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PM Modi gifts wooden swing to President Nahyan

► Details on page 11

US bill targets citizenship revocation

► Details on page 18

MOTHER OF ALL DEALS

"Mother of all deals": EU Commission President says they stand on "cusp of historic trade deal with India"

DAVOS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has stated the European Union is close to finalizing a Free Trade Agreement with India and noted that some describe it "the mother of all deals".

Addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos, she stressed Europe's intent to expand trade and international cooperation.

She also referred to the scale of the proposed trade deal with India.

"There is still work to do. But we are on the cusp of a

historic trade agreement. Some call it the mother of all deals. One that would create a market of 2 billion people, accounting for almost a quarter of global GDP," von der Leyen said.

The President of the European Commission said she will travel to India next weekend. She said the visit is aimed at taking forward work on the proposed trade agreement and added that there is important work to be done to strengthen economic relations and deepen cooperation between Europe and India.

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Rakhi Israni running for Congress from CA

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Honoring India's Republic Day in Cerritos

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This week's question

Can EU defend Greenland against US take over?

Last week's result

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Daredevils women's team arrive on their bikes for the rehearsals of the upcoming Republic Day parade, in New Delhi. (ANI Photo)



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HIGHLIGHTS

Bollywood:

Akshay Kumar's escort car crashes



As per Mumbai Police, the incident took place at around 9:00 am no one from Akshay Kumar or his family was present in the car

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AI for Fashion Retail



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WHY INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE NOT ON YOUR SIDE IN CALIFORNIA (EVEN WHEN THEY SOUND NICE)

After an accident in California, most people assume the insurance company will do what it advertises: help, be fair, and make things right.

The adjuster sounds friendly. They ask how you're feeling. They say things like, "We just want to take care of this quickly" or "Let's get this resolved so you can move on." In a state where everything already feels expensive and time-consuming, that sounds reassuring.

Here's the reality Californians need to understand early: insurance companies are not on your side.

That doesn't mean they're villains. It means they are businesses operating in one of the most expensive and heavily litigated states in the country-and their job is to limit payouts whenever possible.

CALIFORNIA IS NOT A "FRIENDLY" STATE FOR INSURERS-SO THEY PLAY DEFENSE

California injury claims tend to involve:

- Higher medical costs
- Dense traffic and complex accident scenarios
- Juries that can be unpredictable

Because of that, insurance companies approach California claims cautiously and strategically. From the very first phone call, the claim is being evaluated not for fairness-but for risk exposure.

That friendly conversation? It's part of the process.

RECORDED STATEMENTS ARE ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS HERE

In California, adjusters often ask for recorded statements early, sometimes within days of a crash. They'll say it's routine. It's not harmless.

Statements are used to:

- Lock you into early descriptions of pain and injury
- Identify inconsistencies later
- Minimize claims for delayed symptoms

California law allows insurers to scrutinize credibility aggressively. A casual comment like "I'm okay" or "I didn't feel much pain at first" can follow you for months.

"QUICK MONEY" RARELY COVERS CALIFORNIA REALITY

California medical care is expensive-ER visits, imaging, physical therapy, specialists. Injuries like whiplash, disc issues, and soft-tissue trauma often don't fully present themselves for days or weeks.

Yet insurers often push early settlements before:

- Treatment is complete
- A diagnosis is clear
- Future care is known

Once you sign a release, that's it. No reopening the claim when physical therapy turns into injections-or surgery.

CALIFORNIA'S TRAFFIC CREATES COMPLICATED LIABILITY

In Los Angeles and other urban areas, accidents aren't always clean-cut. Multi-vehicle collisions, lane

- Timing of treatment

- How well the claim is supported

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NOT EVERY CALIFORNIA ACCIDENT NEEDS A LAWYER-BUT TIMING MATTERS

Here's an honest truth: not every accident requires legal representation.

Minor property-damage claims with no injuries can often be handled directly. The problem is that Californians don't always realize when a case crosses the



changes, rideshare involvement, and delivery drivers complicate fault.

Insurance companies take advantage of this by:

- Shifting partial blame
- Arguing "comparative negligence"
- Downplaying responsibility even in rear-end crashes

In California, being even 1% at fault can reduce your recovery. That's not theory-it's how claims are negotiated every day.

The Myth of "They'll Be Fair"

Many Californians believe insurers will ultimately do the right thing. Sometimes they do. More often, they do what they can justify on paper.

Claims are decided based on:

- Medical documentation
- Consistency of statements

line into something more serious-until the insurance company has already framed the narrative.

Once injuries escalate, liability is disputed, or pressure tactics appear, the power imbalance becomes obvious.

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR CALIFORNIANS

Insurance companies operating in California are sophisticated, well-funded, and highly experienced. They didn't get that way by overpaying claims.

Being informed doesn't mean being confrontational. It means understanding that a polite adjuster is still protecting the company's bottom line-not your future medical care or financial well-being.

If there's one thing to remember, it's this:

Kindness on the phone does not equal protection of your interests.

In California injury claims, preparation matters. Timing matters. And understanding how the system actually works-rather than how it's advertised-can make all the difference. If you've been injured as a result of the negligence of others, call an expert!

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MOTHER OF ALL DEALS

"Mother of all deals": EU Commission President says they stand on "cusp of historic trade deal with India"

DAVOS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has stated the European Union is close to finalizing a Free Trade Agreement with India and noted that some describe it "the mother of all deals". Addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos, she

stressed Europe's intent to expand trade and international cooperation. She also referred to the scale of the proposed trade deal with India. "There is still work to do. But we are on the cusp of a

historic trade agreement. Some call it the mother of all deals. One that would create a market of 2 billion people, accounting for almost a quarter of global GDP," von der Leyen said.

The President of the European Commission said she will travel to India next weekend. She said the visit is aimed at taking forward work on the proposed trade agreement and added that there is important work to be done to strengthen economic relations and deepen cooperation between Europe and India.

Placing the proposed India agreement in Europe's larger global trade approach, von der Leyen said Europe remains open to doing business with partners worldwide.

"Europe will always choose the world, and the world is ready to choose Europe," she said.



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

She said Europe's focus is on building a stable, well-regulated environment that encourages investment, boosts trade, and supports sustainable economic growth.

Along with trade and investment, von der Leyen identified energy as a major pillar of Europe's growth agenda, saying Europe intends to build an energy union that can deliver homegrown, reliable and cheaper energy to support economic expansion. She added that Europe needs an "urgency mindset" to address energy challenges and ensure a sustainable future.

Speaking on wider strategic priorities, von der Leyen said Europe has achieved more in defense in the past year than in the decades earlier, with member states increasing investments to record levels. She also noted that three leading European defense technology startups have reached unicorn status, reflecting Europe's growing innovation and strength in the defense sector.

President of the European Council Antonio Luis Santos da Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will be Chief Guests at India's 77th Republic Day celebrations.

The two EU leaders will undertake a three-day State Visit to India from January 25.

During the visit, the leaders will also co-chair the 16th India-EU Summit on January 27. President Costa and President von der Leyen are scheduled to meet President Droupadi Murmu and will hold restricted as well as delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Modi.

An India-EU Business Forum is also expected to be organized on the sidelines of the India-EU Summit.

India and the European Union have been strategic partners since 2004 and the 15th India-EU Summit was held virtually on July 15, 2020. ANI

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India, EU cementing economic ties amid growing global uncertainties

NEW DELHI: The India-EU summit scheduled for January 27 comes as part of the steady strengthening of economic relations between the two sides amid growing uncertainties in global markets triggered by the US tariff turmoil and dramatic geopolitical shifts in the world order.

The summit to be hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and co-chaired by European Council President Antonio Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will witness the adoption of a document by both sides to announce the conclusion of FTA negotiations, after which the agreement will go through the necessary legal procedure and ratification by the European Parliament and Council.

The EU, as a bloc, is India's largest trading partner in goods. For FY 2024-25, India's total trade in goods with the EU was worth about USD 136 billion, with exports around USD 76 billion, and imports at USD 60 billion.

From 2019 to 2024, India-EU bilateral trade in services exhibited steady growth, with Indian exports increasing from EUR 19 billion in 2019 to EUR 37 billion in 2024. Imports from the EU also saw an increase, reaching EUR 29 billion in 2024.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President von der Leyen had already laid the foundation for cementing ties between the two sides

with the establishment of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council in April 2022, during the latter's official visit to India, as a strategic coordination mechanism to tackle challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology, and security.

The is led to an MoU on Semiconductors and an MoU between Bharat 6G Alliance and EU 6G Smart Networks and Service Industry Association were signed in November 2023 and March 2024, respectively.

From 2019 to 2024, India-EU bilateral trade in services exhibited steady growth, with Indian exports increasing from EUR 19 billion in 2019 to EUR 37 billion in 2024.

Imports from the EU also saw an increase, reaching EUR 29 billion in 2024

Other activities include ongoing discussions on Artificial Intelligence, joint research projects in High Performance Computing, and startup collaborations in electric vehicle batteries.

India and the EU also enjoy close ties on energy and climate

The EU has been a partner organization to the International Solar Alliance, spearheaded by India, since 2018. The Phase III of India - EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership (CECP), established

in 2016, was adopted in November 2024.

