the BLA has disputed this statistics. The attacks carried out by BLA involved gun assaults, suicide bombings, and the temporary seizure of police stations and government facilities.

Reports have now surfaced about intensified security operations in Balochistan, sparking concerns among rights activists about treatment of local residents, Khaama Press reported.

"The recent violence in Balochistan represents not an isolated incident but a dramatic escalation in a conflict with roots stretching back to Pakistan's independence. Understanding the crisis requires examining historical grievances, documented human rights violations, economic disparities, and what critics describe as political failures," an opinion piece stated.

Balochistan accounts for 44 percent of Pakistan's land area but it comprises six percent of the country's total population. It remains Pakistan's poorest province, with approximately 70 percent of residents living in multidimensional poverty and unemployment at 33 percent. *IANS*

Diplomacy, international law to resolve border dispute with India: Former Nepal PM Prachanda

KATHMANDU: The Nepali Communist Party (NCP), led by former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', has vowed to work toward settling the border dispute with India through diplomatic dialogue and international law.

Unveiling the party's commitment paper ahead of the March 5 elections, party coordinator Dahal said the disputes over Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani would be resolved through diplomatic talks and in accordance with international law.

Both Nepal and India claim the territory along Nepal's northwestern border as their own, although it has remained under India's effective control. Both countries have incorporated the areas into their official political maps.

Relations between the two countries deteriorated sharply when the government led by former Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli issued Nepal's new political map in 2020 by incorporating these disputed territories, and Nepal's parliament amended the constitution accordingly. The border dispute has long remained one of the key irritants in bilateral relations. *IANS*

Saahas for Cause builds safety and resilience in south asian communities across Los Angeles County

Over the past year, Saahas for Cause, a South Asian community-based nonprofit organization in California, has been steadily strengthening community safety, resilience, and well-being across Los Angeles County. Serving individuals and families across all ages, Saahas works to elevate quality of life through programs that support the social, emotional, and practical needs of the community. All its work is grounded in trauma-informed and culturally humble practices that center dignity, trust, and lived experience.

Through a series of culturally responsive, community-based workshops, the organization has addressed critical issues such as hate incidents, situational safety, violence prevention, and individual rights, while also fostering wellness, cultural pride, and community connection. These programs are designed to meet the unique needs of South Asian immigrants, many of whom face language barriers, social isolation, fear of formal systems, and limited access to culturally relevant resources.

In 2025, Saahas implemented its Community Safety and Violence Prevention Program through workshops held at Artesia Community Park and local residential apartment complexes, in collaboration with speakers from partner organizations. The workshops focused on increasing awareness of situational safety, hate incidents, and victim rights, while also building confidence and self-advocacy skills

all sessions concluded with shared meals featuring South Asian cuisines. Participants also received safety whistles and informational handouts to reinforce preparedness and access to community resources.

Encouraged by the success and strong community response to these sessions, Saahas For Cause plans to continue and expand the program to new locations, including the San Fernando Valley, and to reach more diverse populations such as seniors and new parents. While the South Asian community is known for its resilience, hate incidents often go unreported. Saahas remains committed to advocating for personal and community safety and encouraging the reporting of hate incidents as part of a broader effort to address and prevent such harm.

Through these initiatives, Saahas for Cause continues to advance a vision of safer, healthier, and more connected South Asian communities- One neighborhood at a time. Community members in the San Fernando Valley are invited to attend an upcoming session.



among participants. To create a welcoming and engaging environment, the workshops were blended with cultural and wellness activities such as sari draping demonstrations and Bollywood dance sessions. Parents of young children were supported with on-site childcare, allowing their children to participate in art and play activities, while

China agent gets four years in US jail

WASHINGTON: A California-based political operative has been sentenced to four years in federal prison for acting as a covert agent of the People's Republic of China and influencing local US politics.

Yaoning "Mike" Sun, 65, was sentenced to 48 months by United States District Judge R. Gary Klausner of the Central District of California, the Department of Justice said. Sun pleaded guilty in October 2025 to one count of acting as an illegal agent of a foreign government.

According to the Justice Department, Sun acted at the direction of Chinese government officials from at least 2022 to January 2024 without notifying the US Attorney General, as required by law.

"For years, Sun received and executed taskings from Chinese government officials, distorted our public discourse by disseminating Chinese propaganda, and surveilled groups in the United States that China viewed as threatening its interests as part of a campaign of intimidation," said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John A. Eisenberg. IANS

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PM Modi highlights how carbon capture can power India's next steel revolution

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently highlighted how carbon capture can power India's next steel revolution as the country's guided efforts towards Net Zero 2070 commitment, strategic investments, and hydrogen initiatives drive growth, global competitiveness, and lead the road to a Viksit Bharat.

PM Modi referred to an article by Union Steel Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy about India's iron and steel sector being at a defining moment in its development journey. As the second largest

crude steel producer in the world, with an output of around 152 million tons (MT) in FY 2024-25, the sector is fundamental to the country's economic growth, infrastructure expansion and employment generation. With a target of achieving 300 MT of crude steel capacity by FY 2030-31 under the National Steel Policy 2017 and a longer-term vision of reaching 500 million tons by 2047, steel will remain central to India's industrial and developmental aspirations.

The minister points out that at the same time, steel production is energy-intensive and emissions-intensive. India's steel industry continues to rely predominantly on blast furnace and coal-based direct reduced iron production routes that use coal as the primary energy and reducing agent. *IANS*



Indian apparel sector's outlook upgraded to 'Stable' after US trade deal: Report

MUMBAI: The Indian apparel (exports) sector has been upgraded to 'Stable' outlook from 'Negative' after the US reduced reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods to 18 percent from 25 percent, a recent report said.

The report from ratings agency ICRA restored its outlook on the apparel sector, saying apparel export revenues are likely to rebound 8-11 percent in FY27 even as shipments are still projected to decline 3-5 percent in FY26. *IANS*



'India emerges as viable third pole in fragmented global economy'

NEW DELHI: With the United States, China, and Russia creating a hostile world, Europe and Canada have no choice but to deepen ties with India, according to an article in Washington-based online publication 'The National Interest'.

"Caught between de-risking China and hedging against American volatility, Europe has turned to India as a strategic alternative. India offers scale without China's level of geopolitical and normative baggage. It is not a substitute for the US security umbrella, nor a replica of China's manufacturing ecosystem, but it represents a viable third pole in an increasingly fragmented global economy," states the article written by Dr Jianli Yang.

The article highlights that Canada faces the same situation as Europe. This is reflected in Prime Minister Mark Carney's cautious outreach to China aimed at diversifying partnerships and reducing exposure to unilateral shocks from the USA. And yet keeping space to maneuver between Washington and Beijing.

Despite strained Canada-India relations in recent years, driven by diplomatic and security disputes, Ottawa may realistically

follow Europe's path and treat India as a pragmatic hedge.

With Europe and India signing a trade agreement, the United States and India reaching a

ing both sides of the Atlantic", the article states.

India is seen as fitting into this role as the country is rapidly expanding its manufacturing base,

bal realignment. India also combines relatively low labor costs with improving legal infrastructure, technological capacity, and a vast domestic market, the article states.

"Equally important, India offers something China cannot: democratic legitimacy. Its institutions are imperfect and contested, but they provide a shared political language with Europe and North America -- elections, courts, and civil society -- that lowers the political cost of cooperation. Demographically, India's young, English-speaking workforce and growing purchasing power enhance its long-term appeal. Strategically, its rivalry with China and insistence on strategic autonomy align it more naturally with transatlantic interests than Beijing's vision of authoritarian-led globalization," the article observed.

The report also mentions that India has its protectionist instincts, bureaucratic inertia, and insistence on autonomy, which will pose a problem for both Europe and Canada. "But in a global order characterized by disruption and distrust, India's very flexibility -- its ability to engage all sides without fully binding itself to any -- may be its greatest asset. *IANS*



"Caught between de-risking China and hedging against American volatility, Europe has turned to India as a strategic alternative. India offers scale without China's level of geopolitical and normative baggage"

framework deal, and "Canada potentially moving in the same direction, an unintended architecture is emerging. India is becoming a bridge-commercial, strategic, and political-connect-

attracting investment that has been relocated from China as companies diversify their supply chains. Most iPhones sold in the United States are now made in India, a symbolic marker of glo-

Trade deal will increase India's share in US plastics market: Industry

NEW DELHI: The India-US trade deal has brought a major business opportunity for domestic plastic exporters, which will help the country increase its share in the US plastics market, according to industry leaders.

Speaking to IANS, Arvind Goenka, Managing Director (MD) of RMG Polymers India

Limited, said, "The India-US trade deal will open up a large US market for domestic plastic exporters."

He further said that the US imports plastics annually are worth around \$75 billion. Currently, India's plastic exports to the US are about \$2.2 billion.

"Therefore, this agreement is a golden opportunity for In-

dian companies to increase exports. Our plastic exports to the US could double in the next few years," he mentioned.

He further added that the US is also a major buyer of PVC (polyvinyl chloride). If the US purchases plastic and PVC products from India in large quantities, these goods will be exported to other countries as

well. This will give Indian products a new identity in the global market, said Goenka.

According to his, this agreement will not only prove beneficial for the plastic industry but will also help establish India as a strong and reliable supplier.

He further stated that the US economy is worth \$30 trillion and its population is approxi-

mately 340 million.

Consequently, due to higher incomes, there is a high demand for high-quality products. When demand for high-quality products increases in the US, similar products will be manufactured in India, which will then be sold in India, benefiting the general public. *IANS*

India has over 400 space startups, investment crosses over \$500 million: Minister

NEW DELHI: The number of space startups has reached more than 400, while the investment in such startups crossed more than \$500 million; the Parliament was informed.

Two private sector companies tested and flown their launch vehicles at sub-orbital orbit in November 2022 and May 2024,

"A total of 25 payloads flown/going to fly on PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM) which helps NGE's test and prove the space flightworthiness of their payloads. A total of six Indian Non-Governmental Entities (NGEs) has launched 18 satellites in orbit"

said Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

"A total of 25 payloads flown/going to fly on PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM) which helps NGE's test and prove the space flightworthiness of their payloads. A total of six Indian Non-Governmental Entities (NGEs) has launched 18 satellites in orbit," the minister added.

He further stated that the establishment of Earth Observation (EO) satellite constellation on PPP model will spur innovation and improve global confidence of our Indian space tech companies.

Twenty-five companies are already testing their satellites/subsystems in the real environment of space by taking advan-

tage of platforms like 'POEM'.

According to the minister, state government are seeing space as a sunrise sector and making proactive policies to encourage companies in this domain through incentive schemes. Moreover, Indian space companies are slowly beginning to embed in global aerospace and space supply chains.

After announcement of the 'Startup India' initiative, with a goal of fostering innovation and building a robust startup ecosystem in the country by providing support, funding and easier regulatory frameworks, there is a magnificent growth in startups related to space domain.

Prominent space startups grown in the country after 2014 are Pixxel, Dhruva, Skyroot Aerospace, Agnikul Cosmos and Bellatrix Aerospace, etc.

'Startup India' was launched on January 16, 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a transformative national program to nurture innovation, promote entrepreneurship and enable investment-driven growth, with the objective of making India a nation of job creators rather than job seekers.

Today, the transition from a global "back-office" to an "innovation architect" is not just about sovereignty in defense or technology - it is about reconstructing national institutions, decentralizing opportu-

nity, and embedding innovation into the everyday functioning of India.

Today, India's space startups are strengthening India's sovereign space intelligence. Bengaluru-based Pixxel has



launched the first satellites of its Firefly constellation, the nation's first commercial satellite constellation, delivering world-leading hyperspectral imaging.

Similarly, the upcoming launch of GalaxEye's Mission Drishti will provide the nation with "sovereign eyes" with the world's first multi-sensor Earth-observation satellite. IANS

India and UK sign agreement on social security for employees on short-term overseas assignments

NEW DELHI/LONDON: India and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland signed an agreement on social security relating to Social Security Contributions in New Delhi recently. The agreement seeks to avoid double social

India, Lindy Cameron for the UK side.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India has been entering into bilateral Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with other countries in order to protect the interests of Indian profession-

both governments had committed to concluding an agreement on social security.

"The Agreement seeks to avoid double social security contributions for employees of both countries on temporary assignments in each other's territories for periods of up to 36 months. The Agreement will support mobility and continued social security coverage of the employees on short-term overseas assignments. This will enhance India-UK partnerships in the service sector, leveraging the high skills and innovative service sectors of both countries," read a statement issued by the MEA.

"The Agreement forms part of India's trade deal with the UK and shall come into effect together with the CETA, planned for implementation during the first half of the current year," it added.

The MEA detailed that the signed agreement will be hosted on the website of the Ministry of External Affairs and the website of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) for the information of the stakeholders so that they can secure Certificates of Coverage (CoC) to avoid making double social security contributions. IANS



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and the British High Commissioner to the Republic of India, Lindy Cameron CB OBE, sign an Agreement on Social Security relating to Social Security Contributions between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in New Delhi (@MEAIndia X/ANI Photo)

security contributions for employees of both countries on temporary assignments in each other's territories for periods of up to 36 months.

The Agreement was signed by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri for the Indian side and by the British High Commissioner to

als/skilled workers working abroad for short durations and enhance the competitiveness of Indian companies.

It may be recalled that at the time of signing of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between India and the United Kingdom in July 2025,

India's Q-commerce white collar hiring jumps 21 pc amid high data, tech talent demand

NEW DELHI: India's quick-commerce sector saw white-collar job postings rise 21 percent year-on-year, now accounting for 14 percent of total quick-commerce hiring as firms prioritize data analytics, product technology and supply-chain strategy, as per recent report said.

The report from job portal foundit said the sector is transitioning from rapid expansion to a sharper focus on profitability, predictability, and operational intelligence.

"India's quick-commerce ecosystem is moving from scale-first growth to efficiency and intelligence-led expansion," said Anupama Bhimrajka, VP, Marketing, foundit.

The demand is strong for professionals across "data analytics, product technology, and supply chain strategy, as companies focus on improving forecasting accuracy, optimizing inventory movement, and strengthening customer experience," it said. IANS

Pak stares at \$1.2 bn of vaccine import bill by 2031 as India halts supply

NEW DELHI: The disruption in affordable pharmaceutical imports from India, especially vaccines, has sharply increased Pakistan's financial burden and the country stares at an annual import bill of \$1.2 billion by 2031, according to reports.

The disruption due to last year's military clashes exposed Islamabad's heavy reliance on foreign manufacturing and donor support for routine immunization as the country provides 13 vaccines free of cost but with zero domestic vaccine production, reports said.

Pakistan Health Minister Mustafa Kamal said a halt in Indian vaccine shipments is already hurting the economy and the situation could be direr when international support for vaccine procurement ends by 2031.

"Pakistan contributes 51 of the cost now, and unless we start local production of vaccines, we will face an annual import bill of \$1.2 billion by 2031," the minister was quoted as saying in reports.

The minister further said that Pakistan has traditionally procured cheap vaccines for immunization and other requirements from India through Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). Gavi served as a global purchasing and funding platform for poorer countries. *IANS*

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

Working with India in war on drugs: US

NEW YORK: In a major collaboration with Indian law enforcement in the war on drugs, US authorities have cracked down on online drug-traffickers linked to the country who are allegedly responsible for six overdose deaths in the US.

The US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) said that they arrested four people in the US and seized 200 websites linked to a "transnational criminal organization" (TCO) based in India during "Operation Meltdown".

"Leveraging its global reach, DEA actively collaborates with our Government of India law enforcement partners to identify, investigate, and dismantle dangerous criminal organizations that engage in these types of illegal drug trafficking operations," the agency said.

DEA Administrator Terrance Cole, announcing the crack-down, said: "This case demonstrates how foreign-based traffickers exploit our healthcare sys-

tem, hide behind the internet, and use people inside the United States to move dangerous drugs under the guise of legitimate commerce."