European Investment Bank supports India's climate and energy transition by financing projects in sustainable transport and urban mobility, such as urban rail and metro in some of the Indian cities.

Other areas of cooperation between India and the EU include offshore wind energy, development of gas infrastructure in India, the reduction of methane emissions, investments and transfer of technology.

An agreement for R&D cooperation in

peaceful uses of nuclear energy was also signed between India's Department of Atomic Energy and EURATOM in July 2020.

India - EU Connectivity Partnership was launched in 2021 and focuses on transport, digital, energy networks, and flow of people, goods, services, data and capital. In June 2025, both sides agreed on an administrative arrangement for trilateral development cooperation on joint projects in third countries. *IANS*

US Senator Daines presses India on Montana pulse crops

WASHINGTON: US Senator Steve Daines travelled to India this month to push for better market access for Montana's pulse crops and to underscore the strategic partnership between Washington and New Delhi, his office said.

Daines, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was in India from January 17 to 19. He met senior government officials, members of parliament, and business leaders in New Delhi.

The meetings included talks with External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, according to the statement.

"I came to India to reaffirm our two countries' shared values and strategic partnership and to advocate on behalf of Montana's pulse crop farmers," Daines said. "I appreciated Minister Goyal for listening to our farmers' concerns and will



Senator Steve Daines

continue to work with President Trump to press this important priority."

The visit focused on trade, defense cooperation, and supply chain security. Daines discussed growing US-India defense ties and the role of the partnership in maintaining a stable and open Indo-Pacific region, according to a media release.

According to his office, trade was a central issue in the talks. Daines urged Indian officials to support favorable treatment for US pulse crops in any future trade agreement between the two countries.

Montana is the top producer of pulse crops in the United States. India is the world's largest consumer of crops, including lentils, peas, and chickpeas.

Daines also pushed for faster progress in ongoing trade talks between Washington and New Delhi. The statement said he sought movement toward a fair and reciprocal bilateral trade deal.

The senator said he was advancing the interests of both the Trump administration and the people of Montana during the visit. *IANS*

Buddhist community says minorities in Bangladesh facing severe repression, violence

COLOMBO: Highlighting that Buddhist minorities and other religious communities in Bangladesh are facing severe repression and violence, the Sri Lanka-Bangladesh Buddhist Solidarity Front has urged Buddhists across the world to unite for protecting their rights, especially those of indigenous Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a report has stated.

Addressing a media briefing in Kandy recently, the Front's Secretary, Shastrava and Tripitaka scholar, Kavissara Thero of Nuwara Eliya, said that the future of Buddhist indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts under significant threat, Sri Lankan media outlet Ceylon Wire News reported.

Venerable Kavissara Thero stressed that attacks on Buddhists in Bangladesh is not a recent phenomenon and recalled the 2012 incidents in which extremists de-

stroyed 19 Buddhist temples and around 100 Buddhist homes. He stated that political instability after Awami League government's ouster last year has resulted in increase of violence against the Buddhist community.

Recent reports have revealed that 2,442 incidents of violence against reli-

Recent reports have revealed that 2,442 incidents of violence against religious minorities were recorded in Bangladesh during 2024 and 2025

gious minorities were recorded in Bangladesh during 2024 and 2025. As many as, 25 Buddhist temples were targeted, in the first three months of 2025. Four Buddhist tribal members were killed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts while looting

and arson attacks at homes of Buddhists continue.

Thero said that Hindus and Christians in Bangladesh are also facing similar threats and stressed the need for a united effort to protect the civil and human rights of all religious minorities. The Sri Lanka-Bangladesh Buddhist Solidarity Front

urged Mahanayake Theros of Sri Lanka, the entire Maha Sangha, and Buddhists across the world to make efforts for protecting Bangladesh's Buddhist heritage and the right to life of its Buddhist population, Ceylon Wire News reported. *IANS*

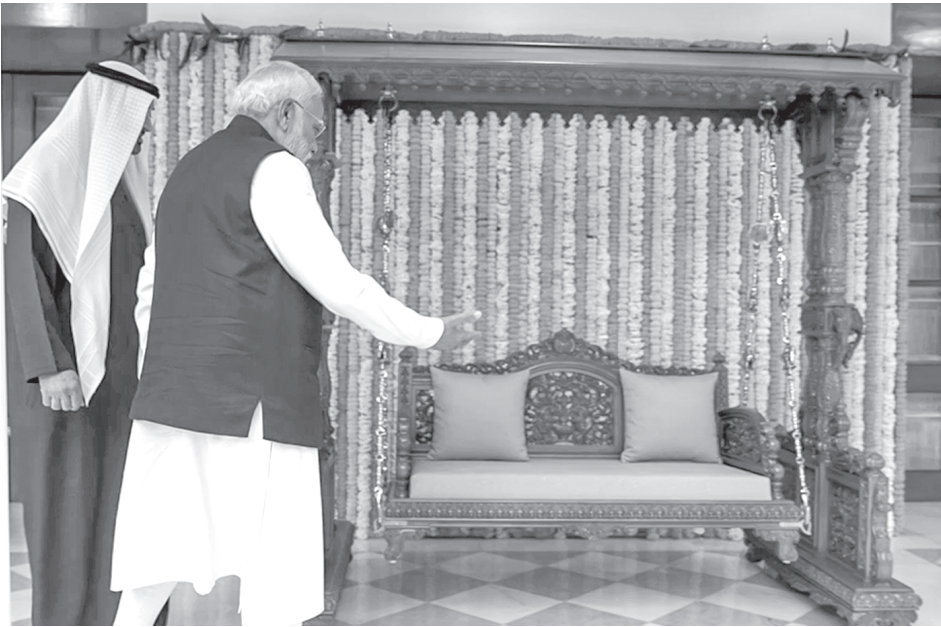
From Gujarati homes to UAE: PM Modi gifts wooden swing to President Nahyan

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted the President of the UAE, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a Royal Carved Wooden Jhula (swing), a beautifully carved wooden swing from Gujarat that sits at the heart of many Gujarat family homes.

It is hand-carved with detailed floral and traditional designs, showing skilled craftsmanship. In Gujarati culture, the jhula symbolizes togetherness, conversation and bonding across generations. The gift also resonates deeply with the UAE's declaration of 2026 as the Year of Family.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, and his family at his residence at Lok Kalyan Marg as the UAE leader continued his official visit to India.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister presented traditional Indian gifts to the visiting dignitaries. PM Modi gifted the UAE President a Royal Carved Wooden Jhula (swing), a beautifully carved wooden swing from Gujarat that sits at the heart of many Gujarati family homes. It is hand-carved



Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifts a Royal Carved Wooden Jhula (swing) to the President of the UAE, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as a welcoming gesture, at his residence at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg in New Delhi. (PMO/ANI Video Grab)

with detailed floral and traditional designs, showcasing skilled craftsmanship.

In Gujarati culture, the jhula symbolizes togetherness, conversation and bonding across generations. The gift also resonates with the UAE's declaration of 2026 as the Year of Family. PM Modi also gifted the UAE President a Pashmina shawl in an ornate silver box. The Pashmina shawl comes from Kashmir and is made by hand from very fine wool, making it soft, light and warm. ANI

Ex-Mozambique education minister Graca Machel gets Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

NEW DELHI: Graca Machel, former Education and Culture Minister of Mozambique and a noted humanitarian has been chosen as the recipient of Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, this year.

The special honor for Graca Machel recognizes her work as a distinguished African stateswoman and humanitarian, while also acknowledging her consistent struggle for the protection of human rights in the Southern African nation.

The International Jury, chaired by Shivshankar Menon, India's former National Security Advisor and former Foreign Secretary, announced her as the recipient of the award, said an official statement from the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.

"The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2025 is awarded to Madam Graca Machel, for her path breaking work in the field of education, health & nutrition, economic empowerment and humanitarian work under difficult circumstances, and for inspiring hope in millions for building a more equitable and just world." IANS

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Babbar Khalsa terrorist was released by Biden Admin, says DHS

WASHINGTON: A suspected Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terrorist from India was released into the interior of the United States under the Biden administration before being arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said.

Harpreet Singh is wanted in India in connection with terrorist activities that included planning more than a dozen grenade attacks on police officials. He is linked to BKI, which has been designated as a foreign terrorist organization.

According to the Department of Homeland Security recent statement, he entered the country illegally in Arizona on January 27, 2022. He was then released into the interior of the country under the Biden administration, the DHS said.

ICE arrested Singh in April 2025, according to the DHS recap of enforcement actions taken under the leadership of President Donald J. Trump and Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem since January 20, 2025.

DHS released the statement highlighting what it described as the "worst of the worst" criminal illegal aliens ICE took enforcement action on during President Trump's first year in office.

"On President Trump's first day in office, he unleashed ICE to target the worst of the worst criminal illegal aliens, including pedophiles, murderers, gang members, terrorists, and rapists," said Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin.

"Today, we thank our law enforcement for a record-breaking first year of achievements, including more than 670,000 removals and two million self-deportations. DHS is committed to continuing to remove dangerous illegal aliens from American

gang leaders, violent offenders and repeat criminal illegal aliens from multiple countries.