The DEA and the US prosecutor's office for Eastern

who used these online pharmacies, and it has sent more than 20,000 letters to the public requesting information in support of this ongoing investigation, "dangerous drugs under the guise of legitimate commerce."



New York, based in Brooklyn, said they seized the websites, which they said were made to look like genuine pharmacy sites but were dispensing drugs illegally.

The DEA said that it had identified thousands of customers

The TCO, which the officials did not identify, had been under investigation since 2022 by the DEA field office in Colorado, the agency said.

Following that up, DEA field offices across the US conducted several raids from January 27,

arresting the four people, who were also not identified, it said.

The DEA said that it also issued five, Immediate Suspension Orders (ISO), and one Order to Show Cause (OTSC) against the "pharmacies" that may have had some form of DEA registration.

According to the DEA, the "online pharmacies" that it took down had US website addresses and professional-looking designs to falsely make them appear legitimate.

The counterfeit medications they dispensed "are often made with fentanyl or methamphetamine and taking them can lead to serious health risks, including harmful side effects, ineffective treatment, and even death", it said.

Investigators found that the online pharmacies and their co-conspirators illegally dispensed and shipped diverted medications, without valid prescriptions, to customers throughout the US, violating the Controlled Substances Act, the DEA said.

Through these operations, the drug traffickers were "dangerously infiltrating a closed system of distribution intended to keep patients safe" by requiring doctors' prescriptions, it said.

President Donald Trump had made the war on illegal drugs, particularly fentanyl, a key goal.

According to the US government, 73,000 people died of drug overdose in the US during the 12-month period ending in August.

Trump threatened China, the major source of precursor chemicals for making fentanyl, with tariffs and other punitive actions. *IANS*

AstraZeneca Pharma India receives CDSCO approval for Durvalumab indication in cancer treatment

NEW DELHI: AstraZeneca Pharma India Limited said, it has received permission from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) to sell and distribute, Durvalumab solution for infusion used in cancer treatment for an additional indication.

In its latest stock exchange filing, the drug company said that through this approval, "Durvalumab in combination with carboplatin and paclitaxel is indicated for the first-line treatment of adults with primary advanced or recurrent endometrial cancer who are candidates for systemic therapy, followed by maintenance treatment with Durvalumab as monotherapy in endometrial cancer that is mismatch repair deficient (dMMR)".



According to the filing, "This is to inform that AstraZeneca Pharma India Limited has received permission from the Central

Drugs Standard Control Organisation, Directorate General of Health Services, Government of India to import for sale and distribution of Durvalumab Solution for Infusion 120 mg/2.4 mL and 500 mg/10 mL (Brand Name: Imfinzi) for an additional indication," said AstraZeneca Pharma India Ltd.

The receipt of this permission paves way for the marketing of Durvalumab So-

lution for "Infusion 120 mg/2.4 mL and 500 mg/10 mL (Imfinzi) in India for the specified additional indication, subject to the receipt of related statutory approvals, if any," the filing further said. *IANS*

80 pc of Bangladesh's health budget is wasted: Top executive

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh's healthcare system has become capable of meeting the majority of domestic demand, but chronic mismanagement and poor planning are draining nearly four-fifths of the sector's public spending, according to AM Shamim, general secretary of the Bangladesh Private Hospital, Clinic and Diagnostic Owners Association.

The problem is not a lack of resources but their deployment. For instance, he said that at Labaid Cancer Hospital, two linear accelerator (LINAC) machines deliver radiotherapy to between 160 and 220 patients a day

In a recent interview with Bangladesh's The Daily Star newspaper, he said "Our national health budget stands at around Bangladeshi Taka 42,000 crore. But nearly 80 percent of that is wasted. Equipment that isn't needed is purchased, while the ones we do need often sit idle and unused."

The problem is not a lack of resources

but their deployment. For instance, he said that at Labaid Cancer Hospital, two linear accelerator (LINAC) machines deliver radiotherapy to between 160 and 220 patients a day.

In contrast, he emphasized, "Government cancer hospitals have 8-12 LINAC machines, yet they treat fewer patients. That's not a technical issue -- it's purely a

matter of management."

Red tape compounds the dysfunction. Noting that there were once around 17,500 licensed hospitals and diagnostic centers, he said that number has now dropped to just 3,000 hospitals and 7,000 diagnostic centers.

"To set up a hospital, you need approvals from at least 18 different agencies,

ranging from fire services, the Department of Environment, narcotics control, boiler inspection, generator compliance, and more," he was quoted as saying.

"The main issue is that licenses remain valid for just one year. By the time one agency completes its inspection, the year is already over. This opens the door for delays, bribes, and inefficiencies," he added.

The government extended the license validity to two years last month. But Shamim warned that the underlying problems remain.

He argued that the country has reached a point of functional self-reliance in healthcare delivery, even as deep structural flaws continue to threaten efficiency, accountability and public trust.

The Labaid MD pointed to the sharp fall in outbound medical travel as one of the indicators of the system's growing capacity. He claimed that medical visas to India, once routine for Bangladeshi patients seeking treatment, have fallen to a tenth of their previous levels over the past 18 months. *IANS*

Health Minister Nadda urges youth to work responsibly; give back to society

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare JP Nadda urged youth to work responsibly and to give back to society.

Addressing the convocation ceremony 2025-26 of Manav Rachna Educational Institutions (MREI), Nadda said it is not just the culmination of an academic journey but the beginning of a new phase of responsibility towards the nation and society.

He emphasized that the graduating cohort is privileged to be entering their professional lives during the second phase of Amrit Kaal, leading up to 2047, when India aspires to become a fully developed nation. "This phase presents both immense opportunities and equally significant responsibilities; the youth must contribute meaningfully to the national development," Nadda said.

"Always carry the sentiment that society has enabled their success and, in return, they must strive to give back by serving society selflessly and meaningfully," said Nadda. *IANS*



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US bill seeks to end H-1B visa program

WASHINGTON: A Republican lawmaker introduced legislation to end the H-1B visa program, arguing that it disadvantages American workers and prioritizes foreign labor over US citizens.

US Representative Greg Steube announced the introduction of the Ending Exploitative Imported Labor Exemptions Act, known as the EXILE Act.

The bill would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act by discontinuing the H-1B visa program, which allows US companies to hire foreign workers in specialty occupations.

"Prioritizing foreign labor over the well-being and prosperity of American citizens undermines our values and national interests," Steube said.

"Our workers and young people continue to be displaced and disenfranchised by the H-1B visa program that awards corporations and foreign competitors at the expense of our workforce," he said.

"We cannot preserve the American dream for our children while forfeiting their share to non-citizens," Steube added. "That is why I am introducing the EXILE Act to put working Americans first again."

According to his office, the EXILE Act would amend Section 214(g)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to end the H-1B program entirely. The material states that more than 80 percent of H-1B visa recipients are Indian or Chinese nationals, with priority often given to younger workers. *IANS*

Immigration

POST

16 India Post

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February 13, 2026

According to the submission, Bangladesh recorded 2,673 attacks on minorities between August 2024 and November 30, 2025

Global Hindu alliance urges action on Bangladesh abuses

WASHINGTON: A global alliance of Hindu and multi-faith groups called for urgent international action to protect Hindus in Bangladesh. The groups cited what they said was a sustained pattern of violence, intimidation, and forced displacement.

The appeal was coordinated by the Hindus Advancing Human Rights Initiative, or HAHRI. It is an initiative of HinduPACT. The group said more than 125 organizations and individuals from 15 countries have signed the letter.

The letter urges governments and international bodies to intervene.

"The Hindus of Bangladesh are the indigenous peoples of the country entitled to have their life and culture protected from discrimination under the UN Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007," said Rahul Sur, Executive Director of HAHRI. "What we are seeing is the exact opposite. It is not episodic violence or isolated lawlessness. It is a sustained human rights crisis rooted in impunity."

The letter documents killings and mob violence. It cites attacks on temples and homes. It also points to the use of blasphemy allegations to target Hindus.

It highlights the public killing of Dipu Chandra Das on December 18, 2025. He was accused of blasphemy. Video of the killing spread widely online. The incident drew global attention.

According to the submission, Bangladesh recorded 2,673 attacks on minorities between August 2024 and November 30,

international bodies. These include the US Commission on International Religious Freedom. The reports note rising intimidation and violence against Hindus in 2025.

Ajay Shah, Founder and Executive Chair of HinduPACT, said the demographic shift shows a deeper problem. "The numbers

state and of the global system meant to prevent such outcomes."

The alliance said Hindus made up about 22 percent of Bangladesh's population in 1951. That figure is now under 7 percent. It said about 230,000 Hindus leave the country each year.

The group described the trend as ethnic and religious cleansing. It said the migration is not voluntary.

The letter calls on the United States to act. It asks Washington to send a fact-finding team. It urges trade penalties. It calls for refugee protection for persecuted Hindus. It also asks for a review of Bangladesh's role in UN peacekeeping missions.

The appeal urges the European Union to impose punitive tariffs. It also calls for an EU investigative mission.

The groups want United Nations bodies to condemn the abuses. They ask for an independent inquiry into the violations.

HAHRI said rallies were held in more than 25 US cities. The group also launched a petition to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It said thousands of people worldwide have signed it. *IANS*



The alliance said Hindus made up about 22 percent of Bangladesh's population in 1951. That figure is now under 7 percent. It said about 230,000 Hindus leave the country each year

2025. The attacks followed the overthrow of the previous government. The alliance said fear has spread across Hindu communities.

The letter also cites reports by

alone tell a devastating story," Shah said. "A democracy cannot selectively protect rights. When a minority shrinks at this scale under persistent violence and intimidation, it is a failure of the

Pakistan set to deport 20,000 Afghan refugees awaiting relocation to US: Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has planned to deport nearly 20,000 Afghan refugees who have been waiting for resettlement in the United States, local media reported.

Pakistan's federal government will issue orders for senior provincial authorities and police in Islamabad, Balochistan, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Paki-

stan-occupied Kashmir and Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan (PoGB) to facilitate the deportation of Afghan refugees, Afghanistan's leading Khaama Press agency highlighted citing a report from Pakistan's 'The Nation' newspaper.

Majority of these refugees left Afghanistan after Taliban seized power in 2021 and they have been waiting for more than

three years to relocate to other countries. In recent months, Pakistan has already deported some Afghan refugees who were included in the US resettlement lists, citing doubts regarding Washington's commitment to the program.

The US has halted Afghan refugee admissions after an Afghan national, Rahmanullah Lakanwal, shot two US Na-

tional Guard soldiers near the White House in December. After the shooting incident, US President Donald Trump suspended visa issuance for Afghan passport holders for an indefinite period and ordered a review of existing Afghan immigration cases, Khaama Press reported.

Last month, several Afghan refugees living in Pakistan

urged the Pakistani government and Afghan authorities to resolve existing challenges through talks and provide them adequate time to return to Afghanistan gradually with dignity, the local media reported.

These refugees stated that rapid deportations and increasing pressure has caused serious challenges for Afghan residents. *IANS*

White House says zero illegals released into US over past 9 months

WASHINGTON DC: White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt has said that no illegal immigrants had been released into the United States over the past nine months, calling it a "remarkable achievement" of the Trump administration.

Addressing reporters during a press briefing on February 5, Leavitt said, "Zero illegals were released into our homeland over the past nine months. This is a truly remarkable achievement."

She said the administration's immigration enforcement policies had contributed to a significant drop in crime across the country, despite criticism from Democrats and sections of the media.

"Even as Democrats and the liberal media are engaged in hysteria about this administration arresting and deporting violent criminal illegal aliens, the undeniable truth is

government funded and operational.

"When it comes to any discussions about immigration policy, the President is never going to waver in his commitment to allow immigration enforcement efforts in this country," she said.

Leavitt also referred to a recent incident in which, four Americans were killed, by an illegal immigrant, saying, the individual had been paroled into the country by the previous administration using the CBP One app.

"That's not how immigration in this country should work," she said.

She said President Trump had urged Congress to pass the SAVE America Act, which she said would ensure compliance with federal election law by removing non-citizens from voter rolls and requiring voter ID and proof of citizenship for registration.

Leavitt also reiterated that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence held statutory responsibility for counterintelligence matters related to election security.

Responding to a question on whether President Trump remained committed

to deporting an estimated 20 million illegal immigrants who entered the country under the previous administration, Leavitt said, "Yes, and the President has always been committed to that."

In a post on X later, Leavitt said newly released data showed the murder rate in America's largest cities had fallen in 2025 to its lowest level since at least 1900, marking the largest single-year drop on record.

She said, "President Trump promised to restore law and order to the United States. Newly released data proves he is delivering: the murder rate in America's largest cities plummeted in 2025 to its lowest level since at least 1900 -- marking the largest single-year drop in murders on record. This dramatic decline is what happens when a President secures the border, fully mobilizes federal law enforcement to arrest violent criminals, and aggressively deports the worst illegal alien offenders." ANI

"Even as Democrats and the liberal media are engaged in hysteria about this administration arresting and deporting violent criminal illegal aliens, the undeniable truth is that deporting these individuals is one of the primary reasons why America's streets are safer today than they were one year ago,"

that deporting these individuals is one of the primary reasons why America's streets are safer today than they were one year ago," Leavitt said.

Citing newly released data, the Press Secretary said crime had declined sharply under President Donald Trump's leadership.

"The drop in crime is more proof that all that is required to improve public safety on our streets is a leader with the will to do what is necessary to protect law-abiding American citizens," she said.

Leavitt said nearly eight in ten Americans supported the deportation of illegal immigrants, while two in three backed the administration's requirement that state and local authorities cooperate with federal agencies and hand over criminal illegal immigrants held in local jails.

On immigration policy, she said President Trump remained firm on enforcement while seeking to keep the

How U.S. Expansion Is Becoming a Strategic Residency Tool for Indian Owners Looking Forward to Citizenship

NEW DELHI: The United States of America is long dubbed the land of opportunity. It is one of the most coveted destinations for immigrants worldwide. For generations, Indians have been among the most motivated and aspirational participants in this grand narrative of migration. Be it driven by economic opportunity, education, family unification, or the promise of stability and belonging, millions look toward U.S. citizenship as a way to secure a future for themselves and their progeny.

In recent years, a significant shift in U.S. immigration processes has elevated investment-based immigration from a minor strategy to a core tool in the playbook of Indian individuals and families seeking permanent residency and ultimately citizenship. With traditional U.S. im-

migration routes facing unprecedented backlogs, programs such as the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Visa have emerged as strategic pathways.

American citizenship conveys not just legal status, but socio-economic mobility. It offers the right to live and work without restrictions, full access to social and economic benefits, educational opportunities for children, and the security to establish generational roots. In contrast with temporary visas (such as H-1B work visas or F-1 student visas), which impose conditions on employment or studies, citizenship is the "final stop," a place of permanence.

(ADVERTORIAL DISCLAIMER: The above press release has been provided by VMPL. ANI and India Post will not be responsible in any way for the content of the same.)

India, Canada agree to establish security, law-enforcement liaison officers during NSA Doval's visit

OTTAWA: India and Canada have agreed to establish security and law-enforcement liaison officers during a meeting with National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and Nathalie Drouin, Deputy Clerk and National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister of Canada, as part of the former's visit to Ottawa.

According to a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) release, at a meeting recently, as part of the NSA's two-day visit to the country, both sides agreed to build on their working relationship.

These were part of the regular bilateral security dialogue between India and Canada, during which the two sides acknowledged progress on initiatives to ensure the safety and security of their citizens and agreed on a shared work plan to guide cooperation on national security and law enforcement priorities.

As per the statement, the establishment of liaison officers is expected to streamline bilateral communications and facilitate timely information sharing on issues of mutual concern, including the illegal flow of drugs, particularly fentanyl precursors, and transnational organized criminal networks.