DHS cited the case of Khor Bozorov, a criminal illegal alien from Uzbekistan wanted in his origin country for belonging to a terrorist organization. ICE arrested Bozorov in Kansas on November 9 while he was working as a commercial truck driver.

Another case involved Jaan Shah Safi, an Afghan national who entered

CE arrested Singh in April 2025, according to the DHS recap of enforcement actions taken under the leadership of President Donald J. Trump and Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem since January 20, 2025

communities. 70 percent of ICE arrests are of criminal illegal aliens who have been convicted or charged with a crime in the U.S. We will not rest until American communities are free of the scourge of illegal alien crime."

Since January 20, 2025, ICE has taken enforcement action against dangerous criminals, DHS said, detailing dozens of cases involving alleged terrorists,

the United States under 'Operation Allies Welcome.' Safi allegedly provided support to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan (ISIS-K), and his father is a commander of a militia group in Afghanistan, DHS said. ICE arrested Safi in Waynesboro, Virginia in December 2025.

Another MS-13 leader, Rene Escobar-Ochoa from El Salvador, faces an INTERPOL Red Notice for drug trafficking and conspiracy to commit murder and was arrested by ICE in July 2025. IANS

Pakistan using films to advance anti-India narrative, promote Khalistani agenda: Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani cinema is being leveraged to push anti-India narrative and manipulate religious symbols for political objectives, with critics warning that such strategies undermine the sanctity of holy sites, politicize heritage, and turn art and religion into tools of state power, a recent report said.

"It is being observed in Pakistan that cinema is increasingly being used as a tool to intensify anti-India activities, particularly those linked to Khalistan. Those individuals who face difficulties in producing films or songs promoting Khalistan due to restrictions in India appear to be taking full advantage of this situation. They go to Pakistan, carry out their activities without any restrictions, and then make the content go viral on social media," a report in 'Khalsa Vox' detailed.

"Because of this regressive mindset among Pakistanis, a situation has emerged where, on one hand, the whole of India and Indian Punjab are attracting global attention due to rapid economic growth, institutional reforms, and social progress, while on the other hand, Paki-

stani Punjab remains trapped in corruption, scams, and long-standing misgovernance," it added.

According to the report, rather than confronting its domestic failures, Pakistan is increasingly relying on an anti-India narrative with state-supported media houses, social media influencers, YouTubers, and filmmakers being mobilized to divert attention and shape public opinion through cultural production.

"In any case, the weaponisation of cinema is not a new phenomenon. For decades, Pakistani films and television serials have portrayed Sikh characters-especially Sikh women-from an extremely narrow and deeply controversial perspective. Many productions use tropes such as Islamization or 'conversion romance,' which numerous Sikh commentators consider insulting and ideologically biased," it noted.

The report highlighted that the decision to film at sacred Sikh sites - especially Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev Ji - has drawn widespread criticism. IANS

Sindhi leader claims Pakistani army, ISI behind terror attack on Chinese restaurant in Afghanistan

BERLIN: Shafi Burfat, Chairman of the Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM), accused the Pakistani army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of being directly or indirectly involved in orchestrating the terrorist attack on a Chinese restaurant in Afghanistan.

The remarks came after an explosion outside a Chinese restaurant in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, on January 19 caused multiple casualties, including the death of one Chinese citizen.

Condemning the attack, Burfat asserted that such acts of terrorism are not isolated incidents but are carried out by extremist and terrorist groups nurtured, protected, and strategically deployed by Pakistan's military establishment, particularly under the direction of the ISI. IANS

"Greenland is not a natural part of Denmark, is it?" Russia says

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said that Greenland was not a "natural part of Denmark."

Addressing a news conference recently, Lavrov said several countries own parts of colonies, which is a flagrant violation of the UNSC Charter.

"If we talk about Greenland, well, that's part of the issue that has to do with the consequences of the colonial era, starting with the 13th century. Greenland essentially, was a Norwegian colony, starting with the 18th, till the very beginning of the 20th century was the Denmark's colony. And by the mid-20th century, an agreement was signed, according to which it is part of Denmark, not as a colony but as an associated territory. It was associated with the European Union. But in principle, Greenland is not a natural part of Denmark, is it?" he said.

Lavrov said that the problem of former colonial powers holding on to colonies is a problem which is becoming more urgent.

"It was not a natural part of Norway or Denmark. It was the colonial acquired state. Well, people got used to that. That's the other matter. But the problem of former colonial powers, well, it is something that is becoming more urgent," he said.

Lavrov further said that there are 17 territories, which are still dependent on ruling powers, listing out the regions, and said that these issues will be raised even in the future.

"According to the UN, there are 17 territories that either do not have sovereignty or are directly dependent on their ruling powers. Unlike and at odds with the UNSC resolution, France keeps the island of Mayotte. Judging by all of the decisions of the United Nations. It keeps part of the Comoros. The UK keeps the Malvinas. In violation of multiple resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. Britain also keeps the Mauritius island of Tagus, archipelago. There are multiple examples, French Polynesia, Epirus islands that are still kept by the French Republic. Therefore, these issues will be raised in the future as well," he said. ANI

Scientists find hidden synapse hotspots in the teen brain: Study

WASHINGTON DC: The scientists have discovered that the adolescent brain does more than prune old connections. During the teen years, it actively builds dense new clusters of synapses in specific parts of neurons.

These clusters emerge only in adolescence and may help shape higher-level thinking. When the process is disrupted, it could play a role in conditions like schizophrenia.

Adolescence is a defining stage not only for social and physical growth, but also for how the brain develops. During this time, advanced mental abilities such as planning, reasoning, and decision-making continue to mature.

Even so, scientists still lack a complete understanding of how the brain's complex networks are shaped during this critical period.

At the heart of brain development are synapses, the functional connections between neurons that allow information to flow through the brain. For decades, researchers believed that synapse numbers steadily rise during childhood and then decline during adolescence. ANI

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

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India making best investments with Ayushman Bharat, Future Health Districts programs: Report

DAVOS: India is making best investments in the health sector by strengthening Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and initiating the Future Health Districts programs, according to experts during the World Economic Forum 2026 (WEF) Annual Meeting.

While the ABDM, launched in September 2021, is the

Under the ABDM program, more than 850 million citizens in India hold ABHA digital IDs, with approximately 454,000 health facilities and 767,000 professionals registered to date. More than 842 million digital records in the country have also been linked.

"ABDM's sandbox model enables any health facility, insurer, laboratory, or digital provider to

mittee, WEF.

The experts noted that custom API integrations, including vendor fees, manpower time, testing effort, and leadership oversight, can typically cost at least \$2,500 each.

But, with ABDM, "one certified integration replaces multiple bespoke interfaces, and the system-wide savings can instead strengthen clinical care, cybersecurity, and citizen engagement".

The same approach used in large public or private hospital networks, diagnostic chains, and integrated care systems has significantly helped "reduce IT duplication and long-term maintenance costs".

The experts noted that "investing in interoperable systems, preventive care, and digital capacity" can yield real and rising returns.

They argued that the upcoming

ing Future Health Districts project under the India Pathfinder initiative is another best investment that India is making.

The project "aims to test ABDM-aligned, outcome-linked models in collaboration with state governments and partners," the report said.

"Over three to five years, it will

Under the ABDM program, more than 850 million citizens in India hold ABHA digital IDs, with approximately 454,000 health facilities and 767,000 professionals registered to date

government's flagship initiative to create a unified, national digital health ecosystem, the Future Health Districts project has been launched as collaboration between the WEF and India. It serves as a testing ground for the ABDM.

integrate once and seamlessly connect with every other ABDM-enabled entity," said experts Suneeta Reddy, Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise, and Shyam Bishen, Head, Centre for Health and Healthcare and Member of the Executive Com-



work to improve indicators such as screening rates, maternal health follow-ups, and claims-processing times. Each district that succeeds becomes proof of what investable digital health can deliver," it added.

The report also flagged major disparities such as gaps in health coverage, financing pressures, and system inefficiencies in the country.

"These highlight the need to redirect resources toward high-return investments -- particularly digital infrastructure, prevention, and interoperable systems," stated the experts.

They recommended reframing health as a crucial driver of economic prosperity and national stability; strengthening interoperable digital systems; and channeling philanthropic health funding toward measurable outcomes.

"The lessons emerging from ABDM, Future Health Districts experiments can guide low and middle-income countries seeking scalable, interoperable and affordable solutions," the report said. IANS

Local leadership key to improving infant, maternal health: IIM Lucknow study

NEW DELHI: Affirmative action in local government leadership can significantly help improve health outcomes, particularly infant survival and maternal prenatal care, in India, according to a study, led by researchers at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Lucknow.

The study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) journal, offers important insights into how structural interventions can address long-established social and health inequities.

The findings showed that vil-

lage clusters with affirmative action in local leadership recorded significantly better health outcomes.



Infant mortality rates were significantly lower in villages led by local representatives.

Maternal health indicators also improved, including higher odds of receiving at least two prenatal visits, tetanus vaccinations, and

prenatal supplements by the second trimester.

"Our study found that local

leaders from historically disadvantaged groups made decisions on health and education spending that appear to address some structural inequalities in local communities," said Prof. K. G. Sahadevan from the varsity.