"During the meeting, it was agreed that each country would establish security and law-enforcement liaison officers and that their respective agencies would build on working relationships," the statement stated.

"The two sides acknowledged the progress on initiatives aimed at supporting the safety and security of their countries and citizens. They agreed to a shared workplan to guide bilateral cooperation on national security and law enforcement issues and to enable practical collaboration on respective priorities," the release added.

During the discussions, both countries also committed to formalizing cooperation on cybersecurity policy and information sharing on cybersecurity issues. They agreed to continue collaboration on matters related to fraud and immigration enforcement, consistent with domestic laws and international obligations.

"They also committed to formalizing cooperation on cybersecurity policy and information sharing on cybersecurity issues, as well as continuing discussions on cooperation related to fraud and immigration enforcement, consistent with domestic laws and international obligations," it added.

In addition to his meeting with Drouin, Doval held talks with Gary Anandasangaree, Canada's Minister for Public Safety.

The visit highlights India and Canada's ongoing efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation in national security, law enforcement, and cybersecurity. ANI

Negotiation strategies for buying resale homes

HARINI BALASUBRAMANIAN

Price negotiation is a crucial stage in the home-buying process, and resale home buyers often find it difficult to navigate it. This is because resale homes are different from new properties. Effective negotiation strategies can lead to substantial savings for a buyer. One thing to note about resale homes is that buyers have greater flexibility in negotiating, unlike new properties, where developers set a fixed price. Buyers who know how to negotiate resale home prices smartly save costs and work the deal in their favor through favorable terms and conditions that benefit them in the long run. In this guide, we share effective negotiation strategies for homebuyers purchasing a resale home.

Understanding the resale home market

Resale properties differ from new properties in many ways and price is one of the biggest differentiating factors. Due to older construction and layout, resale homes are priced lower. Factors such as higher maintenance costs, limited amenities, and advanced features further increase costs. However, factors like prime location can offset this price advantage for buyers.

To succeed in negotiations, a buyer must understand these key differences.

Cont'd on page 19

Real Estate POST

18 India Post

www.indiapost.com

February 13, 2026

'Educational institutions to emerge as India's next big real estate opportunity'

NEW DELHI: India's push to modernize its education system is creating a massive new opportunity for the real estate industry. A new report by ANAROCK Capital, titled "The Academic Real Estate Supercycle," reveals that the country needs a huge amount of new land and buildings to meet the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. ANI



For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Aditya Birla Housing Finance strengthens commitment to 'Housing for All' under PMAY 2.0

MUMBAI: Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited ("ABHFL"), a wholly owned subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited, India's leading and diversified financial services company, is deepening its engagement under the Government of India's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 and reinforcing its commitment to the national vision of 'Housing for All'.

Through its PMAY-linked home loan offerings, ABHFL is facilitating affordable and accessible homeownership for eligible first-time homebuyers by providing repayment tenures of up to 30 years, funding of up to 90% of the property's market value, flexible eligibility assessment frameworks, and minimal documentation, thereby streamlining the home-buying process and enhancing ease of access to housing finance.

Key Benefits

1. Loan amount: Up to Rs. 25 lakhs OR 90% of the property market value
2. Tenure flexibility: Up to 30 years, ensuring smaller EMIs.
3. Minimal documentation: Tailored for EWS, LIG & MIG

4. Interest Subsidy: Rs. 1.8 lakhs in 5 annual installments
5. Doorstep service: Guid-

beneficiary segments as follows:

- Economically Weaker Section (EWS): Annual household in-



ance and support at the customer's convenience

6. Digital onboarding + Track My Loan: Seamless loan journey with transparency.

Eligibility

- Property Value: Up to Rs. 35 lakhs
- Carpet Area: Maximum 120 sq.mt (1291 Sq.ft)
- Ownership: Women must be owner/co-owner of the property

The scheme, applicable to only first-time homebuyers clearly defines income-based

come up to Rs. 3 lakh

- Low Income Group (LIG): Annual household income between Rs. 3 lakh and Rs. 6 lakh

- Middle Income Group (MIG): Annual household income between Rs. 6 lakh and Rs. 9 lakh

Why it Matters?

India's affordable housing momentum reflects a strong growth outlook, with GDP projected at 7.3% in FY26. This creates favorable conditions for first-time

homeownership. As PMAY-U 2.0 advances India's affordable housing agenda, ABHFL continues to expand formal housing finance. This supports the Government of India's Housing for All mission and enables more households to move into organized homeownership.

To know more click on - Aditya Birla Housing Finance- PMAY 2.0

Aditya Birla Housing Finance, a subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital, India's leading diversified financial services provider, stands as one of the fastest-growing housing finance companies in the country. The company is backed by the highest level of creditworthiness, holding a long-term AAA (Stable) rating, and a short-term A1+ rating from CRISIL, ICRA & India Ratings. As of September 30, 2025, Aditya Birla Housing Finance manages assets under-management of over Rs. 38,270 Crore with a footprint of 167 pan-India branches.

(ADVERTORIAL DISCLAIMER: The above press release has been provided by NewsVoir. ANI and India Post will not be responsible in any way for the content of the same.)

Godrej Properties' The Elevated Living Edit report offers sneak-peek into emerging wellness and trust-led luxury housing trends

NEW DELHI: Godrej Properties Limited (GPL), one of India's leading real estate developers, offered a sneak peek into key insights from its upcoming 'The Elevated Living Edit' report at Godrej Meridian, Gurugram. The teaser of the report was unveiled as part of Godrej Properties' Shubh Aarambh season, in the presence of actor Sara Ali Khan and Rohit Mohan, Chief De-

sign Officer at Godrej Properties and Kalyani Chawla, Founder of Rezon, a luxury silverware brand.

The research-led insights were shared during Shubh Aarambh, a special home handover ceremony at Godrej Meridian, alongside actor Sara Ali Khan

Key Highlights: Emerging Trends that will transform luxury housing in India

- 84% of luxury homebuyers prefer homes with private balconies, highlighting the growing demand for openness and indoor-outdoor living

- 70% of homebuyers associate luxury with modern, minimalist design, signaling a move away from overt opulence

- 70% of buyers prioritize health and wellbeing, preferring homes with dedicated yoga and meditation spaces

- 74% of homebuyers view private elevators as a key luxury feature, with over 60% favoring dedicated pet lifts; 43% are willing to pay a ₹10-20 lakh premium for this added privacy and convenience

Shubh Aarambh is GPL's signature handover IP, and elevated ceremonial experience that transforms a home handover in to a moment of pride and grandeur for its customers.

Based on insights from close to 1500 affluent respondents across seven major Indian metros, the preview shared at the event highlighted 10 emerging trends that reflect a decisive shift in how premium homebuyers evaluate luxury, moving beyond traditional markers of size and location to prioritize brand trust, wellness and livability. PRNewswire

Things senior citizens should look for when renting a house

HARINI BALASUBRAMANIAN

Indian real estate is experiencing rapid growth in the senior living segment, as many elderly citizens now prefer independent living. While there are many senior living projects available for investment, many seniors still consider renting as a viable option. Renting provides flexibility and minimizes the liabilities associated with property ownership. Yet renting can offer the same convenience as owning a property, provided thorough research and planning are done beforehand. It is important for elderly renters to understand that properties that suit younger tenants may not be ideal for them. In this guide, we list the various factors seniors should consider when renting a house.

Location and neighborhood facilities

Location is a major factor influencing property decisions, whether buying or renting. Prospective tenants avoid locations that require travelling far for essentials. This can be even more difficult for senior citizens. Choosing the wrong location can lead to inconvenience and higher long-term costs for the renter.

Senior renters should choose a house that is within easy reach of basic amenities, such as convenience stores, pharmacies, and markets. Moreover, when evaluating a neighborhood, they should ensure that social infrastructural facilities such as hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centers are easily accessible. Checking whether public transportation is available nearby is also important.

Which area should you choose to rent? This is a big question that arises when seniors look for rentals. This can be answered by identifying the social environment in which one is comfortable. Proximity to friends or family members provides a familiar and secure environment for se-

niors. Moreover, areas with less traffic congestion.

Senior-friendly features

When exploring rental options, seniors can check whether a project offers senior-friendly features. Some essential facilities to look out for include lifts, power backup, wheelchair access, etc. When inspecting apartments or houses, it is essential to check for grab bars, nonslip flooring in bathrooms, adequate lighting, and other accessibility features. Another important consideration seniors should check before

available in the property.

Safety and security features

Like most gated communities, senior-friendly communities should have the latest safety and security systems to ensure a secure environment for the residents. Key features to check include 24/7 security personnel, CCTV cameras and video doorbells in houses, advanced door lock systems, and fire safety systems.

Apart from these security features, a gated community must ensure a comfortable living experience for seniors. This can



renting is the availability of emergency call buttons, which provide a sense of security in times of need.

Some senior-friendly projects include senior citizen clubs and amenities such as parks, walking tracks, yoga rooms, and community halls. Renting a property in a dedicated senior living project can be a good option. However, if that is not possible, ensure these basic facilities are

be gauged from the presence of facilities such as efficient housekeeping and maintenance services, parking areas, open spaces, and greenery.

Rental affordability and financial considerations

Moving to a rented house can involve high costs for a tenant. Seniors with limited income sources often struggle to manage these costs. Before renting a

house, they must assess rental affordability in the area. Rental affordability is evaluated by considering several factors. These include monthly income and household expenses, rental trends in the location, property size and facilities.

When negotiating rent with landlords, prospective elderly tenants must discuss terms such as rent increases, security deposits, and the landlord's flexibility regarding home repairs and maintenance. They can even consider signing a long-term rental agreement to minimize yearly rent increases. Prior budget planning can go a long way toward understanding hidden costs and minimizing rental costs.

When should seniors consider renting a house over buying?

Senior citizens must choose renting for the following reasons:

Flexibility: Unlike property ownership, renting offers the flexibility to relocate whenever and wherever one wants. Most elderly citizens prefer living close to their children and in well-developed localities with healthcare facilities. Therefore, it is essential to consider personal preferences when choosing a rental location. Moreover, renting allows them to choose a home based on their space needs, and they can downsize if needed.

No property maintenance liabilities: In a rented home, the landlord is responsible for major repairs and maintenance. So, seniors can stay worry-free about repairs of appliances, replacements of fittings, etc. This also puts a lesser burden on their finances.

Financial benefits: Renting is more affordable than buying a property at a certain age. Senior citizens, especially those with limited income sources, may find it difficult to get affordable home loans. Property ownership can involve a lot of expenses. On the other hand, renting allows them to secure their funds and use them for other needs, such as healthcare.

Housing.com POV

Whether to rent or buy is a decision senior citizens must take after carefully assessing their financial situation and personal needs. Property purchase gets more expensive with age, especially with rising property prices across cities. So, renting is a practical solution for older citizens. However, when renting a house, it is crucial to consider factors such as a good location, the presence of senior-friendly features, and rental affordability to make an informed decision.

Negotiation strategies for buying resale homes

Cont'd from Page 46

They must also consider the role of distress selling and other factors that compel sellers to accept a lower price. Additionally, property sale trends vary by city. In prime residential markets such as Mumbai and Bangalore, buyers may have limited scope for negotiation due to high demand, which drives prices upward. Hence, it is important to realize that the price negotiation process starts much earlier for a buyer.

Research resale home prices in the locality

To be in a better position to negotiate, buyers must be aware of the prices of comparable properties in the neighborhood. They must look up the prices of similar properties in their society and nearby areas. Factors such as the same floor, property age, and size and layout should also be considered when comparing prices of similar properties. This will help them get a clearer picture of price trends. Moreover, property prices may vary

based on additional features such as parking, views, upgrades, and other amenities, and buyers should take these into account.

By understanding the factors that affect property prices in a given area, home buyers can negotiate with sellers with greater confidence.

Use property age and condition to your advantage. www.housing.com

For detailed story visit
www.indiapost.com

South Asian Heart Health Seminar

Anekant Community Center and Aparigrah Foundation present South Asian Heart Health Seminar: Preventing Heart Attacks and Sudden Cardiac Death. A prevention-focused talk covering heart attacks, cholesterol, blood pressure and sudden cardiac death, with a community panel and patient perspectives.

Date: Saturday, March 21, 2026

Time: 10 AM - 12:30 PM (followed by lunch)

Location: Jain Center, 8072 Commonwealth Ave, Buena Park, CA 90621

Click Here to RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/3y65fkn9>

Sponsored by: Anekant Community Center, Aparigrah Foundation, Jain Center of Southern California and Shah Happiness Foundation

SHAH HAPPINESS FOUNDATION

ANEKANT COMMUNITY CENTER AND APARIGRAH FOUNDATION PRESENT

SOUTH ASIAN HEART HEALTH SEMINAR: PREVENTING HEART ATTACKS AND SUDDEN CARDIAC DEATH

A prevention-focused talk covering heart attacks, cholesterol, blood pressure, and sudden cardiac death, with a community panel and patient perspectives

SPONSORED BY SHAH HAPPINESS FOUNDATION & JAIN CENTER OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026
10 AM - 12:30 PM (followed by lunch)
JAIN CENTER OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 8072 COMMONWEALTH AVE, BUENA PARK, CA

Speakers

Dr. Kevin Shah, MD, FACC
Cardiology/Advanced Heart Failure & Transplant

Geeta Sikand, MA, RDN, FAND, CLS, FNLA
Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine: Cardiology Division

Mr. Manu Shah, Shah Happiness Foundation

Click HERE to RSVP or Scan the QR Code

Join to learn practical steps to reduce heart attack risk and prevent sudden cardiac death!

QUESTIONS? DR. NITIN SHAH: 562-244-9035 | NITINSHAHMD@GMAIL.COM
MR. PRAMOD SHAH: 213-327-7058 | ANEKANTCOMMUNITYCENTER@GMAIL.COM

Meet our distinguished speakers:

- Dr. Kevin Shah, MD, FACC - Cardiology/Advanced Heart Failure & Transplant

- Geeta Sikand, MA, RDN, FAND, CLS, FNLA. Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine: Cardiology Division

- Mr. Manu Shah, Shah Happiness Foundation

Please join to learn practical steps to reduce heart attack risk and sudden cardiac death!

A detailed flyer is attached. Contact the ACC if you have any questions.

Anekant Community Center
 Dr. Nitin Shah: 562-244-9035
nitinshahmd@gmail.com

Pramod Shah: 213-327-7058
anekantcommunitycenter@gmail.com

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

20 India Post

www.indiapost.com

February 13, 2026



MMNA-West coast north chapter- Sakha's Winter Jacket Drive brings warmth and community spirit to those in need

RITU MAHESHWARI
 India Post News Service

In a meaningful act of community service rooted in cultural values, *WCN Sakha, an affiliate of the Maheshwari Mahasabha of North America (MMNA), successfully organized a **Winter Jacket Drive, donating **60 winter jackets to *Sacred Heart Community Service* to support individuals and families facing hardship during the cold winter months.

This drive marked the *first service initiative undertaken by Sakha of this chapter* symbolizing a strong beginning for the group's mission to combine cultural heritage with social responsibility. The chapters Lead Siddharth Sodhani and Co-lead Suyash Rathi planned and executed the drive along with National Sakha lead Representative Sandeep Maroo and Chapter President Sachin Dhoot. Community members came together with enthusiasm, contributing generously toward the purchase and collection of winter jackets, which were donated to Sacred Heart's Clothing Closet program. The program provides essential clothing at no cost to those in need and plays a vital role in supporting vulnerable populations.

The initiative was guided by the core values of *Seva (service), Sanskar (values), and Swasth (health)*-principles that



form the foundation of both WCN Sakha and MMNA. Founded in 1983, MMNA has long worked to preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Maheshwari community while also encouraging its members to actively engage in philan-

dren*. Young participants assisted in unloading the donated jackets and attended a brief session where representatives from Sacred Heart Community Service shared insights into their mission and the impact of community partnerships. This inter-

Service, whose mission is to build a community free from poverty by creating hope, opportunity, and action, expressed deep appreciation for the donation. The organization emphasized how community-driven efforts such as this play a critical role in addressing both the immediate needs and long-term challenges faced by those experiencing poverty.

The successful completion of the Winter Jacket Drive has generated a strong sense of pride within the community. Encouraged by the positive response and impact of this initiative, WCN Sakha looks forward to organizing more service activities that inspire community participation and instill values of service in future generations.

*This drive marked the *first service initiative undertaken by Sakha of this chapter* symbolizing a strong beginning for the group's mission to combine cultural heritage with social responsibility*

thropic efforts within their local communities across North America.

A notable highlight of the jacket drive was the *active involvement of families and chil-

action provided a valuable learning experience for children, helping them understand the importance of empathy, generosity, and giving back to society.

Sacred Heart Community



Award Gala Night 2026

SABAN 2025 celebrated its prestigious, Award Gala on January 30st, 2026 at Cerritos Sheraton Hotel. The Award Accomplished South Asian Business entrepreneurs and professionals.

SABAN Award Chair, Parimal Shah, extended felicitations to all awardees along with Co-Chair Yogi Patel and Mohammod Islam, Executive Director.

The event recognized outstanding individuals and organizations for their contributions to the community. We are incredibly grateful support that made show a success.

"This event was a true reflection of collaboration, dedication and remarkable talent within our community."

SABAN 2025 award show concluded with a great success.



India's flag raised by Indian army veterans at Chapman University's R-Day celebration

PRADIP K. SHUKLA



On Friday January 23, 2026 Chapman University hosted a Celebration of India's 77th Republic Day with Chief Guest, The Consulate General of India Los Angeles Dr. K. J. Srinivasa. Chapman University's Office of the President Nidhi P. Vogt welcomed business and community leaders to the campus. Vice Chancellor for Student Life Jerry Price, Dean Tom Turk of the Chapman University Argyros College of Business & Economics, Executive Director Araceli Martinez, and other campus leaders welcomed attendees. The Orange High School Color Guard led by MSgt. Carlos Mata and Colonel Mark Tull started the program with

pageantry. Academic Director of the MSc. in Business Analytics Program The Shah Family Endowed Chair in Innovativeness Dr. Pradip K. Shukla and Professor Yatri Shukla welcomed the attendees to the celebration. Dr. Sinha Charu sang the original version of a 150 year old patriotic Indian song, Vande Matarum. The flag of India was raised by Dr. Srinivasa and, Indian Army Veterans Major Gurjeet Singh and Captain Aparna Hande. Event co-sponsors were GOPIO-LA, SMAP, Saahas for Cause, SoCal Channel as Media Partner, and Chups Mom2Mom founded by Sami Susaimanickam that prepared special Meal Boxes for guests.



OPEN HOURS

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SUN (LUNCH BUFFET) 12 NOON - 3:30 PM
CLOSED FROM 4:00PM - 5:30PM (LUNCH BREAK)

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From classroom to community: Students build real-world AI solutions at Cordova High School through Suvidha International Afterschool AI program

Suvidha International Foundation (<https://suvidhainternational.org/>), a California-based 501(c)(3) non-profit successfully organized the After-School Industrial AI Agent Development Program at Cordova High School, offering students a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in artificial intelligence while solving real-world problems that directly impact their community. The program was supported by the City of Rancho Cordova through its Community Enhancement & Investment Funds (CEIF). The five-month initiative started in September 2025 was thoughtfully designed to introduce high school students, grades 9 to 12, to AI and AI agent development without requiring prior experience. The curriculum progressed from foundational concepts to more advanced applications, enabling both beginners and experienced learners to steadily build confidence, technical skills, and problem-solving abilities.

As part of the program, students collaborated in teams to design and develop two impactful AI applications focused on addressing real community needs. The first project was a Customer Service AI Agent developed for the City of Rancho Cordova, created to help residents and local businesses quickly and easily find answers to common city service questions. This AI agent addressed challenges such as identifying the correct department to contact, navigating city resources, and understanding permits, trash services, billing, and other frequently asked questions providing accessible, 24/7 support beyond regular office hours. The second project was an Energy Efficiency AI Agent, developed in collaboration with SMUD, focused on helping Rancho Cordova homeowners, renters, and small businesses better understand and manage their energy usage. The AI agent offers around-the-clock guidance on energy-saving practices, local utility programs, and practical steps to reduce utility bills. Beyond individual cost savings, this project supports broader sustainability and environmental goals by encouraging energy efficiency and reducing overall demand on the power grid.

The program benefited 32 students, who gained valuable hands-on experience in Generative AI, Python programming, machine learning, and natural language processing (NLP). To ensure inclusivity and flexibility, additional Sunday evening make-up sessions were conducted to accommodate academic, athletic, and personal schedules. The curriculum was in-



tentionally structured to evolve over time, helping students understand how AI is applied in industries such as customer service and energy efficiency while preparing them for future STEM education and career pathways.

The program was initiated and coordinated by Bhaskar Vempati, Founder and President of Suvidha International Foundation, with the support of the Suvidha team, including Vandna Sharma, Avinash Maddy, Padmapriya Maddy, Balu Kodavatikanti, and Praveen Vempati. Instruction and technical mentorship were provided by Jothi Periyasamy, a Stanford alumnus and AI expert, along with his team, including Sathvika from Deep Science AI Foundation and team members from LLM at

Chalamcherla, and SMUD Directors Michael and Oliver, who provided valuable feedback to the student teams. The program concluded with a Grand Final AI Showcasing on Friday, January 30, 2026 at the Cordova High School Multipurpose Hall. The event brought together a distinguished group of attendees, including City of Rancho Cordova Mayor Gatewood, a nine-member SMUD delegation led by Board President Dave Tamayo, SMUD Directors Michael Champ and Oliver Daniels, FCUSD Board President Jennifer Laret, Cordova Recreation & Parks District Director Eric Sloan, Cordova High School administration including Principal Amy, Golden 1 representatives, local IT professionals, parents, and community

generation.

Mayor Garrett Gatewood, Council Member Siri Pulipati, and Council Member Joe Little commended Suvidha International Foundation and Jothi for organizing a high-quality After-School AI Program that empowered students with real-world AI skills and community-focused solutions. CEIF team members Randi Kay, Lindsay and Laura, Rick, Dave, YK Chalamcherla, Jennifer and Amy congratulated the students for their innovation and highlighted the value of strong partnerships in preparing students for future careers. The guests include Venu, Ramraj, Anupriya, Manish, Jagan, JP, Prasad, Syam, Siva, Prashanth, Srinadh, Ranga and Vashist.

Bhaskar Vempati and Jothi Periasamy expressed gratitude to the City of Rancho Cordova, SMUD, FCUSD, partners, mentors, and volunteers for their support and congratulated students for their dedication and perseverance. Bhaskar also thanked Padmapriya and Manish for capturing the event pictures. Aparent, Tripti, also thanked Suvidha, noting the program significantly increased her child's confidence, problem-solving skills, and interest in STEM.

SMUD presented the Best in Energy Award to the Energy Efficiency team, while all participants were presented with trophies. Suvidha International Foundation plans to organize two additional AI programs at Cordova High School in 2026, continuing our partnership to expand AI education opportunities for students.

Brief Description of Suvidha International Foundation:

Suvidha International Foundation (<https://suvidhainternational.org/>) is a California-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to advancing education, empowerment, and community service in the United States and India.

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com



Scale.AI, giving students valuable exposure to real-world AI practices and industry insights.

A program demo was held on January 9, 2026, and was attended by Rancho Cordova Council Members Siri Pulipati and Joe Little, City of Rancho Cordova Chief Digital Transformation Officer Rita, City AI staff Laura, City CEIF staff Randi Kay, FCUSD Vice President

members. Golden 1 Credit Union and Tech Yantra partially sponsored program laptops while the SMUD partially helped the showcasing event. The final showcasing celebrated student innovation highlighted the tangible impact of their AI solutions, and demonstrated the power of strong partnerships among schools, nonprofits, local government, and industry in advancing AI and STEM education for the next

Federal demands for voter data, laws to limit access and challenges to state control of elections

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

As the 2026 midterms approach, the Justice Department has demanded that nearly every state and Washington, DC, turn over election-related records, including full statewide voter registration lists and, in some cases, ballots from prior elections or access to voting equipment. The federal government has sued more than 20 States and Washington, DC, for refusing to comply, prompting concerns about federal overreach into states' constitutional role in administering elections. The requests involve highly sensitive personal information and have raised serious privacy and security concerns. At the same time, Congress is advancing election legislation that would tighten voter identification requirements, mandate voter roll purges, and restrict vote-by-mail. Experts warn that together these actions could affect who is able to vote and increase disputes over election outcomes. ACom briefing on Feb 6 examined how these developments could function as wild cards in the midterms and how

states and courts are responding. John C. Yang, president and executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC stated that any electoral reform should be based on the principle of "making voting easier, not harder," and carefully weigh whether restrictive laws

The federal government has sued more than 20 States and Washington, DC, for refusing to comply, prompting concerns about federal overreach into states' constitutional role in administering elections. The requests involve highly sensitive personal information and have raised serious privacy and security concerns

impose a reasonable burden on voters. He pointed out that Asian Americans are the fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States, with their population increasing by more than 38% between 2010 and 2020, currently numbering approximately 24 million, and projected to reach 35 million by 2060; their voting influence cannot be ignored. In the 2020 election, the number of eligible Asian American voters increased

by 1.8 million compared to the previous election, with registered voters growing by 28% and actual voter turnout increasing by 37%; approximately 60% of eligible Asian American voters participated in the election. In several swing states, the number of Asian American voters even exceeded

official pointed out that election affairs are constitutionally controlled by state and local governments, and the president has no direct power to intervene in the actual operation of elections. He described recent actions at the federal level as mostly "political signals and marketing," which, while unusual and intimidating, have largely been blocked by the courts and have limited actual impact on grassroots voters.

Danielle Lang, Vice President for Voting Rights & Rule of Law, Campaign Legal Center; Adjunct Law Professor and Leading U.S. Voting Rights Litigator stated that recent court rulings have clearly defined the boundaries of executive authority in election matters. She pointed out that courts have repeatedly ruled that the federal government lacks legal basis for executive orders and the Department of Justice's requests for large amounts of voter data, and have issued injunctions against these measures. Lang added that the Department of Justice's attempt to collect voter data on a large scale has been rejected by the courts, which have determined that it does not fall within the scope of the Civil Rights Act.

the margin of victory in the presidential election. He also emphasized that language barriers and restrictions on mail-in voting had a significant impact on the approximately 30% of Asian American voters with limited English proficiency.

Justin Levitt, Professor of Law, Loyola Law School (LMU); former White House Senior Advisor for Democracy and Voting Rights; former DOJ Civil Rights Division

National Retail Solutions (NRS) achieves Better Business Bureau (BBB) Accreditation and A+ Rating

NEWARK, NJ: National Retail Solutions (NRS) announced, it has been officially accredited by the Better Business Bureau (BBB), achieving the organization's highest A+ rating. The accreditation follows a company-wide initiative to enhance customer service processes and resolve merchant inquiries more efficiently and transparently.

The Better Business Bureau awards accreditation only to businesses that meet its strict standards for integrity and performance. Earning an A+ rating requires passing a rigorous scrutiny process, demonstrating a track record of responsive customer support, and maintaining a commitment to good-faith efforts to resolve consumer issues.


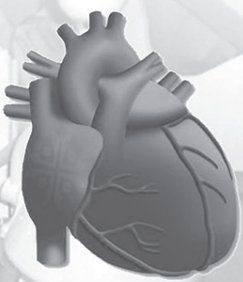
"Trust is the most valuable asset we share with our merchants," said Elie Y. Katz, President and CEO of NRS. "Earning this A+ rating and official accreditation validates our relentless commitment to service. Our team has worked tirelessly to refine our support channels and ensure that every independent retailer in our network feels heard and valued."

NRS pursued this accreditation to reinforce its reputation as a partner that independent retailers can rely on. The A+ rating signals to current and future merchants that NRS adheres to the BBB's Standards for Trust, prioritizing honesty, transparency, and responsiveness in all business operations.

About National Retail Solutions (NRS)


National Retail Solutions (NRS), a subsidiary of IDT Corporation (NYSE: IDT), operates the leading point-of-sale (POS) system and NRS Pay payment processing services for thousands of independent retailers in the United States and Canada. NRS provides small and mid-sized business owners with robust, revenue-generating store management and checkout systems, including EBT/eWIC acceptance, e-commerce solutions, payroll services, business cash advances, and other merchant services. NRS serves diverse retail segments through specialized solutions, such as NRS Petro for gas stations and convenience stores. For more information on NRS, visit www.nrsplus.com.

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CDPH urges vaccination as measles cases rise across multiple counties recent cases include Shasta County outbreak of eight related cases

What You Need to Know: Recently, local health departments in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Shasta counties reported multiple cases of measles. Public health officials are investigating additional suspect cases. With this news and measles spreading in other parts of the United States, as well as international destinations, CDPH is strongly urging Californians to ensure they are fully vaccinated against measles.

SACRAMENTO: The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is urging Californians to check their immunization status and get vaccinated against measles after local health departments have notified the state of multiple recent cases of measles. This includes an outbreak of eight related cases in Shasta County, the state's first measles outbreak since 2020. All of these individuals were either unvaccinated or had an unknown history of vaccination. Last week, CDPH issued a Health Alert notifying health care providers to be on the lookout for measles in patients presenting with a fever, rash and other symptoms consistent with measles.

"As a pediatrician and parent, I encourage families to make sure everyone gets up to date on their MMR vaccine, if they haven't already," said Dr. Erica Pan, CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer. "CDPH continues to coordinate with, and support, local health departments in their responses to stop measles from spreading further in our communities. The United States is experiencing the highest numbers of measles cases, outbreaks, hospitalizations and deaths in more than 30 years, driven by populations with low vaccination rates. We all need to work together to share the medical evidence, benefits, and safety of vaccines to provide families the information they need to protect children and our communities."

Cases have been reported in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Shasta counties. Two recent cases visited Disneyland on January 22 and 28 while infectious. Local health officials are

working with Disneyland Resort to notify potentially exposed employees, and members of the public that visited Disneyland on either date should contact their health care provider if they develop measles

measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) coverage among kindergarteners for the 2024-2025 school year - the level of immunity needed to reduce the risk of community spread. To continue achieving this

Before traveling internationally, everyone 12 months and older should receive two MMR doses, and babies 6 to 11 months are recommended to get one dose of MMR vaccine. Families with children traveling to regions in the United States with ongoing outbreaks should consult with a health care provider about following immunization recommendations for international travel.

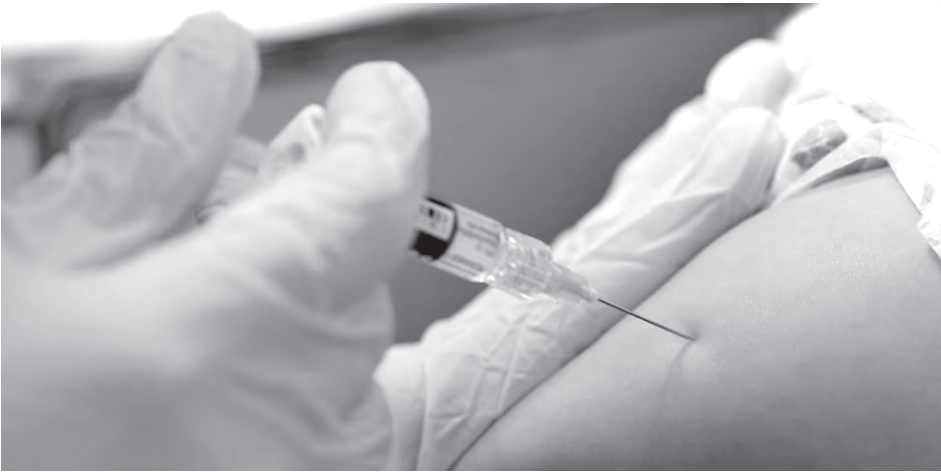
Families can check their vaccination status with the California Digital Vaccine Record (DVR) and schedule a vaccine appointment by visiting [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov), or contacting their local pharmacy or health care provider. MMR vaccines are covered for most people through their health insurance plans, including Medi-Cal and regular health care providers. People having difficulty obtaining vaccines can contact their health care provider or local health department for help finding a place to get immunized.