By using a quasi-experimental design, the research team focused on the impact of leadership reservation for Scheduled Castes (SC) in India's local governments, the smallest units of governance responsible for delivering essential public services such as health and education. IANS

Swedish study reveals when fitness and strength begin to fade

STOCKHOLM: A long-running Swedish study has followed adults for nearly five decades, uncovering when physical decline truly begins. Fitness and strength start slipping around age 35, then worsen gradually with age.

The encouraging twist: adults who began exercising later still improved their physical capacity by up to 10 percent. It's a powerful reminder that staying active matters, even if you start late.

A long-running Swedish study conducted at Karolinska Institutet has followed people for 47 years to examine how fitness, strength, and muscle endurance evolve during adulthood. The findings show that physical performance begins to decline around age 35.

The research is part of the Swedish Physical Activity and Fitness study (SPAF), which tracked several hundred randomly selected men and women between the ages of 16 and 63.

Published in the *Journal of Cachexia, Sarcopenia and Muscle*, the study offers rare long-term insight into how physical

capacity changes over decades rather than snapshots at a single point in time.

Earlier research in this area relied on cross-sectional data, comparing different age groups rather than following the same individuals.



In contrast, the SPAF study repeatedly measured fitness and strength in the same participants across Sweden for

nearly half a century, making it one of the most comprehensive efforts of its kind.

Fitness Declines After 35, but Activity Still Helps:

The results show that both fitness and

physical decline continues gradually and tends to speed up with advancing age.

Despite this pattern, the researchers found encouraging evidence that exercise remains valuable at any stage. Participants who became physically active during adulthood increased their physical capacity by 5-10 percent.

"It is never too late to start moving. Our study shows that physical activity can slow the decline in performance, even if it cannot completely stop it. Now we will look for the mechanisms behind why everyone reaches their peak performance at age 35 and why physical activity can slow performance loss but not completely halt it," says Maria Westerstaahl, lecturer at the Department of Laboratory Medicine and lead author of the study.

The research is ongoing. Next year, the participants will be examined again when they reach age 68. The team hopes to better understand how changes in physical performance are connected to lifestyle choices, overall health, and underlying biological processes. *ANI*

Physical activity in adolescence may ward off breast cancer risk later: Study

NEW DELHI: Adolescent girls who actively partake in recreational physical activity can have significant protection against risks of breast cancer, according to a study.

Researchers from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health in the US showed that recreational physical activity may be associated with breast tissue composition and biomarkers of stress in adolescent girls.

In the study, girls who reported engaging in at least two hours of recreational physical activity in the prior week, compared with none, had lower percent water content in breast tissue -- an indicator of lower breast density and lower concentrations of urinary biomarkers linked to stress.

The findings, published in the journal *Breast Cancer Research*, shed new light on how physical activity during adolescence -- a critical period of breast development -- may influence biological pathways related to future breast cancer risk.

"The importance and urgency of this

research are underscored by the rising incidence of breast cancer in young women and the alarmingly low levels of recreational physical activity observed both in this study and among adolescents globally," said Rebecca Kehm, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at Columbia Mailman School of Public Health.



"Our findings suggest that recreational physical activity is associated with breast tissue composition and stress biomarker changes in adolescent girls, independent of body fat, which could have important

implications for breast cancer risk," Kehm added.

The study aligns with previous research in adult women showing that higher levels of physical activity are associated with lower mammographic breast density, a key predictor of breast cancer risk.

During adolescence, participants self-reported past-week engagement in recreational physical activity, including both organized and unorganized activities, and completed clinic visits that included blood and urine collection as well as breast tissue assessments.

The average age of girls in the study was 16 years. More than half (51 percent) reported no recreational physical activity in the past week. Seventy-three percent reported no participation in organized activities, and 66 percent reported no participation in unorganized activities.

The team noted that additional longitudinal studies are needed to determine how these adolescent biomarkers may translate into breast cancer risk later in life. *IANIS*

Hyaluronic acid may help improve gynecological cancer treatment: Study

NEW DELHI: In the first-ever study, Australian researchers have demonstrated the feasibility and safety of using stabilized hyaluronic acid (SHA) gel during radiation treatment for gynecological cancers.

The gel is already approved by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in prostate cancer radiation treatment.

The team led by experts from Monash University investigated hyaluronic acid gel for the first time in women as a means to gently create more space between the tumor and the rectum during MRI-guided brachytherapy -- a type of internal radiation treatment.

By creating this space, clinicians aimed to reduce radiation exposure to the rectum, allowing a higher dose of radiation to reach the tumor with more effective targeting, reducing damage to healthy tissue, and potentially improving treatment results. *IANIS*

AI must be multilingual, voice-enabled to ensure better healthcare services: Officials

NEW DELHI: For artificial intelligence (AI) to deliver meaningful public value in a linguistically diverse country like India, it must be multilingual and voice-enabled, ensuring that language does not become a barrier to accessing healthcare services, according to Amitabh Nag, CEO, Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD).

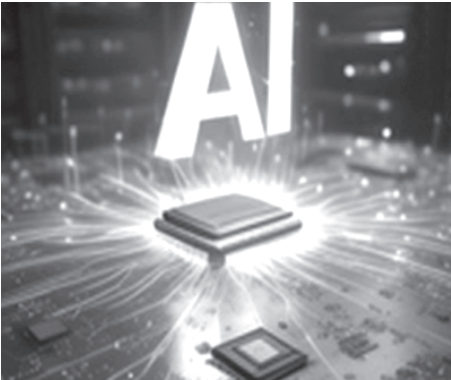
Nag said that language AI can significantly enhance citizen engagement, griev-

digital health initiatives across the country. Nag highlighted that as digital health systems scale across the country, the adoption of artificial intelligence becomes a natural progression.

A key highlight was the signing of an MoU between the National Health Authority and the Digital India BHASHINI Division to enable multilingual translation services and AI-powered language support across

straints faced by doctors by enabling seamless patient-doctor interactions, while allowing electronic health records to be created automatically, thereby improving efficiency and strengthening digital health systems.

The Digital India BHASHINI Division will support the National Health Authority in



deploying multilingual and voice-enabled solutions across beneficiary-facing and administrative platforms, with provisions for responsible data governance, secure system integration, and continuous improvement of language models through real-world usage and feedback. IANS

Language AI can significantly enhance citizen engagement, grievance redressal mechanisms, clinical documentation, and the overall accessibility of digital public health platforms

ance redressal mechanisms, clinical documentation, and the overall accessibility of digital public health platforms. He participated at an event by DIBD in Bhubaneswar which brought together senior officials from the Union and state governments, technical institutions, and implementing agencies to review progress and accelerate the adoption of

NHA's digital health platforms, including AB PM-JAY and ABDM. Kiran Gopal Vaska, Joint Secretary, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), highlighted the practical benefits of language AI in healthcare delivery. He noted that AI-enabled tools such as voice-to-text and natural language processing can help address the time con-

Human heart regrows muscle cells after heart attack: Study

NEW DELHI: In a world-first discovery, scientists in Australia have found that the human heart can regrow muscle cells after a heart attack, raising hopes for future regenerative treatments for heart failure. The study, published in Circulation Research, revealed that while parts of the heart remain scarred after a heart attack, new muscle cells are also produced, a phenomenon previously seen only in mice and now demonstrated in humans for the first time, Xinhua news agency reported. "Until now we've thought that, because heart cells die after a heart attack, those areas of the heart were irreparably damaged, leaving the heart less able to pump blood to the body's organs," said Robert Hume, research fellow at the University of Sydney and first author of the study. "In time, we hope to develop therapies that can amplify the heart's natural ability to produce new cells and regenerate the heart after an attack," said Hume. IANS



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Gold prices jump over 4 pc to hit record high

NEW DELHI: Gold futures on the MCX surged over Rs 4,100 or, 4 percent on 21 January, to a fresh record high, as investors jumped to buy safe haven assets amid fears of a widening US-EU trade conflict and a softer dollar.

MCX gold February futures, rose 4.25 percent to Rs 1,56,970 per 10 grams. Meanwhile, MCX silver March futures rose 2.71 percent to Rs 3,32,451 per kg.

International markets also saw new peaks as US gold futures jumped to \$4,849 per troy ounce on COMEX. COMEX silver consolidated in the \$92.5-\$95.7 range.

The rally followed reports that the United States plans tariffs on eight European countries from February 1 and could raise duties to 25 percent in June. European countries are reportedly considering anti-coercive measures, using trade defense mechanisms designed to counter economic pressure from foreign governments.

The medium-to-long-term outlook of silver remains exceptionally bullish, with scope toward \$110-\$120 in 2026 under sustained supply constraints and industrial demand, according to analysts.

In MCX silver futures, immediate upside targets are placed at Rs 3,30,000-Rs 3,32,000, with scope to extend toward Rs 3,35,000-Rs 3,50,000 over the coming months, they said. *IANS*

India to grow 6 to 8% in real terms, 10 to 13% nominal in next 5 years: Ashwini Vaishnaw

DAVOS: Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, has said, India will continue to grow 6 to 8% in real terms and 10 to 13% in nominal terms in the next five years.

Speaking at the session on 'Bet on India - Bank on the Future' organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in association with EY coinciding with the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2026 at Davos, Vaishnaw spoke of the government's efforts towards ease of doing business. *ANI*



Security risk, political uncertainty in Pakistan pose hurdles for investors

NEW DELHI: Pakistan is unable to attract sufficient domestic or foreign investment because of poor governance, bad law and order situation, weak judicial system, bureaucratic hurdles and political uncertainty, according to an article in the Karachi-based Business Recorder.

The article lists the security situation as a major problem which has not improved for decades. "The country is ranked second on the Global Terrorism Index and the attacks are not receding. How is one supposed to invest in such a situation? Even domestic investors have shifted their capital to safe havens. Similarly, the law and order situation in the country is also forcing investors to move to safer avenues," the article points out.

For many domestic investors, the fear of political victimization, combined with the lack of judicial protection, discourages them to invest. Political instability is a major hurdle. Political parties are after one another driven by vendetta and not by national interest.



Back in 1975, the investment to GDP ratio of Pakistan was approximately 17 percent. After 50 years, it has decreased to 13.1 percent, which is a serious concern that needs to be taken up by policy makers

There is no long-term political vision for the betterment of the country.

Back in 1975, the investment to GDP ratio of Pakistan was approximately 17 percent. After 50 years, it has decreased to 13.1 percent, which is a serious concern that needs to be taken up by policy makers.

In the 1990s, Pakistan used to

attract more FDIs than India, but the equation has flipped completely. For example, in 1992, Pakistan attracted \$336.5 million in FDI, while India attracted only \$276.5 million. Now the trajectory has completely changed; in 2024, Pakistan only managed \$2.7 billion, while India attracted \$27.1 billion, which is almost 13 times higher, the article points out.

Citizens witness strikes, lockdowns and closure of main roads for weeks, affecting businesses adversely. In developed democracies, there are consistencies of policy regardless whichever party is in the government. Regrettably, the case is different in Pakistan.

Likewise, regulatory burdens and red tape are another nightmare. Instead of facilitation, regulations are often used as a tool of control. Compliance is very time consuming. If someone wants to install an electricity or gas connection, he has to wait for months. If one wants faster service, then one has to grease the palm of the authorities.

Similarly, opening a bank account is a herculean task, providing endless documents like utility bills, proof of income and so on. Company registration takes even more long and hectic documentation. Why would someone put his hard earned money in a process full of hurdles? On top of that, repatriating money or profit is also a struggle. *IANS*

Easing defense FDI norms could be a game-changer for India: Report

NEW DELHI: India is considering a significant relaxation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules in the defense sector, raising the automatic route ownership cap from 49 to 74 percent for existing licensed defense firms and removing vague conditions that would reshape its defense landscape, a recent report has highlighted.

"This policy shift aims to lure global manufacturers, fostering joint ventures and technology transfers to bolster domestic production," observed an article

in the India Narrative.

"Amid rising geopolitical tensions and a push for self-reliance under the 'Make in India' initiative, these changes could prove transformative, enhancing economic growth, technological advancement, and national security," it added.

Exploring why this could be a pivotal game-changer for India, the article pointed out that India's defense sector has historically been cautious about foreign involvement due to security concerns.

It was in 2016 that FDI up to 49 percent was allowed under the automatic route, with higher stakes requiring approval. By 2020, the cap rose to 74 percent automatic for new licenses, and

100 percent with government nod in cases involving advanced tech, it reminded.

Despite these steps, existing licensed firms remained capped at 49 percent, which the new

proposal seeks to change, it said.

The central economic argument is that raising the automatic route cap to 74 percent will make India a more attractive destination for large defense firms by offering greater operational control, stronger intellectual property protection, and clearer ownership rights.

These factors, it opined, multinational defense companies often require before committing large capital and technology transfers. *IANS*



IBM CEO calls for AI sovereignty in India with focus on real-world applications at Davos

DAVOS: IBM Chairman and CEO Arvind Krishna has urged Indian entrepreneurs to build local capabilities across semiconductors, model development and real-world applications to build stronger "AI sovereignty" in India.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos, Krishna said smaller, specialized AI models are rapidly closing the gap with large foundational models and now account for nearly 95 percent of consumption.

"The underlying ecosystem whether it's semiconductors, model building, or usage applications is where the big breakthroughs will come for India," he told NDTV Profit.

IBM Chairman mentioned China's DeepSeek as an example of how success in the AI sector follows multiple failed attempts. He argued that specialized AI systems trained on local datasets from Indian healthcare, defense and legal domains are necessary for building effective domestic applications, also urging a culture of ex-



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw meets CEO of IBM Arvind Krishna on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, in Davos. (@AshwiniVaishnaw/ANI Photo)

perimentation and tolerance for failure.

Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, speaking at the same event, said that Indian IT companies have already pivoted toward AI boosting the hiring in the sector. India is currently developing 12 AI models, and at least four of them will be launched

soon, Vaishnaw said.

India focuses on a suite of focused, sector-specific small models that can deliver productivity gains across industries, the minister said, adding that the country attracted \$70-billion investment into AI-enabling infrastructure, including data

centers from prominent companies such as Google and Amazon.

The minister further highlighted the progress in India's semiconductor program. The country has 10 fabrication plants under construction, three pilot projects underway, and four units expected to begin commercial operations in 2026.

The government's recent move to allow private sector participation in nuclear power generation can provide the scale of energy required for large-scale AI computing, he added.

A recent report highlighted rapid expansion in electronics and semiconductors, with India's semiconductor demand projected to grow from \$33 billion in 2022 to \$117 billion by 2030.

The government's Rs 7,280 crore scheme for Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPM) is expected to act as a force multiplier for India's broader semiconductor manufacturing ambitions by ensuring secure access to strategic materials. IANS

India belongs to 1st group of AI nations, remains biggest supplier of services: Ashwini Vaishnaw

DAVOS: India clearly belongs to the first group of AI nations as AI architecture comprises five layers - application, model, chip, infrastructure, and energy -- and we are actively working across all five, Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, has said.

Outlining India's approach to Artificial Intelligence (AI) the minister emphasized large-scale AI diffusion, economic viability, and techno-legal governance, during a panel discussion at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos.

The discussion was moderated by Ian Bremmer, (President and Founder, Eurasia Group), and other panelists included Brad Smith (Vice-Chair and President, Microsoft); Kristalina Georgieva (Managing Director, IMF); and Khalid Al-Falih (Minister of Investment, Saudi Arabia).

"At the application layer, India will probably be the biggest supplier of services to the world," he said, adding that return on investment (ROI) in AI comes from enterprise-level deployment and productivity gains, not from creating very large models alone.

Vaishnaw observed that nearly 95 percent of AI use cases can be addressed

with models in the 20-50 billion parameter range, many of which India already has and is deploying across sectors.

Vaishnaw, however, cautioned against equating geopolitical power with ownership of very large AI models.

He noted that such models can be switched off and may even create economic stress for their developers.

deployment increasingly relies on CPUs, smaller models and emerging custom silicon, reducing dependency on any single country and challenging the notion of AI dominance through scale alone.

Identifying availability of GPUs as a major constraint, he said India has adopted a public-private partnership model, empanelling around 38,000 GPUs as a common national



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw during discussions with leaders in the fields of AI, robotics, and cyber security, at World Economic Forum, in Davos. (@AshwiniVaishnaw/ANI Photo)

"The economics of what I call the fifth industrial revolution will come from ROI - deploying the lowest cost solution to get the highest possible return," he said.

The minister highlighted that effective AI

compute facility. This facility is government-enabled and subsidized, providing affordable access to students, researchers, startups and innovators at nearly one-third the global cost. IANS

India likely to join US-led Pax Silica maintaining strategic autonomy

NEW DELHI: In the war between China and the West to secure critical mineral supply chains needed for advancing AI initiatives, New Delhi may lean towards Pax Silica, a US-led initiative but without sacrificing strategic autonomy, according to reports.

India's participation in Pax Silica would help India scale collaborations with advanced economies, attract investment and deepen supply chain resilience, the report noted. However, India will be keen to ensure that its strategic autonomy is not diluted through its participation in the Pax Silica.

Pax Silica initiative brings together an initial group of countries closely tied to semiconductor manufacturing and advanced technology supply chains, including Singapore, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Australia and the United Kingdom. It is designed to address vulnerabilities exposed by over-concentrated supply chains that underpin everything from consumer electronics and automobiles to cutting-edge AI systems. IANS

T20 World Cup: Rehan Ahmed and Adil Rashid issued visas to travel to India

NEW DELHI: England cricketers Rehan Ahmed and Adil Rashid have received their visas to travel to India for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, starting next month, according to ESPNcricinfo.

According to ESPNcricinfo, the ICC is also confident that visas for all players, support staff, and officials of Pakistani origin or nationality attending the event will be arranged in time.

It was reported earlier that England players Rehan and Rashid had been waiting for their visa clearances even after the rest of their World Cup-bound team-mates had received theirs.

Previously, many Pakistani-origin cricketers from England and Australia had faced visa delays when travelling to India.

According to ESPNcricinfo, the United States' Ali Khan shared an Instagram post, claiming he had been denied an Indian visa. During the 2023 Men's ODI World Cup, Pakistan faced a brief delay in obtaining its visas before travelling to India.