About Measles

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease. Unvaccinated individuals, particularly young children and pregnant people, face the highest risk of severe illness and even death. Roughly 90% of those unvaccinated and exposed to measles will contract the disease. Symptoms include a fever that lasts a couple of days followed by a cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis (pink eye) and rash. Those infected can spread measles about four days before their rash starts to four days afterwards.

Measles remains common globally, including in Europe, Africa and Asia. There are also ongoing outbreaks in Canada and Mexico. Although the United States eliminated measles in 2000, cases have risen, with major outbreaks in Texas and South Carolina in 2025. California experienced a notable outbreak linked to Disneyland from December 2014 to April 2015, infecting 131 residents and others in six additional states, Mexico, and Canada. Due to California's currently high levels of immunization, the state is less likely to see sustained transmissions as has been seen in other states in recent years. However, transmission of measles is still possible, particularly in communities with lower immunization coverage.

Additional Resources: For updated measles activity in California, visit the CDPH Measles web page. CDPH's Measles Toolkit also provides resources in multiple languages.



"CDPH continues to coordinate with, and support, local health departments in their responses to stop measles from spreading further in our communities. The United States is experiencing the highest numbers of measles cases, outbreaks, hospitalizations and deaths in more than 30 years, driven by populations with low vaccination rates"

symptoms.

As of February 9, 2026, a total of 17 measles cases have been reported statewide. Elsewhere in the United States, one of the largest outbreaks in over 30 years is happening in South Carolina with 920 associated cases.

California reported more than 95%

level of protection from measles and other preventable diseases, CDPH and the West Coast Health Alliance (WCHA) recently endorsed the 2026 American Academy of Pediatrics Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule, ensuring all Californians receive access to evidence-based guidance on life-saving vaccines. For more information on California's immunization guidance, visit the CDPH Vaccines for All web page.

Get Vaccinated

The MMR vaccine provides the best protection against disease and serious illness. It is important Californians check to see that they and their family members are up to date, as the number of measles cases has increased. In particular, it's important that families are up to date on all vaccines before traveling, including international travel and travel to domestic areas where there are measles outbreaks. It is also important to be up to date before visiting places or events where there are many people from other countries or regions of the United States, such as large sporting events, theme parks or airports.

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Consulate General of India, San Francisco and NASSCOM Convene High-Level Roundtable on India-U.S. Technology and AI Partnership

India Post News Service

SAN FRANCISCO, CA: The Consulate General of India, San Francisco, in collaboration with ITServe, hosted a high-level roundtable discussion on February 6, bringing together NASSCOM leadership, senior technology executives, venture capitalists, and academic experts to strengthen strategic collaboration between the United States and India in the technology sector.

The discussion, titled "India-U.S. Technology Partnership: From Strategic Intent to Execution," examined the evolving role of artificial intelligence in reshaping global trade, workforce dynamics, and the Indo-U.S. technology corridor. Participants emphasized that AI represents a structural transformation of the global economy, necessitating close coordination among government, industry, and academia to foster innovation while promoting inclusive and sustainable growth.

The NASSCOM delegation visiting the San Francisco Bay Area under the NASSCOM U.S. CEO Forum program included Rajesh Nambiar, President of NASSCOM; Shivendra Singh, Vice President, Global Trade Development; Mayank Gautam, Director, Global Trade Develop-

ment; and 12 of India's most prominent technology firms, including Infosys, Cognizant, HCL, and Nagarro.

Consul General Dr. K. Srikar Reddy delivered the opening remarks at the closed-door session which was held against the backdrop of significant geopolitical and economic developments, including the announcement of a finalized India-U.S. trade agreement and India's forthcoming role as host of a global AI summit.

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He highlighted that the landmark India-US trade deal, under which the U.S. reduced tariffs on India from 50 percent to 18 percent and India will eliminate or reduce tariffs on U.S. products, will boost bilateral trade and achieve the target of US\$ 500 billion in bilateral trade in Goods and Services by 2030, set by the leaders of our

two countries in February 2025.

Mr. Nambiar highlighted the expanding role of Indian technology companies in driving global digital transformation, strengthening innovation partnerships, and contributing to economic growth and job creation in the U.S., as well as the challenges and opportunities arising from Gen AI for future collaboration between Indian and US tech companies.

Participants highlighted the growing

strategic importance of technology col-

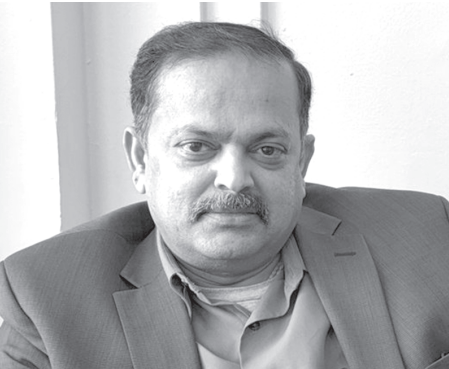
laboration as businesses navigate geopolitical shifts, market volatility, and rapid advances in artificial intelligence. Speakers noted that India's technology sector is a major contributor to the U.S. economy, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs and contributing an esti-

ated \$103 billion to U.S. GDP. Moderated by MR Rangaswami, founder of Indiaspora, the discussion focused on the future of Indian IT services and SaaS firms in an AI-driven environment. Participants emphasized the need for business-model transformation, workforce reskilling, and the transition toward outcome-driven, AI-enabled service delivery models. The roundtable underscored the importance of a "triple helix" approach-collaboration among government, industry, and academia-to address future skills, workforce transitions, and curriculum modernization. Discussions also highlighted India's potential leadership at the application layer of the global AI ecosystem, particularly in enterprise solutions, sovereign technologies, and scalable, affordable AI applications relevant to global and emerging markets.

As India prepares to host a global AI summit, participants agreed that decisions made today will shape AI's impact on jobs, productivity, and society over the coming decade. The roundtable concluded with a call for continued engagement to strengthen the India-U.S. technology and AI partnership.

Indian-American Ashok Baddi announces bid for Michigan House

WASHINGTON: Indian American community leader Ashok Baddi has announced his bid for the Michigan House of Representatives, saying he is running to bring what he calls practical, people-first leadership to a diverse suburban district north of Detroit.



Ashok Baddi

"I am running for the portion of state representative from Michigan District 56," Baddi told IANS in an interview.

Baddi, a longtime resident of Troy, said his decision was rooted in local ties. "I've been a resident of Troy for over a decade now. I've been working in the community, trying to help our community in various ways," he said.

He pointed to the district's growing diversity, noting that "almost 25 percent of the population is of Indian origin," with about 12,000 voters overall. "That is a very sizable number that can actually make or break an election," he said.

Baddi said his motivation to seek office came from a belief that change requires political engagement. "It is only through political will that we can actually make change happen," he said. "Once we are here, we are an American, as American as anybody else."

He said he decided to run toward the end of last year after years of political involvement. Baddi said he was previously active in the Democratic Party, serving as "a core team member for several fundraisers for the governor of Michigan" and helping campaigns "right from council elections to school boards."

Explaining his break from the Democrats, Baddi said his "core value system" aligns more closely with Republicans. He cited views on gender and school sports, saying, "I personally believe that there are two clear genders," while also saying a third gender "should have a right to live with all freedom."

Education is a central issue of his campaign. Baddi said he opposes efforts in Troy to eliminate honors programs. "I believe every child has a different learning capacity and capability, and it should remain so," he said. "If they're capable of learning, they should be allowed to do that."

An immigrant from Hyderabad, Baddi came to the United States in 2005 with his wife, a pediatric nephrologist. He described years spent in rural America, living

Baddi said his motivation to seek office came from a belief that change requires political engagement. "It is only through political will that we can actually make change happen," he said. "Once we are here, we are an American, as American as anybody else"

near farms in Georgia and Missouri. "We practically lived in about a 400-acre farmland," he said, before later moving to Michigan.

On immigration, he said he favors legal pathways. "For me, getting into this country legally is a big yes," he said, adding that the United States is "the only country in the

world which has an open door policy." Baddi said he is challenging Democratic incumbent Sharon McDonald, whom he previously supported. "I feel she has not delivered much to the community," he said, citing roads and education policy. He acknowledged the financial hurdles of campaigning. "The dollar is the mother's milk of politics in America," Baddi said, urging greater political donations from the Indian American community.

Indian Americans have steadily increased their political footprint in the United States, with a growing number serving in Congress, state legislatures and local offices. Michigan, home to one of the largest Indian American populations in the Midwest, has seen increased civic engagement from the community in recent election cycles. IANS

UCSF-Washington Cancer Center expands to meet community need

Continuing a commitment to excellence, healing, and innovative care, close to home

FREMONT, CA: Washington Health announces the expansion of the UCSF-Washington Cancer Center, top-tier facility serving the Tri Cities in collaboration with UCSF Health. The expansion gives the residents of Alameda County and the surrounding region even broader access to cancer treatment and services, including integrated and holistic care, a network of specialists and experts, and access to clinical trials without having to travel across the Bay.

"This expansion represents more than additional space -- it is a reflection of our unwavering commitment to this community and to every person facing a cancer diagnosis," said Kimberly Hartz, Chief Executive Officer. "Through our collaboration with UCSF Health, we are bringing world-class oncology expertise, advanced treatments, and access to clinical trials closer to home so our patients and families can focus on healing, supported by exceptional care, compassion, and hope, right where they live."

Driven by a shared commitment to exceptional, community-based care, the new cancer center was made possible through the Washington Health Foundation and the generosity of community donors, physicians, and staff. Leadership gifts from Fremont Bank Foundation, Paul and Sandi Bonderson, and John and Candace Hallquist, among others, helped turn this vision into a lasting resource for patients and families, close to home.

"We are proud to support the UCSF-Washington Cancer Center, a next-generation facility that brings innovation, hope,

and excellence to cancer care," said Brian Hughes, President and Executive Director, Fremont Bank Foundation. "With a best-in-class infusion center in Southern Alameda County, patients in the Tri-City Area can receive top-tier care close to home, without the burden of long travel. We are honored to partner with Washington Health in delivering this vital resource to our community."

Six years in the planning and construc-

tion process, the new UCSF-Washington Cancer Center, located at Washington West, 2500 Mowry Ave., can now serve more patients. The new center began seeing patients today.



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"As a cancer survivor and patient of the UCSF-Washington Cancer Center, I know the center delivers extraordinary care and the staff help make a difficult situation bearable," said Paul Bonderson, a retired electrical engineer with a career in networking solutions and services companies. "I am so grateful for advanced treat-

ment close to home; it was important to me to support increased access to help meet the growing needs of our community."

The newly expanded cancer center encompasses 15,000 square feet of dedicated space and is supported by a multidisciplinary team delivering advanced cancer care. In addition to comprehensive clinical services, the center advances research and education while providing pa-

tients access to a robust portfolio of clinical trials. Advanced cancer care services include:

- Medical oncology
- Infusion services
- Pathology
- Care navigators and social workers to guide patients through their cancer journey
- Nutritional counseling
- Financial counseling
- Survivorship and support programs
- Providing the most advanced equipment, the new space accommodates eight

exam and procedure rooms, 17 infusion chairs, three private treatment rooms, a full-service on-site pharmacy, a centralized nurse station, and a modern family waiting area. The center is currently participating in 10 clinical trials, with four more on the way.

"Our community asked for this, we listened, and together with our UCSF Health partners, we are responding to the growing demand for top-tier accessible cancer care for generations to come," said Hartz. "The dream to expand would not have been possible without our generous donors. It is exceptional relationships with community-minded organizations and residents that enable us to continue providing the most advanced technologies and treatments, world-class physicians, and compassionate health care for this community."

Learn more about Washington Health's oncology services at WashingtonHealth.com/cancer-programs.

About Washington Health

Washington Health is an independent, community-based health system governed by the publicly elected Washington Township Health Care District Board. Opened in 1958, Washington Health has grown to include a 415-bed, acute care hospital that includes the Morris Hyman Critical Care Pavilion that also houses emergency services and a level II trauma center; the Bell Neuroscience Institute of Silicon Valley; the Institute for Joint Restoration and Research; Peninsula Surgery Center; Washington Outpatient Surgery Center; Washington Outpatient Rehabilitation Center; Washington Health Medical Group; Washington Health Urgent Care, and Washington West that houses the UCSF-Washington Cancer Center, Washington Women's Center, Outpatient Imaging Center, and additional outpatient hospital services and administrative facilities. Through the Washington Health Foundation, generous donor and community support helps advance innovation, expand access to care, and strengthen vital programs. The health system continues to receive top-tier awards and distinctions for many programs and services, while advancing the level of medical care and treatment in Southern Alameda County. Discover more at washingtonhealth.com, and through Facebook, X (Twitter), LinkedIn and Instagram.

AAPI Global Health Summit 2026 in Odisha showcases cutting edge resuscitation training AI Driven Clinical Education, and India's National Emergency Life Support Program

The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) advanced its mission of strengthening global emergency care through innovation, technology, and Indo US collaboration with a landmark Resuscitation and Emergency Medical Care Workshop held on January

10, 2026, at the Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) in Odisha.

The workshop, a signature component of the AAPI Global Health Summit (GHS) 2026, combined mass CPR training on January 9th and high fidelity simulation, and AI enabled multi specialty clinical case

discussions on January 10th setting a new national benchmark for emergency medicine education.

AAPI President Dr. Amit Chakrabarty described the summit as a defining moment for Indo U.S. medical collaboration. "GHS 2026 reflects AAPI's unwavering commitment to elevating global health standards," he said. "When experts from two of the world's most dynamic healthcare systems come together, the impact extends far beyond conference halls-it reaches communities, hospitals, and future generations."

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com



'Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu', blockbuster Chiranjeevi-Nayanthara entertainer, to stream from February 11th on ZEE5!

The film to stream in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Marathi and Bengali

National, 6th February 2026: After setting the box office on fire this Sankranti, the Telugu blockbuster Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu is all set to make its grand digital debut on ZEE5 on February 11th. The platform has acquired the exclusive digital rights of the Chiranjeevi-Nayanthara starrer, which has emerged as one of the biggest successes of the season. As announced earlier during the Sankranti campaign, the film will stream on ZEE5 from across all languages available on the platform, ensuring massive reach among Telugu diaspora and South Asian audiences globally.

Written and directed by Anil Ravipudi, Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu features Megastar Chiranjeevi in a powerful yet endearing avatar, alongside Venkatesh Daggubati, Nayanthara and Catherine Tresa.

This family entertainer is deeply rooted in emotion, humor and relationships, while also delivering edge-of-the-seat drama. Blending action, comedy, emotion and family drama, the film follows a national security officer's (Chiranjeevi) journey to protect his estranged family while rediscovering love, responsibility, and redemption. With Chiranjeevi's enduring screen

legacy and Nayanthara's wide appeal across the country, the film found strong resonance with audiences during its theatrical run.

Speaking about the digital premiere, Chiranjeevi said, "Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu is a film that celebrates fam-

more viewers across languages and countries. It's always special when a story travels beyond cinemas and becomes a part of people's homes."