The Three Lions have announced their provisional 15-member squad for the upcoming T20I World Cup 2026. Surprisingly, England have included pacer Josh Tongue, who is yet to play a limited-overs match for England, in their T20 WC squad.

Harry Brook has been named the captain for the T20 World Cup. The squad will also include veteran players such as Jos Buttler, Adil Rashid, and Jofra Archer. *ANI*

US bill targets citizenship revocation

WASHINGTON: A US senator has introduced a bill that would make it easier for the administration to revoke the citizenship of naturalized Americans who commit serious crimes, large-scale fraud, or have links to terrorist organizations.

Republican Senator Eric Schmitt of Missouri said the legislation is needed to protect the integrity of American citizenship. The bill is called the Stop Citizenship Abuse and Misrepresentation, or SCAM, Act.

Schmitt said recent fraud cases show that the current system is too weak. He pointed to a major welfare fraud scandal in Minnesota that involved naturalized citizens. He said people who commit serious crimes after taking the oath of citizenship show they never deserved it.

"American citizenship is a privilege," Schmitt said in a statement. He said those who commit felony fraud, serious crimes, or join terrorist groups fail to meet the basic standards of citizenship. He said they should be denaturalized because they never met the legal requirements in the first place.

The SCAM Act would expand the grounds for starting civil denaturalization cases. These would include committing major fraud against federal, state, or local welfare programs, affiliating with a designated foreign terror-

ist organization, or committing aggravated felonies or espionage.

The bill has the White House's backing. Stephen Miller, the White House deputy chief of staff



for policy and homeland security adviser, called the Minnesota case "one of the greatest financial scandals in American history." He said immigrants who commit fraud against the United

States should be denaturalized and deported.

According to a summary released with the bill, the Minnesota case involved a federally

funded children's nutrition program. More than 70 defendants were charged or convicted. Many were naturalized citizens. Prosecutors said at least \$250 million was stolen. The summary said

of the country.

Under the bill, criminal convictions or admissions within 10 years of naturalization could be treated as strong evidence that citizenship was obtained through concealment or misrepresentation. That could lead to the revocation of citizenship and removal from the country.

Several conservative immigration and policy groups endorsed the proposal. They said the bill would strengthen national security and protect public funds. They argued that denaturalization is a civil process and has long been allowed under US law.

In past debates, critics have warned that expanding denaturalization powers could create fear among immigrant communities. They have said citizenship should not be easily questioned once granted, except in clear cases of fraud.

Under current law, the government must meet a high legal standard to revoke citizenship. It must show that naturalization was illegal or obtained through willful misrepresentation.

Immigration and citizenship remain sensitive political issues in Washington. Proposals like the SCAM Act are expected to draw close attention in the US and abroad, including in countries such as India, which has large immigrant communities in America. *ANS*

The SCAM Act would expand the grounds for starting civil denaturalization cases. These would include committing major fraud against federal, state



Foreign maids under South Korean govt's pilot project overworked, underpaid: Survey

SEOUL: Foreign housekeepers employed locally under a government pilot project launched two years ago were severely underpaid and had to do extra work that was not agreed upon, a recent survey showed.

In September 2024, the Seoul metropolitan government launched its foreign maid pilot

program and allowed the entry of 100 people, mostly from Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, to work as housekeepers at more than 150 households in the city.

The project, which ended in December last year, was aimed at tackling the shortage of locals willing to work as maids and to support women in continuing

their careers, reports Yonhap news agency.

According to the survey, respondents said they received an average of 1.92 million won (US\$1,303) in monthly wages during the first six months of the project.

The amount is less than half the average monthly payment received by South Koreans in 2024,

which was 3.74 million won.

When deducting costs, such as residential expenses and insurance payments, their net monthly wages were only 1.18 million won, the survey showed.

Some respondents said they were requested to work outside of their job descriptions, such as washing dishes, caring for pets

and tutoring kids in English.

"We must ... reevaluate the value of child care, recognize the economic value of housekeeping labor, and foster a virtuous cycle of providing high-quality housekeeping services and jobs," said Professor Lee Mi-ae of Jeju National University, who conducted the survey. *ANS*

Trump says "ICE is removing some of the most violent criminals" amid Minneapolis immigration crackdown

WASHINGTON, DC: US President Donald Trump defended intensified federal immigration enforcement following a deadly Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operation in Minneapolis, sharply criticizing Minnesota leaders and the backlash to the raids while reiterating his hard-line stance on immigration.

In a Truth Social post, Trump wrote that "ICE is removing some of the most violent criminals in the World from our Country, and bring them back home, where they belong." He questioned why Minnesota officials were resisting the enforcement efforts and urged them to stop what he described as shielding violent offenders.

"Why is Minnesota fighting this? Do they really want murderers and drug dealers to be ensconced in their community?" Trump wrote, framing the issue in terms of crime and public safety.

Trump also criticized protesters opposing ICE raids, calling them "highly paid professional agitators and anarchists" and alleging that state politicians were using the unrest to divert attention from alleged political scandals.

"The crooked Governor and 'Congresswoman' Omar, who married her brother, don't mind because it keeps the focus of attention off the 18 Billion Dollar, Plus, FRAUD, that has taken place in the State! Don't worry, we're on it!" Trump posted.

Trump's remarks come as tensions remain high in Minneapolis following the fatal shooting of 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good during a federal immigration enforcement operation, triggering protests and renewed debate over ICE tactics and the use of force.

Minneapolis has witnessed tense demonstrations against the Trump administration's deployment of federal agents to the city for an immigration crackdown, raising questions over what these officers can do on the ground and how Trump can respond, CNN reported.

As the protests have intensified, Trump has threatened to take the extreme step of invoking the Insurrection Act to crack down on the unrest, CNN reported. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem has also suggested that people may be asked to "validate their identity" in some cases.

Amid these developments, the Pentagon has ordered around 1,500 active-duty soldiers to be prepared for a possible deployment to Minnesota, The Hill reported, citing multiple media reports quoting unnamed defense officials.

News outlets said the troops are from

the Army's 11th Airborne Division, based at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska, which specializes in cold-weather operations. The unnamed defense official

"We are taking prudent steps to prepare active-duty Army forces," a defense official told ABC News, which first reported on the potential deployment. "This doesn't mean

or may not make." "The Department of War is always prepared to execute the orders of the Commander-in-Chief if called upon," chief Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said in a statement to The Hill.

Trump has threatened to invoke the 1807 Insurrection Act, hours after a federal officer shot and injured a man recently in Minneapolis, sparking the latest wave of protests.

"If the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don't obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job, I will institute the INSURRECTIONACT, which many Presidents have done before me, and quickly put an end to the travesty that is taking place in that once great State," Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social.

However, Trump said there was no need to invoke the law at present, telling reporters, "I don't think there's any reason right now to use it, but if I needed it, I'd use it."

The shooting of a Venezuelan migrant, which was reported to have taken place after a federal officer was attacked while following the man on foot during a traffic stop, further escalated tensions in a city already unsettled after the death of Renee Good earlier this month.

The Insurrection Act allows the president to deploy military troops domestically to contain civil unrest. The last time it was invoked was in the early 1990s. ANI



US President Donald Trump

"Why is Minnesota fighting this? Do they really want murderers and drug dealers to be ensconced in their community?" Trump wrote, framing the issue in terms of crime and public safety

officials said the Army has placed units on standby in case violence in Minnesota escalates, though it remains unclear whether the soldiers will be sent.

they will deploy; we are preparing options." A White House official told The Hill that "it's typical" for the Pentagon "to be prepared for any decision the President may

Trump administration condemns protest at Minnesota church, DOJ opens investigation

MINNESOTA: President Donald Trump has sharply condemned the Minnesota incident in which anti-ICE demonstrators entered a church during a worship service on a Sunday.

The US president said that federal authorities will not tolerate interference with religious worship.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, in a post on X wrote, "President Trump will not tolerate the intimidation and harassment of Christians in their sacred places of worship. The Department of Justice has launched a full investigation into the despicable incident that took place earlier today at a church in Minnesota."

The disruption occurred at Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, where a group of protesters stormed the sanctuary during a Sunday service over online

claims that one of the church's pastors also serves in a senior role with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Videos circulating on social media showed chant-ing and demonstrators inside the church as services were un-

The disruption occurred at Cities Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, where a group of protesters stormed the sanctuary during a Sunday service over online claims that one of the church's pastors

derway, raising immediate concern from federal authorities, reported Fox News.

Protesters were heard chanting slogans such as "Justice for Renee Good" and "ICE out" while confronting worshipers. The demonstration is part of a

broader wave of protests that have erupted across the Minneapolis-St. Paul area following the fatal shooting of Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old Minneapolis resident fatally shot by an ICE agent earlier this month - a case that

has intensified tensions between federal agencies and local communities.

Responding to the church incident, the Department of Justice announced it has opened a civil rights investigation into the protest to determine whether federal laws were violated. ANI

Kashmiri Hindu groups in US renew justice call on Exodus Day

WASHINGTON: Kashmiri Hindu advocacy groups in the United States on renewed their call for justice, restoration and secure rehabilitation of the community, marking January 19 as Exodus Day.

In a statement, the Kashmir Hindu Foundation and Panun Kashmir described the date as a reminder of what they called the systematic displacement of Kashmiri Hindus from the Valley.

The groups said January 19 symbolizes a "deliberate and sustained process of ethnic cleansing" that uprooted an indigenous community. They said Kashmiri Hindus lost not only homes but also roots and civilizational identity.

They rejected what they called symbolic gestures, selective amnesia, and tourism-focused narratives as inadequate responses.

Sunanda Vashisht, writer and political commentator and Chairperson of the Jonaraja Institute of Genocide and Atrocities Studies, said the crimes could not be seen as a single historical episode.

"Genocide is not an event; it is a process aimed at wiping out or severely weakening particular identity-based groups. These groups are perceived as a threat to the offenders' identity or dominance," she said. *IANS*

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

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www.indiapost.com

January 23, 2026

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US-based nonprofit group of Marathi mothers celebrate Makar Sankranti at Bay Area event

An awakening of heritage: Honoring India's Republic Day

ANILA BHASIN

Please join UIASC for an evening of prestige and patriotism as we celebrate India's democratic spirit at "An Awakening of Heritage." On January 24th, the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts will be transformed into a vibrant sanctuary of culture. This gala serves as a luminous gathering for the diaspora, inviting our community to honor the enduring values of the Republic and the rich tapestry of our collective identity.

A Night of Mastery and Tradition

The evening features a masterful fusion of live entertainment and traditional artistry, designed to evoke a deep sense of pride and connection:

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The Grace of Dance: A capti-

vating journey through the rhythmic elegance of Indian classical and folk traditions.

The Art of Flavor: A curated dinner experience celebrating the subcontinent's profound culinary legacy.

Why Your Presence Matters

More than just a performance, this event is a platform to strengthen the bonds of our community and reflect on the heritage that defines us. It is an opportunity to witness the brilliance of our culture in a world-class venue, surrounded by fellow leaders and families of the diaspora.

We invite you to be part of this unforgettable tribute to India's legacy.

Date: January 24th

Venue: Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts

UIASC
United Indian Associations of Southern California

India
REPUBLIC DAY
CELEBRATION

GUEST OF HONOR
Dr. K. J. SRINIVASA, Consul General of India, Los Angeles

CHIEF GUEST
Dr. K. J. SRINIVASA

General Admission: \$30 per person | Member Admission \$25 per person

January 24, 2026 | 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm

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Kailash Parbhat brings iconic North Indian cuisine to Santa Clara

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

SANTA CLARA, CA: One of India's most beloved chaat destinations, Kailash Parbhat, is excited to announce the opening of its newest location in Elcamino Real, Santa Clara, California, bringing its legendary North Indian street food flavors to the Bay Area.

Renowned for its authentic Mumbai-style chaat, vegetarian comfort food, and time-less recipes, Kailash Parbhat has been a household name for generations. From crisp pani puri and flavorful bhel to signature chaats and classic Indian sweets, the Santa

Clara location promises the same uncompromising quality

and taste that has made Kailash Parbhat an international favorite.

"We are thrilled to open in Santa Clara and share the

Kailash Parbhat experience with the Bay Area community," said Kalaiselvi Selvam and Sneha Budhrani. "Our food is rooted in tradition, nostalgia, and authenticity, and we look forward to becoming a go-to destination for families, food lovers, and chaat enthusiasts."

The Santa Clara restaurant will open to public on Jan 23 and will feature a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere ideal for casual dining, family gatherings, and quick bites, staying true to the brand's legacy of serving pure vegetarian food made with fresh ingredients and time-honored techniques.



Andrew Pappachen receives 2025 Good Samaritan Award for decades of service

Celebrated Indian-American Leader Recognized by Global Malayalee Christian Forum and CMS College Alumni

AJAY GHOSH

Andrew Pappachen, a distinguished Indian American community leader, was honored with the 2025 Good Samaritan Award by the Global Malayalee Christian Forum in a solemn ceremony at the Kochi Ramada Inn on January 17, 2026. This prestigious award celebrates his unwavering commitment to the Indian diaspora, acknowledging over 30 years of dedicated service and leadership.

In a separate event marked by warmth and nostalgia, Pappachen was felicitated by his classmates and professors from CMS College in Kottayam. The gathering, held on a Saturday, recently, highlighted his significant contributions to the global Malayalee community and brought together friends, mentors, and supporters from his formative years.

Renowned writer Prof. S. Sivadas, classmate Rev. Dr. K.M. George, and professors, including Dr. George Cherian, Dr. Joseph Cherian, Dr. Mary Kuruvilla, Prof. Parvathy, Thomas Job, and Prof. John presented Andrew with a ceremonial shawl, signifying their respect and admiration.

Expressing his gratitude, Pappachen described the recognition as the greatest honor of his life, emphasizing the humility and pride he felt in receiving such accolades from both his professional community and alma mater.



Andrew Pappachen's journey began in Kerala, India, where he earned a master's degree in chemistry from Kerala University. After migrating to the United States in 1973, he continued his academic pursuits, obtaining a master's degree in Environmental Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology, New Jersey. Further-



ing his expertise, he completed a doctoral program and earned specialized Mini Masters Degrees in Water Pollution and Air Pollution, as well as a degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University.

With a career spanning 47 years in government service, Pappachen worked for the City of Newark, New Jersey, from 1974 to 2018. He held key positions such as Chief Engineer, Director of Operations for Newark Watershed Conservation and Development Corporation, and Director of Public Works. Between 2012 and 2019, he served as Environmental Commissioner in Montville Township, where he continues to reside. Currently, he works as an Environmental Consultant and is a New Jersey State certified water distribution system and water treatment operator. Since 2000, he has also served as an Adjunct Professor, teaching courses on water pollution, water and wastewater treatment, and environmental regulations.


Pappachen is an accomplished author, with several books published in both English and Malayalam. His English titles include Love With The Ghost, A Journey Alone, Rays of Light From The Darkness of A Prison Cell, Zero to Infinity, and Story of Achu, each offering unique perspectives and narratives. His Malayalam works, published by Prabath Book House in Trivandrum, comprise Thalamurakalethedi, Theerdhadanathintte Kadha, Eruttil Ninnu Velichathilaekku, and

ing his expertise, he completed a doctoral program and earned specialized Mini Masters Degrees in Water Pollution and Air Pollution, as well as a degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University.

Sophi. Beyond literature and academia, Andrew Pappachen has played a pivotal role in numerous organizations. He is the founder, former Global President, and chairman of the World Malayalee Council, and has held leadership posts at the

Kerala Center New York, Asian American Heritage Council, Asia Society, and Festival of People in New Jersey. His community service has been recognized by various associations, including the Asian American Political Coalition, Federation of Indian Associations, Kerala Center New York, Staten Island Malayalee Association, Kerala Cultural Association, and YMCA.

Driven by a vision to unite Malayalees worldwide, Pappachen founded the World Malayalee Voice and has worked tirelessly to foster communication and preserve Malayalee identity across generations. He is the son of Korah and Lucy Andrews from Kollad, Kerala. His wife, Somini, hails from Vadavathoor, Kottayam. Their daughter, Simmy, is an executive in healthcare management, while their son, Kevin, manages fraud investigations at a New Jersey bank. Kevin's wife, Grace, and their daughter, Anna, complete the family.

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H Mart to open two-story flagship store at Vestar-managed Pacific Commons Shopping Center

The 100,000 SF+ Fremont Location Will Be Largest in California and Introduce New Store and Dining Concepts

FREMONT, CA: Vestar announced today that H Mart, the nation's largest Asian supermarket chain, will open its largest U.S. location at Pacific Commons Shopping Center in Fremont, California. The flagship store will introduce H Mart's brand-new multi-level prototype, featuring a food hall and dine-in restaurants in addition to its expansive grocery offering. This project represents the largest investment in the company's history and will also be its largest store in California. Construction is expected to begin in late 2026.

The H Mart at Pacific Commons will be located in a highly visible location on the west side of the property, at the intersection of Bunche Drive and Interstate 880. The first-ever food hall will feature a curated mix of fast-casual eateries, full-service sit-down restaurants, a bar, and entertainment offerings, creating a vibrant, immersive destination that goes far beyond a traditional grocery experience. H Mart currently operates multiple locations throughout Northern California, but this will be the company's first store in Fremont.

"This flagship H Mart further reinforces Pacific Commons as a leading retail destination in Northern California and its continued evolution into a true shopping, dining, and entertainment district."



ing, and entertainment district." said Rick Hearn, Vice President of Leasing for Vestar. "Together with our partners at Heitman and the City of Fremont, we are actively adapting to our consumers' shopping preferences, focused on welcoming experiential, destination-driven concepts that energize the center and serve the broader community."

"At H Mart, we strive to enrich lives through our Asian heritage, food, and culture, and this new location represents a

bold new chapter for us." said Brian Kwon, President of H Mart. "By blending elevated dining and community spaces, we are creating a premier destination for food lovers where diverse ethnicities of friends and neighbors can gather. Our priority is to provide the Fremont community with a convenient 'One-Stop Shopping' experience and high-quality food and service."

Fremont Mayor Raj Salwan also praised the announcement and its long-term impact on Fremont's economic vitality.