Nayanthara added, "This film has a beautiful emotional core along with humor and action, and that balance is what

Garu on ZEE5 and enjoy the journey from the comfort of their homes."

Venkatesh Daggubati said, "What I love about Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu is how it blends large-scale entertainment with heartfelt relationships. Working with Chiranjeevi garu for the first time made this journey even more special. I'm glad the film is now reaching audiences worldwide through ZEE5 in multiple languages, allowing families everywhere to experience its emotion, humor and drama together."

Director Anil Ravipudi added, "This film was designed as a complete family entertainer, something rooted in emotions, laughter and thrilling moments. The theatrical response has been extremely encouraging, and I believe the story will connect even more strongly on OTT. With ZEE5 streaming it across all languages, Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu will now reach homes across markets and cultures, which is truly exciting for us as creators."

Get ready to relive the blockbuster magic as the film is streaming from February 11th, exclusively on ZEE5 in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Marathi and Bengali languages!



ily, relationships and resilience, all wrapped in entertainment. The love the audience has shown us in theatres has been truly overwhelming. I'm happy that through ZEE5, the film will now reach even

makes it special. Working with Chiranjeevi garu and the entire team was a wonderful experience. I'm excited that audiences who may have missed it in theatres can now watch Mana Shankara Vara Prasad

Global leaders mark 49 years of Eye Foundation of America Commemorate International Day for world without childhood blindness at House of Lords, England

HOUSE OF LORDS, LONDON: Global leaders, Parliamentarians, healthcare pioneers, philanthropists, and representatives/leaders of several community and professional organizations came together at the Cholmondeley Room and Terrace, House of Lords at the iconic Parliament of the United Kingdom on January 31st, 2026, to commemorate the International Day for a World Without Childhood Blindness (IDWWCB) and celebrate 49 years of dedicated service by the Eye Foundation of America (EFA)-a global organization that has been restoring sight and safeguarding children's futures since 1977.

The high-level commemoration marked January 31 as a defining global moment for sight, education, and equity, reinforcing the urgent call to eliminate preventable childhood blindness worldwide.

The event was chaired by Lord Rami Ranger, Member of the House of Lords, and brought together a distinguished gathering of global voices committed to ad-

vancing child eye health as a public health and development priority.

In his welcome address, Lord Rami Ranger said, "This is indeed a privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the House of Lords, a place where decisions are made,



which will touch the life of almost everyone in the world. I'm also delighted to have so many distinguished guests who have been recognized by the government of India, by the United Kingdom, and many dignitaries from all over the world who are here."

While stressing the need and policy significance of the mission to have the world without childhood blindness, Lord Ranger said, "The House of Lords stands today not only for tradition and governance, but for conscience and global responsibility. A

the world without childhood blindness, Dr. V. K. Raju, Founder and Visionary Leader of EFA, said, "Forty-nine years ago, this mission began with one simple belief-that no child should go blind because of poverty or lack of access. Today, that belief has become a global responsibility. Childhood blindness is preventable, and together, we have the power to end it."

The Eye Foundation of America was founded following the first eye camp organized by Dr. V. K. Raju in Vijayawada, India, in 1977-an act of service that sparked a movement now spanning India, Africa, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

After witnessing "BLIND YEARS" in children in India, the then young ophthalmologist, Dr. Raju, brought in the most modern vitrectomy instrument to India in 1979.

world without childhood blindness is not an aspiration-it is an achievable goal if governments, philanthropy, and civil society act together."

Taking the audience to 1977 when he chose to take on the mission of rendering

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Sanjeevani x **Suta**
United Against Cancer

When fashion becomes a force for health: **SUTA JOINS SANJEEVANI'S PINK TAG PROJECT** for breast cancer awareness

MUMBAI: In a village outside Delhi, a woman notices a Pink Tag stitched inside her blouse- next to the wash-care label. It gently reminds her how to check herself with simple visuals, no alarms, no fear, just awareness. This is how the Federal Bank Hormis Memorial Foundation | Network 18 Sanjeevani - Pink Tag Project was born from rural India, is being amplified by local tailors and community trust. The ambitious initiative is now entering the fashion mainstream through Suta- the home-grown D2C brand that's been redefining what the saree means to the modern Indian woman. In this moment, tradition meets contemporary purpose. A garment becomes a carrier of care, and the fashion industry takes a step into nation-building.

Watch the film here:
Sanjeevani x Suta |
Pink Tag Project

In India, every four minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. Over 70% are detected late. Women don't screen because they have no time- no time for themselves.

Between household work, earning livelihoods, and caring for families, self-care is a luxury they cannot afford. The Pink Tag Project began with a simple observation: women have one moment alone each day. When they get dressed. Stitched into clothing, the Pink Tag carries self-examination steps. A behavioral nudge embedded in a moment that already belongs to her. Rural tailors, volunteers, trusted voices, made it real.

Tradition Meets Contemporary Purpose

Suta entered Indian fashion with a mission: to reclaim the saree for the modern woman. In a market where tradition felt frozen in nostalgia, Suta brought fresh energy, cultural confidence, and design innovation. Now, Suta integrates the Pink Tag into its blouses that are no longer just identity, they become a carrier of care. A reminder that a woman's health matters as much as her responsibilities to others.

From Grassroots to Industry Blueprint

By stitching the Pink Tag into Suta blouses, right next to the wash-care label, the brand demonstrates a blueprint for how fashion companies can embed social purpose into product design and corporate philosophy. This tangible integration creates a replicable model for the broader apparel industry to adopt. The intervention scales from rural communities to mainstream fashion. A behavioral change nudge, once tested by local tailors, is now manufactured at scale by Suta. This convergence of community insight, industry participation, and market innovation creates the conditions for systemic health behavior change.

Sujata Biswas, Co-founder, Suta, said, "At Suta, we understand that the garments women wear carry meaning beyond purchase. They carry identity, confidence, and now- care. When we learned about the Pink Tag, we saw something we couldn't ignore: an opportunity to use the trust women place in us for something that matters more. If a blouse can remind a woman that her health deserves attention, then fashion becomes a force for nation-building."

Taniya Biswas, Co-founder, Suta, added, "The dressing moment is sacred- it's when a woman is truly alone with herself. Placing the Pink Tag there felt inevitable. We're not instructing. We're simply being present in a moment that already belongs to her, reminding her that she matters."

Siddharth Saini, COO, News18 Studios, added, "Sanjeevani's scale across News18's broadcast network and digital platforms has ensured that vital health information reaches every segment of Indian society- from the nation's most influential audiences to underserved regions. *Businesswire India. ANI*

SUTA ENTERED INDIAN FASHION WITH A MISSION TO RECLAIM THE SAREE FOR THE MODERN WOMAN. IN A MARKET WHERE TRADITION FELT FROZEN IN NOSTALGIA, SUTA BROUGHT FRESH ENERGY, CULTURAL CONFIDENCE, AND DESIGN INNOVATION

"It cannot be fast fashion...": Ace designer JJ Valaya on creating clothes that last generations

JAIPUR: Ace designer JJ Valaya presented his men's collection The Valaya Man: East during FDCI India's Men's Weekend in Jaipur.

The show took place at Diggi Palace and shifted the focus back to design, craft, and long-lasting fashion, rather than quick trends.

After the show, Valaya spoke to ANI about his belief in luxury fashion that lasts for years, sharing experiences about how his work is never about fast fashion but about clothes that can be worn again and again.

Talking about the "luxury trade" and how creations must "endure," Valaya said, "When you're in the luxury trade, whatever you

create must endure. It cannot be fast fashion. It can be something relevant today, but next year, you won't look at it the same way."

He further spoke about long-time clients and how his clothes continue to stay relevant across generations. Sharing how such



JJ Valaya

moments keep him inspired, the designer said these stories make him believe even more in his work.

"So, we've always believed in that. And that's why, today, I have clients-- patrons of Oz--who've dressed in our clothes 30 years ago, and now they're coming back with garments we made for them then, and their children want to wear them now." ANI

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Philosophy

G.I.GURDJIEFF

Man's chief delusion is his conviction that he can do. All people think that they can do, all people want to do, and the first question all people ask is what they are to do. But actually nobody does anything and nobody can do anything. This is the first thing that must be understood.

Everything happens. All that befalls a man, all that is done by him, all that comes from him—all this happens. And it happens in exactly the same way as rain falls as a result of a change in the temperature in the higher regions of the atmosphere or the surrounding clouds, as snow melts under the rays of the sun, as dust rises with the wind.

Man is a machine. All his deeds, actions, words, thoughts, feelings, convictions, opinions, and habits are the results of external influences, external impressions. Out of himself a man cannot produce a single thought, a single action. Everything he says, does, thinks, feels—

one's "whole mass," to be really convinced that it is so and never forget it.

With this question of doing yet another thing is connected. It always seems to people that others invariably do things wrongly, not in the way they should be done. Everybody always thinks he could do it better. They do not understand, and do not want to understand, that what is being done, and particularly what has already been done in one way, cannot be, and could not have been, done in another way.

Everyone now is talking about the war. Everyone has his own plan, his own theory. Everyone finds that nothing is being done in the way it ought to be done. Actually everything is being done in the only way it can be done. If one thing could be different everything could be different. And then perhaps there would have been no war.

Everything is dependent on everything else, everything is connected, nothing is separate. Therefore everything is going in the only way it can go. If



G.I. Gurdjieff

Man cannot do anything
everything happens
It seems to people that others invariably
do things wrongly

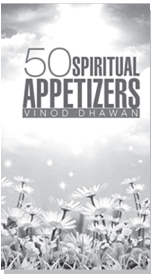
all this happens.
Man cannot discover anything, invent anything. It all happens. To establish this fact for oneself, to understand it, to be convinced of its truth, means getting rid of a thousand illusions about man, about his being creative and consciously organizing his own life, and so on. There is nothing of this kind.
Everything happens—popular movements, wars, revolutions, changes of government, all this happens. And it happens in exactly the same way as everything happens in the life of individual man. Man is born, lives, dies, builds houses, writes books, not as he wants to, but as it happens. Man does not love, hate, desire—all this happens.

But no one will ever believe you if you tell him he can do nothing. This is the most offensive and the most unpleasant thing you can tell people. It is particularly unpleasant and offensive because it is the truth, and nobody wants to know the truth. It is one thing to understand with the mind and another thing to feel it with

people were different everything would be different. They are what they are, so everything is as it is.
People rarely tell a deliberate lie. In most cases they think they speak the truth. And yet they lie all the time, both when they wish to lie and when they wish to speak the truth.

Excerpted from P. D. Ouspensky's 'In Search of the Miraculous' where he records the above conversation with G.I. Gurdjieff whose 160th birth anniversary is being observed on January 13

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After the begums: Battle for the soul
of Bangladesh has just begun

IRFAN CHOWDHURY

In the tea stalls of Bangladesh, where politics is consumed with the same sugary intensity as the cha, the mood is one of jittery anticipation. For 18 months the country has been a state in parenthesis. On 12 February that parenthesis would close. Voters will go to the polls in a unique double act: casting one ballot for a new parliament and another in a referendum on the "July Charter," a package of constitutional reforms designed to prevent the rise of another autocrat.

The election is framed as the culmination of a "Second Liberation," born of the student-led uprising that ousted the Awami League in August 2024 after 15 consecutive years in power. Observers from the Commonwealth, the EU and other nations are in place; the ballot boxes are ready.

Yet the papers will feature a glaring omission. Awami League, the party of independence that mutated into its leaders' fief, is banned. Its leaders are in jail, in hiding or in Kolkata; its registration is sus-

for 15 years, stands on the cusp of power. With the League proscribed, the only organized opposition comes from a strange alliance: Jamaat-e-Islami and the student-led National Citizen Party (NCP). This coalition hopes to be the dark horse. The Jamaat, once a pariah for opposing independence in 1971, has reinvented itself with startling efficacy. The NCP, led by Nahid Islam, a revolutionary turned politician, provides the fire.

The longevity of the Jamaat is noteworthy. While the BNP and the Awami League spent decades in a bitter rivalry, the Jamaat played a long game, focusing on social welfare and cadre discipline. It has quietly entrenched itself within the bureaucracy and hospitals, transitioning leadership through party rule books rather than bloodlines. It has survived multiple bans, post-1971 owing to huge public demand following its overt anti-independence activities, and again in 2024, during the previous regime's last-ditch

The election is framed as the culmination
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years in power. Observers from the
Commonwealth, the EU and other nations
are in place; the ballot boxes are ready

attempt to cling to power. It has endured sustained campaigns against its activities, including the execution of senior leaders convicted for alleged war crimes.

Understand-
ing that it lacks the mass appeal for an outright parliamentary victory, it has concentrated its efforts in selected regions, such as Chittagong and Rajshahi, and cultivated influence within social services, banks, hospitals and religious institutions. Like other cadre-based ideological parties, Jamaat has proven its ability to rejuvenate and to adapt, shelving its longstanding demands for 'Sharia' (Islamic) law to organize underground, and now fielding religious minority candidates and winning university student-council elections. Despite this, its role in 1971 hangs around its neck, a history the BNP alliance has exploited on the campaign trail.

The mechanics of the vote are novel. For the first time the diaspora, in particular, the hardworking remittance heroes whose blood and sweat keep the central bank afloat, have voted by post. Polling hours have been extended to accommodate the referendum. But as campaign posters promising a corruption-free, prosperous nation plastered over the faded graffiti of the revolution, the question is not just who will win, but whether Bangladesh is jumping towards democracy or merely swapping one form of illiberalism for another.

Restoration Of Old Order?

A synthesis of polling and analysis suggests a restoration of the old order, minus its recent empress. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party, battered

(The author is a public-sector policy analyst and adviser from Bangladesh currently based in Australia) South Asia Monitor

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

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Pakistan mosque blast: ISIS' growing shadow in the subcontinent

SRIJAN SHARMA

After nearly five years, the Islamic State (ISIS) has carried out a high-intensity terror attack in the subcontinent, targeting a Shia mosque in Pakistan and killing more than 30 people while injuring around 170. The last comparable attacks include the 2023 Khar bombings, the deadly Peshawar mosque bombing in 2022 that killed over 60 people, and the Abbey Gate bombing during the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, which claimed more than 170 lives.

After a relative lull, ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) once again demonstrated its capacity for mass-casualty violence—this time through a suicide bombing car-

Data from 2021 reveals a sharp escalation in ISIS-K activity: the group carried out 334 attacks in Afghanistan—up from 83 in 2020—including five suicide bombings. However, between 2022 and 2023, ISIS-K was significantly weakened by sustained Taliban counter-offensives that eliminated key leaders. In early 2023, the Taliban killed Qari Fateh, ISIS-K's military chief, and Abu Saad Muhammad Khurasani, a senior ideologue and interim leader.

As Taliban pressure intensified, ISIS-K shifted into a more clandestine mode of operation, focusing on building deep cells capable of sustaining low-intensity attacks while remaining be-

low the radar. Even this strategy proved difficult to sustain. Taliban intelligence penetration and continuous raids in traditional ISIS-K strongholds such as Nangarhar and Kunar, along with operations in urban areas, fragmented the group further. As a result, ISIS-K activity in Afghanistan has largely been reduced to sporadic targeted killings of ideological and political figures.

100. Throughout 2022, ISIS-K maintained a high tempo of attacks inside Pakistan. By the end of that year, however, the group's activities began to decline. The next major strike occurred nearly a year later, when ISIS-K carried out a suicide bombing in Khar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, during a rally of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), killing more than 60 people and injuring over 200.

In 2024, ISIS-K began expanding externally into Central Asia while sustaining low-intensity, targeted killings in Pakistan. This pattern suggests a calculated strategy: exploiting weakened security environments, waiting for moments of distraction, and striking selectively to signal continued relevance and capability.

Strategic Objectives In The AfPak Theatre

ISIS-K has consistently sought to demonstrate its presence through clandestine recruitment and targeted assassinations, punctuated by high-impact attacks designed to maximize shock value. This gap-driven strategy prioritizes lethality over frequency, a hallmark of ISIS-style operations aimed at reasserting relevance.

During 2022 and 2023, ISIS-K attacks in Pakistan became significantly more lethal, capitalizing on a deteriorating security environment marked by the resurgence of Baloch insurgent groups and the collapse of the ceasefire with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In July 2023 alone, when TTP and Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) attacks peaked, ISIS-K carried out the Khar bombings, exploiting the overstretch and distraction of Pakistan's security apparatus.

(The author is a national security analyst specializing in intelligence and security analysis) South Asia Monitor

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After a relative lull, ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) once again demonstrated its capacity for mass-casualty violence—this time through a suicide bombing carried out during the visit of the Uzbek president to Pakistan. While the incident may appear episodic, dismissing it as such would be a serious misreading

ried out during the visit of the Uzbek president to Pakistan. While the incident may appear episodic, dismissing it as such would be a serious misreading. A closer look at the Khorasanis' evolving strategy and their struggle to establish a durable foothold in South Asia raises alarming implications for regional security.

The Khorasani Struggle

Following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, ISIS-K gained a limited opening to expand its influence across the subcontinent. Its campaign began months earlier with attacks such as the Kabul school bombings and continued through the withdrawal period, culminating in the Abbey Gate bombing in August 2021.

Shift Towards Pakistan

From 2022 onwards, ISIS-K gradually redirected its operational focus from Kabul to Pakistan. Initially, the group carried out low-intensity attacks, but within months escalated to mass-casualty violence, most notably the Peshawar mosque bombing that killed over 60 people and injured more than



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INDO-US TRADE DEAL SIGNED

The Indo-US trade deal has generated significant interest due to the growing strategic, economic, and geopolitical alignment between India and the United States. Both nations represent large, dynamic markets with complementary strengths, and a trade agreement could reshape economic ties for decades. However, while the potential benefits are substantial, there are also notable challenges and risks that must be considered. One of the most significant advantages of an Indo-US trade deal is the expansion of market access.

United States is one of India's largest trading partners, and a formal agreement could remove tariff and non-tariff barriers, enabling Indian goods particularly textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and IT services, to compete more effectively in the American market. Similarly, American agricultural products, industrial goods, and technology sectors would benefit from easier access to India's fast-growing consumer base. This will also make Indian products become more competitive in international market.

Second, a trade deal would enhance investment flows. A stable and predictable trade framework could encourage US companies to increase foreign direct investment (FDI) in India, especially in manufacturing, clean energy, digital infrastructure, and supply-chain diversification. India's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes align with US interests in diversifying away from China, making the partnership economically strategic for both countries.

Third, an agreement would deepen strategic cooperation. The Indo-Pacific region is increasingly central to global geopolitics, and stronger economic ties would reinforce the broader strategic partnership between the two democracies. Enhanced trade cooperation would complement existing defense and technological collaborations such as the Quad, ICET (Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies), and joint military exercises.

Another benefit lies in technology transfer and innovation. The US leads in cutting-edge technologies, AI, semiconductors, clean energy and, biotech while India offers a large tech-skilled workforce and expanding digital ecosystem. A trade deal could facilitate joint ventures, R&D collaboration, and smoother technology flows.

On the flip side, despite the benefits, several challenges could complicate an Indo-US trade agreement. A primary concern is the asymmetry in economic interests. The US often pushes for greater market openness, strict intellectual property rules, and lower tariffs, while India traditionally adopts a more protectionist approach to safeguard domestic industries and farmers. These conflicting priorities may hinder negotiations. Indian agricultural and dairy sectors could face competitive pressure from heavily subsidized US producers. This could raise political resistance within India, where small and marginal farmers form a significant voting bloc. Third, the US seeks broader access for its digital companies and stronger data-flow commitments, which may conflict with India's data-sovereignty and digital-regulation policies. Differences over e-commerce rules, data localization, and privacy laws remain major sticking points. Additionally, US concerns about India's tariff structures often among the highest for major economies could slow progress. At the same time, India is wary of opening sensitive sectors like retail, agriculture, and healthcare to large US corporations.

Finally, geopolitical expectations tied to such a deal could create pressure on India to align more closely with US positions, potentially challenging India's traditional foreign-policy autonomy. For India to become a fully developed nation there are of course several risks. Let's hope Indian products and services become more competitive.

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

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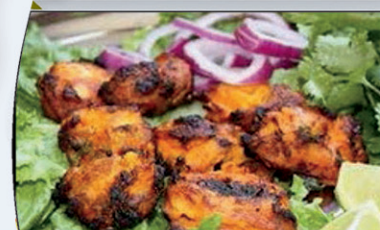
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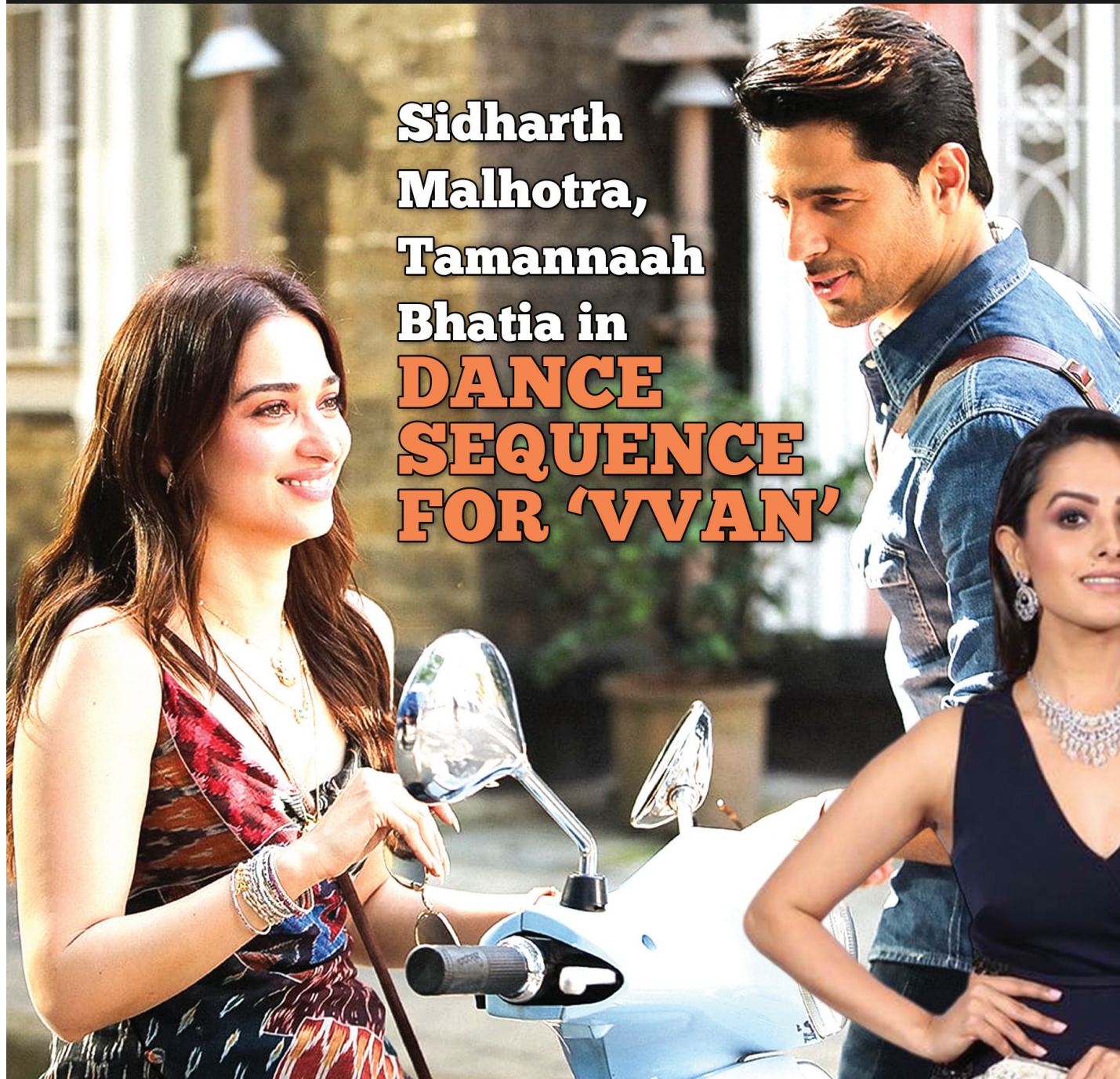


Ashok Vaza

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Sidharth Malhotra, Tamannaah Bhatia in **DANCE SEQUENCE FOR 'VVAN'**



Actor Sidharth Malhotra and Tamannaah Bhatia are set to shoot a special folklore dance sequence for the upcoming film 'Vvan' in Mumbai. The film is set to explore the cultural folklore genre, further adding to its ever-rising anticipation.

While the glimpse has already left audiences hooked, the buzz around the film continues to grow, and as per a source close to the film, the lead actors may soon be filming a visually rich folklore dance sequence in the city. Given that the film delves deep into the folklore genre, it would be intriguing to see the lead pair come together for a dedicated sequence that beautifully complements the film's thematic essence.

'Vvan' is written by Arunabh Kumar, directed by Deepak Mishra and Arunabh Kumar, with DOP and Visual Director Manu Anand; and produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ektaa R Kapoor, Arunabh Kumar and Niraj Kothari. 'Vvan' is set to release in theatres this year.

Last month, Sidharth Malhotra turned a year older, and his 'Vvan' co-star Tamannaah Bhatia,

penned a lovely birthday wish for him on social media. On his special day, Tamannaah wished Sid health, happiness, and joy in the coming year.

Uploading a picture of Sidharth on the Stories section of her Instagram handle, Tamannaah wrote, "Wishing health, happiness and so much joy in the year ahead!!! Happy happy birthday @sidmalhotra (sic)."

'Vvan' was initially slated to release around the festival of Chhatt in 2025. However, later, the drama was pushed due to reasons best known to the makers. Announcing the new release date for the highly anticipated drama, Sidharth earlier shared on social media, "The Forest has whispered; the Force will be unleashed on 15 May 2026. Get ready for the big-screen adventure".

Starring Maniesh Paul and Shweta Tiwari in crucial roles, the folk-fantasy thriller has been jointly produced by Balaji Telefilms and TVF Motion Pictures. 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 Sharat: **Dhurandhar**
- 8 Lutt Le Gaya: **Dhurandhar**
- 9 Deewaniyat : **Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat**
- 10 Sahiba: **Sahiba-Aditya Rikhari**

Anita Hassanandani pens b'day note for son Aarav

Actress Anita Hassanandani marked her son Aarav's birthday with a heartfelt note that beautifully captured a mother's love.

Anita took to Instagram, where she shared an adorable image of her son Aarav and husband Rohit Reddy. Sharing a glimpse of her emotions, Anita described her little one as the boy she once wished for and now holds in her arms.

"To the boy I once wished for and now hold in my arms You are the best thing that ever happened to us," she wrote

Overflowing with warmth, the actor expressed how deeply grateful they are for Aarav choosing them as his parents.

"Mumma & Papa love you so, so, so much. We are forever grateful that you chose us. Happy Birthday, our JAAN our LIFELINE our," Anita concluded.

The actress married corporate professional Rohit in Goa in 2013. IANS

Actress Shilpa Shetty continues to shell fit ness goals even at 50, all thanks to her strict fitness regime and clean diet.

One of the secrets of Shilpa's picture-perfect physique is yoga, which is an integral part of the fitness routine of the 'Dhadkan' actress.

Through her latest Instagram post, Shilpa gave a glimpse of herself performing the variations of Vyaghrasana to her InstaFam.

Listing the benefits of the asana, Shilpa penned the caption, "Benefits of this variation of Vyaghrasana:



SHILPA SHETTY: VYAGHRASANA IMPROVES BALANCE, STRENGTHENS BACK & CORE

- Improves balance and enhances coordination between the mind and body.
 - Strengthens the lower back, gluts, hamstrings and core muscles.
 - Supports hip mobility (sic)".
- However, she advised fellow fitness junkies to avoid this practice in case they are experiencing back pain and/ or knee issues. Shilpa's feed is a hub of such motivational videos.
- In January, Shilpa gave a sneak peek into her mobility exercises.
- She took to her official Instagram account and dropped a video of her gym session. She was seen working on her mobility with

some difficult floor exercises.

She stressed that high mobility on a daily basis is a major factor in improving the quality of life as it helps reduce stiffness in the body, enhances flexibility, and also provides healthy joints.

Challenging netizens to try the regime, Shilpa captioned the post, "Hip hip... no hooray...But mobility is so important for daily movement and quality of life. It helps reduce stiffness, improves flexibility and keeps the joints happy. So if you can get through this, you are already winning! Go give it a shot, while I complete my challenge."

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ANKITA LOKHANDE GUILTY OF NOT SPENDING TIME WITH MOTHER

A popular name in the television industry, Ankita Lokhande, confessed that she feels guilty about not spending much time with her mother, Vandana Phadnis Lokhande.

The 'Pavitra Rishta' actress penned a heart-felt note appreciating her mother for not just showering love and affection on her, but also on all those around her.

Ankita wrote on her IG, "Meri maa...Sometimes words fall short, but today I want to say everything that sits in my heart. I know I don't express it often, but Mama, the kind of mother you are-to me, to Arpan, Vikki to all of us-is rare. You are not just a mother to the children you gave birth to, but to every child in this family...Adi, Nikita, Ashu, Tanmay, Poonam, Mudgdha and now Advait too. Your love is never divided, never partial. It is equal, pure, and overflowing. (sic)"

She admitted that whatever she is today, whatever strength she carries, and whatever values she holds, it has all come from her mother.

Ankita admitted that she feels bad that she is not able to spend a lot of time with her mother due to her hectic schedule.

"Sometimes I feel guilty that we don't spend much time together anymore-our responsibilities, our lives, this busy city... and even though we're in the same place, we don't meet daily. But please know, Mama, I'm grateful every single day that I have you. Truly grateful," she added.

Ankita shared that, as her mother is off on a trip with her sisters and friends, she wished she could have been there with her. **IANS**

RANI MUKERJI: STRONG FEMALES CELEBRATED IN HINDI CINEMA

Bollywood star Rani Mukerji says Hindi cinema has always celebrated strong women on screen and credits legendary performers like Nutan and Nargis for setting that foundation decades ago.

It was during an exclusive session with IANS, that Rani engaged in an insightful talk with women officers of the Delhi Police.

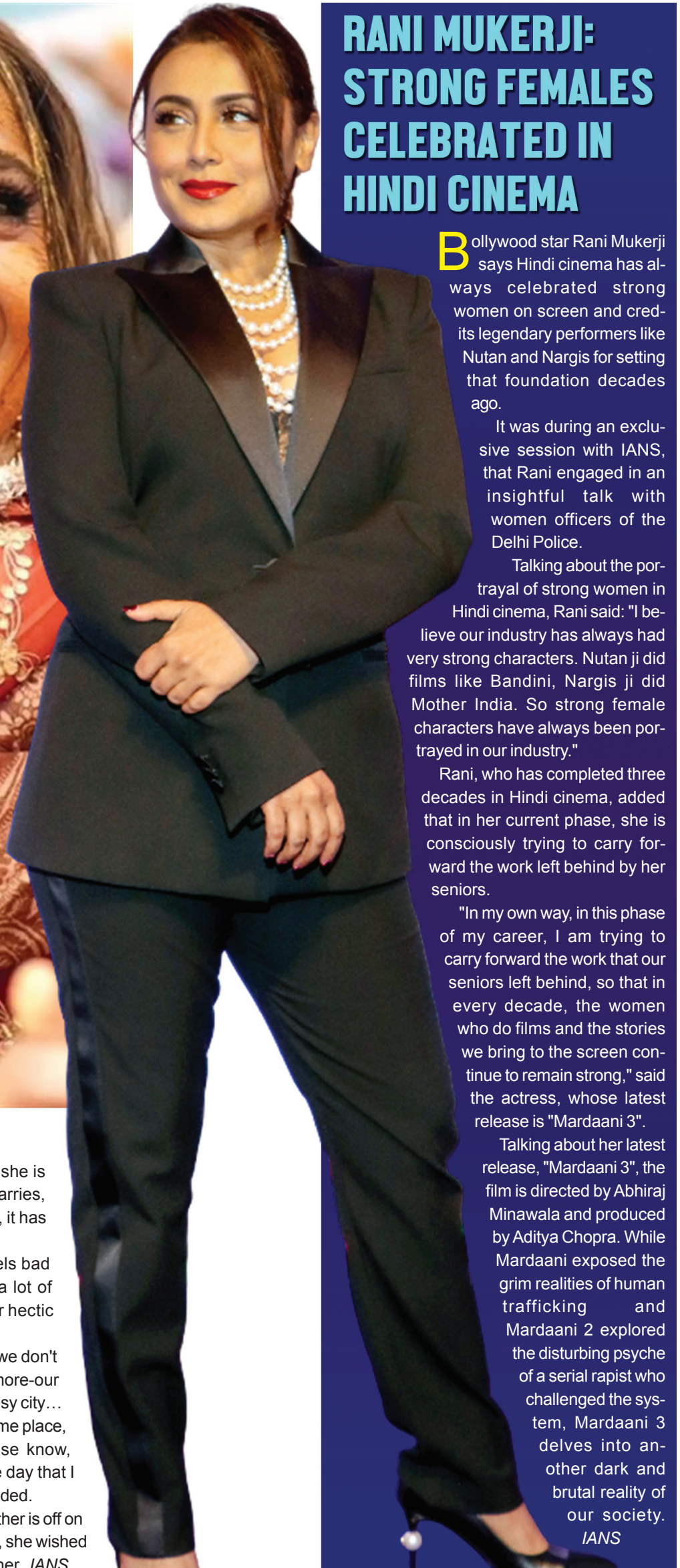
Talking about the portrayal of strong women in Hindi cinema, Rani said: "I believe our industry has always had very strong characters. Nutan ji did films like Bandini, Nargis ji did Mother India. So strong female characters have always been portrayed in our industry."

Rani, who has completed three decades in Hindi cinema, added that in her current phase, she is consciously trying to carry forward the work left behind by her seniors.

"In my own way, in this phase of my career, I am trying to carry forward the work that our seniors left behind, so that in every decade, the women who do films and the stories we bring to the screen continue to remain strong," said the actress, whose latest release is "Mardaani 3".

Talking about her latest release, "Mardaani 3", the film is directed by Abhiraj Minawala and produced by Aditya Chopra. While Mardaani exposed the grim realities of human trafficking and Mardaani 2 explored the disturbing psyche of a serial rapist who challenged the system, Mardaani 3 delves into another dark and brutal reality of our society.

IANS



Konkona Sen Sharma and Pratibha Rannta's upcoming psychological thriller titled "Accused" directed by Anubhuti Kashyap is all set to premiere on Netflix on 27 February.

Talking about the film, Team Accused, shared, "Accused is the kind of story that stays with you because it refuses to simplify human behavior or moral conflict. Anubhuti has crafted a deeply nuanced film that places women at the center of a narrative we rarely explore, one where power, perception, and belief are constantly shifting."

"With Konkona and Pratibha leading the film, we're looking at a relationship tested not just by accusation, but by doubt itself. It's a story told with restraint, empathy, and courage, and we're proud to bring it to Netflix, a platform that has supported the film's intent to provoke thought rather than judgment."

Produced by Dharma Productions, Accused follows a celebrated doctor in London whose carefully constructed life begins to fracture after she is accused of sexual misconduct.

As scrutiny intensifies and public opinion hardens, the film explores the strains this places on her closest relationships, and how quickly perception can take hold when certainty is out of reach. By centering on a woman as the accused, Accused asks viewers to sit with discomfort and doubt, unfolding as a story of one woman's word against another. *IANS*



KONKONA SEN SHARMA, PRATIBHA RANNTA-STARRER ACCUSED TO RELEASE FEBRUARY 27

RAO INDERJEET SINGH YADAV EXTENDS FINANCIAL HELP TO RAJPAL YADAV

Music producer, Rao Inderjeet Singh Yadav has offered financial help to actor Rajpal Yadav in light of his struggles.

Rajpal Yadav is known for his work in 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa', 'Hungama', 'Welcome', and others. While his on-screen journey has been filled with comic brilliance and memorable performances, his recent personal challenges brought attention to the importance of standing by artists beyond the stage and screen.

Rao Inderjeet Singh Yadav, who is the owner of GemTunes Music, stepped forward to support actor Rajpal Yadav with financial assistance of Rs 1.11 crore.

Talking about the same, the producer said, "Rajpal ji has given immeasurable joy to audiences and has been an integral part of Indian cinema. This support is not about money, it is about standing with a fellow human being in his time of need. Our industry is a family, and families hold each other when it matters the most". *IANS*

"KISI NE MERE NAAM SE PICTURE BANA DI...": GOVINDA; CALLS OUT KARAN JOHAR

Veteran Bollywood actor Govinda, known for his comic timing and iconic performances in films such as 'Hero No. 1', 'Coolie No. 1', and 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' has targeted filmmaker Karan Johar over the 2022 film 'Govinda Naam Mera' for using his name and reflecting aspects of his personal life.

While hinting towards Karan Johar, he told ANI, "Kisi ne mere naam se picture bana di.. shaayad Govinda Mera Naam ('Govinda Naam Mera')..i don't know..mujhe lagta hai Karan Johar ki thi (I think it was made by Karan Johar)"

'Govinda Naam Mera' is a 2022 film, directed by Shashank Khaitan and produced by Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, and Shashank Khaitan. The film stars Vicky Kaushal, Bhumi Pednekar, and Kiara Advani.

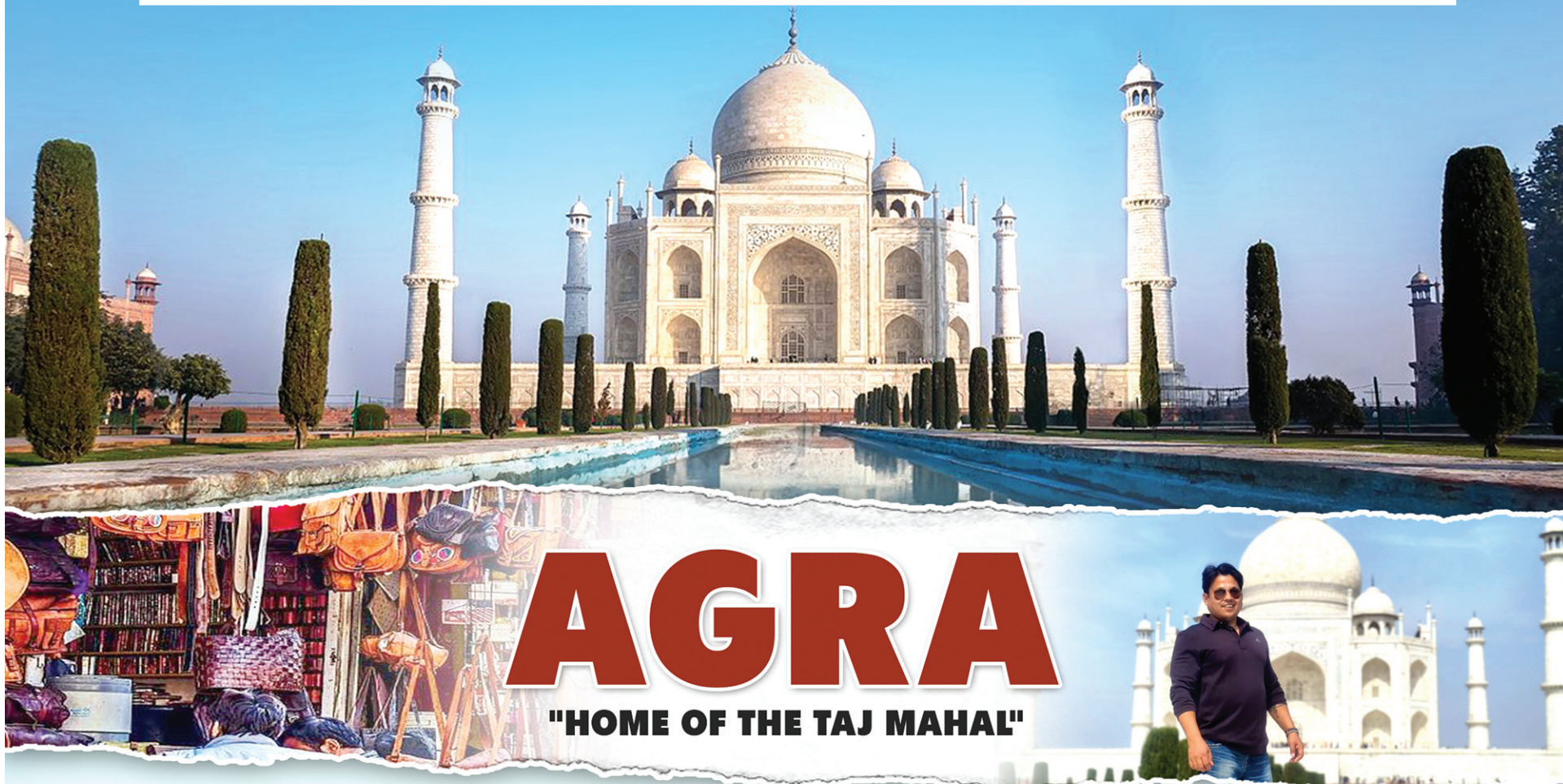
The actor said the film, based on a husband, wife, and girlfriend, depicts conflicts between couples and misunderstandings that arise in personal relationships.

He added that while he appreciates the humor in films, it is important to maintain respect and sensitivity when portraying personal relationships. Urging not to interfere in his personal life, Govinda shared, "...I promise, no misbehave, please. I request. With folded hands. Mazak har jagah par har tarah se acha nahi lagta hai..."

Govinda also spoke about backing his son Yashvardhan Ahuja's career in films, expressing confidence in his acting abilities and highlighting his strong technical understanding of the craft.

Expressing his belief in his son's potential, he shared, "Yash mujhse behtar actor banega. Wo technically mujhse zyada strong hai..he is huge" (Yash will become a better actor than me. He is technically stronger than me). *ANI*





Located on the banks of River Yamuna in Uttar Pradesh, Agra is a popular tourist destination as it is home to one of the 7 wonders of the world, the Taj Mahal. It is a sneak peek into the architectural history and legacy of the Mughal empire with two other UNESCO World Heritage Sites Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri. History, architecture, romance all together create the magic of Agra, and hence, makes for a must-visit for anyone living in or visiting India.

Agra is one of the most populous cities in Uttar Pradesh and 24th most populous city in India. With its long and rich history, it is no wonder that Agra forms part of the popular Golden Triangle Circuit for tourists along with Delhi and Jaipur. It is also a part of the Uttar Pradesh Heritage Arc including Varanasi and Lucknow. History fanatics and architecture buffs are sure to have a ball here with the sheer expanse of the Mughal art and culture on display.

In addition to its historical treasures, Agra offers a vibrant market scene where visi-

tors can indulge in shopping for marble handicrafts, leather goods, and local sweets like petha. Agra is also well known for its marble artifacts, which are best bought in the Sadar Bazaar or Kinaari Bazaar area. The bustling bazaars around the Taj Ganj area provide a glimpse into traditional Indian markets, offering a unique cultural experience.

Agra's cuisine, known for its Mughlai influences, is a treat for food enthusiasts, featuring iconic dishes like Mughlai chicken, kebabs, and biryanis that reflect the city's royal culinary heritage. It is as famous for its Petha (a sweet made from pumpkin and flavored with rose water and saffron) as it is for the Taj Mahal.

Agra is mostly visited on a one-day trip from New Delhi or other nearby cities in Uttar Pradesh but is totally worth it. Be prepared to be astounded, amazed, inspired and thrilled. However, be a little cautious about conmen in the guise of unofficial tour guides and fake handicrafts.

PLACES TO VISIT IN AGRA

Taj Mahal: One of the Seven Won-

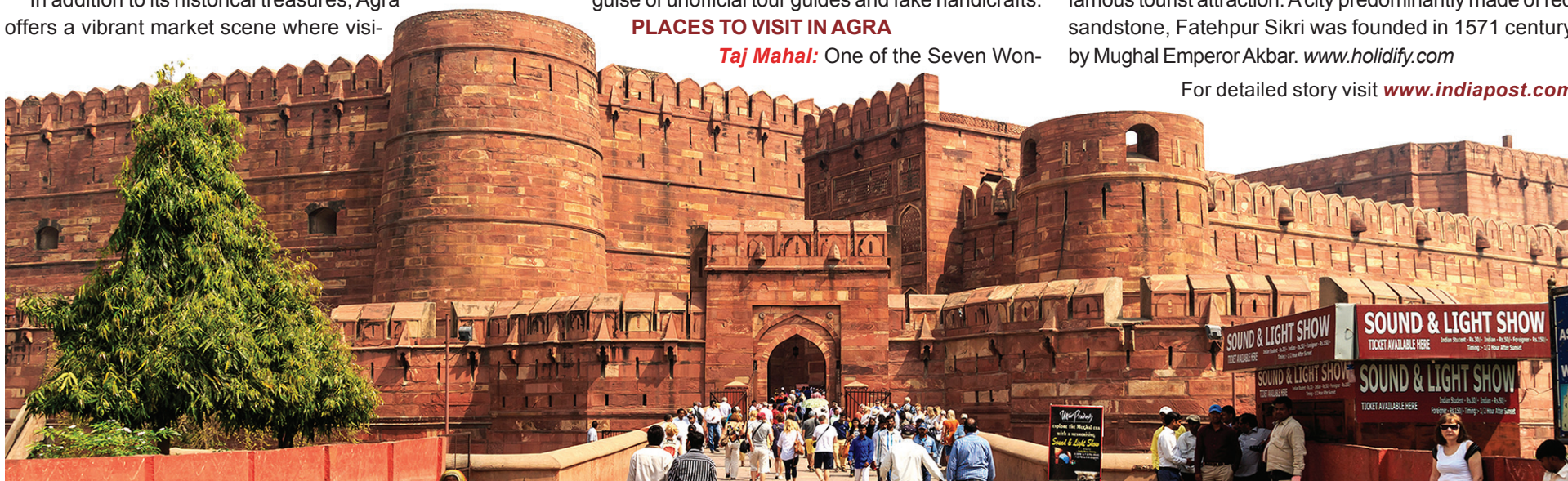
ders of the World, Taj Mahal is located on the banks of River Yamuna in Agra. It was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a memorial for his third wife, Mumtaz Mahal. It also houses the tomb of Shah Jahan himself. Constructed entirely out of white marble in the 17th century, Taj Mahal is one of the most beautiful monuments in the world.

Agra Fort: An architectural masterpiece, The Red Fort of Agra or Agra Fort was built by Emperor Akbar in 1573. It is located on the right bank of the River Yamuna and is made entirely of red sandstone.

Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah: Often referred to as the "Baby Taj Mahal", the tomb of Itimad-ud-daulah is a Mughal mausoleum and often regarded as a copy of the Taj Mahal. This is the first tomb in India made entirely of marble.

Fatehpur Sikri: Located at a distance of 40km from Agra, Fatehpur Sikri is a town in the Agra district and a famous tourist attraction. A city predominantly made of red sandstone, Fatehpur Sikri was founded in 1571 century by Mughal Emperor Akbar. www.holidify.com

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com





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