"The City of Fremont is proud to welcome H Mart to our community. Their transformative investment reflects strong confidence in Fremont and the Pacific Commons Shopping Center. This 100,000-square-foot flagship location will bring together shopping, dining, and entertainment, creating a vibrant, centralized gathering place for residents and visitors alike. The innovative reuse of a vacant large-format retail space reflects the City's strategic commitment to reimagining vacant commercial properties into destinations that generate jobs, amenities, and lasting community value."

Pacific Commons Shopping Center, owned by Heitman and managed by Phoenix-based Vestar, is home to more than 55 retailers and restaurants including Target, Costco, T.J. Maxx, Nordstrom Rack, and Sephora.

For more information on Pacific Commons, visit pacificcommons.com.

For more information about Vestar and its portfolio of properties, visit vestar.com.

About Pacific Commons

Pacific Commons shopping center is a dominant, super-regional power center, located off the I-880 corridor in the middle of Fremont's Silicon Valley. This 1.1 million-square-foot shopping destination is home to such popular retailers as Target, Burlington Coat Factory, Lowe's, Costco, Nordstrom Rack, DSW, Old Navy, T.J. Maxx, Ulta, Total Wine, Men's Wearhouse, and Century Theatres. Restaurant tenants include Gen Korean BBQ, Pho Ha Noi, In-N-Out, Market Broiler, Koja Kitchen, and more.

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

US-based nonprofit group of Marathi mothers celebrate Makar Sankranti at Bay Area event

WASHINGTON: A US-based nonprofit group of Marathi mothers marked the Hindu festival of Makar Sankranti with a sold-out cultural gathering in California's Bay Area, bringing together ritual, conversation and community fundraising, with Indian film actor Ashvini Bhavé as the featured guest.

MAI (Marathi Aai Initiative) hosted the Haldi-Kunku celebration on January 11 through its Bay Area chapter, drawing more than 100 women for an evening focused on cultural identity, motherhood and shared experience in the Indian diaspora, a media release said Sunday.

Organizers welcomed participants with traditional haldi-kunku rituals and a ceremonial vaan brought from India, while the venue was styled to resemble a traditional Marathi courtyard.

The centerpiece of the event was a moderated, informal conversation with Bhavé, who spoke about motherhood, re-

maining rooted in Marathi values and raising children across cultures. The discussion was followed by photographs and informal conversations, over a community



banquet-style dinner, organizers said.

The program included a fashion showcase in which community members walked the ramp wearing black sarees styled in both traditional and contemporary

forms. Presented in partnership with sponsoring saree brands, the segment highlighted everyday women and sought to reflect cultural pride and confidence among mothers balancing family and professional roles in the United States.

"Ashvini Tai (Ashvini Bhavé) brought extraordinary grace, depth, and warmth into the room," said Sayli Natu, co-founder of MAI. She said the interaction fostered a "genuine, mother-to-mother connection" and helped turn admiration for the actor into shared community engagement.

Kshitija Karmarkar, another co-founder, said the organization was built on the belief that culture is sustained through shared, lived experience. She said the rituals, conversations and the cause supported during the evening brought that belief to life and added depth to a gathering rooted in community and continuity. *IANS*

How soaring costs are reshaping health care access?

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

One out of every five dollars spent in the US is related to health care, according to a new KFF study. Health care expenditures are now 18% of America's GDP.

Costs are expected to rise further as the ACA's enhanced premium tax credits expire. With the expiration of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium tax credit, healthcare and insurance costs continue to rise. As many states recently ended their ACA open enrollment periods, many insured individuals have found that their monthly premiums have almost doubled this year. As open enrollment ends this week in many states, millions of Americans enrolled in ACA plans have signed on to monthly premiums at double the cost. Four million people are expected to drop out of health insurance coverage entirely. And small businesses are scrambling to insure their employees even as premiums sharply rise. Speakers this week discussed the factors behind the high cost of coverage and care, including pharmaceuticals, and offered options for addressing the widening gap in health care access.

Merith Basey, Executive Director, Patients for Affordable Drugs stated that the persistently high drug prices in the United States are primarily due to pharmaceuti-

cal companies maintaining market monopolies through the patent system. Drug prices are entirely set by the pharmaceutical companies themselves, with a lack of government negotiation mechanisms. She pointed out that research shows that once generic drugs enter the market, the prices of existing drugs can decrease by an average of 39%; if there are five to six competitors, the price reduction can even reach 95%. Therefore, pharmaceutical

Costs are expected to rise further as the ACA's enhanced premium tax credits expire. With the expiration of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium tax credit, healthcare and insurance costs continue to rise

companies have long used various means to delay the launch of generic drugs. She points out that this drug price negotiation mechanism has been in effect within the Medicare system since January 1st of this year, and the new prices of some drugs included in the negotiations (including diabetes medications, insulin, and cancer and immunotherapy-related drugs) are about 63% lower than before. She says that more high-priced drugs are expected to be included in the negotiations in batches over the next few years, which is

expected to reduce the medication costs for more Medicare beneficiaries.

Dr. Neale Mahoney, Professor of Economics at Stanford University and George P. Shultz inaugural fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research said high health care prices simultaneously impact federal budgets, businesses and households. Healthcare-related spending currently accounts for about a third of the federal budget, and the

of healthcare personnel is equally crucial, including relaxing restrictions on physician training quotas, foreign healthcare personnel, and expanding the scope of practice for nursing and advanced medical personnel, in order to shorten waiting times and improve accessibility to healthcare.

Anthony Wright, Executive Director, Families USA pointed out that with the expiration of the ACA's extended premium tax credit in January, many families have experienced drastic changes in their premium expenses. Families that previously paid only tens of dollars or even zero dollars per month now have to bear hundreds of dollars.

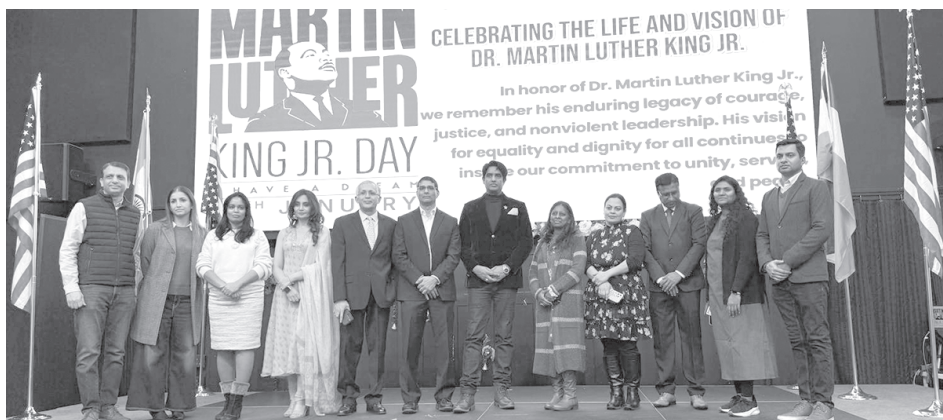
For those aged 50 to 60, some families have spent as much as \$10,000 to \$15,000 on health insurance this year. Wright cited preliminary data indicating that approximately 1.4 million people have lost insurance or switched to lower-coverage plans due to rising premiums, and this may only be the tip of the iceberg. He pointed out that many people automatically renewed their policies at the beginning of the year, and with the grace period ending, even more people may be unable to afford the high premiums and lose their coverage in the coming months.

Indian Americans hold free MLK Day health camp in Boston

WASHINGTON: Indian Americans in the Boston area marked Martin Luther King Jr. Day by organizing a free community healthcare camp, offering medical, dental, and vision services to hundreds of

MLK Day weekend. The initiative was aimed at honoring Dr. King's vision through direct community service, according to a media release issued Monday.

More than 300 community members



residents as a tribute to the civil rights leader's legacy of service and equality.

The Foundation of Indian Americans (FIA)-New England, along with its partner organizations, held the camp on January 19 at the Academy of Creative Arts in Burlington, Massachusetts, during the

received health services at no cost, including medical check-ups, dental consultations, and vision screenings. IANS

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Prominent community leaders complete Houston Marathon: Different journeys, shared purpose, to support Sewa

HOUSTON, TX: Sewa International volunteers and runners had an incredible experience at the Chevron & Aramco Houston Marathon on Sunday, January 11, 2026—an event that showcased the very best of Houston's spirit and community. Among Sewa's participants, two Houston community leaders stood out for the inspiration they brought to the course and for the impact they created for Sewa International: Dr. Randeep Suneja and Mr. Swatantra Jain.

Dr. Suneja, a practicing cardiologist with 33 years of service, completed his sixteenth half-marathon in 2:56:57, which translates to a pace of 13:30 per mile. He improved his finish time by 23 minutes compared to last year, returning close to the strong benchmark he has maintained over the past two decades. He attributes this significant enhancement in his time to a strict low-carb diet and a consistent exercise regimen, resulting in a loss of 20 pounds in the past year. Along the course, his children, Nikhil and Divya, cheered him and helped ensure he stayed replenished as he is highly allergic to the color in Gatorade, which is served on the course, necessitating that he gets his own hydration. As part of Sewa's Run for a Reason program, he also raised a record \$6,700—made possible by generous donors.

Equally inspiring was Mr. Swatantra Jain's run. A well-known entrepreneur, community leader, and dedicated philanthropist, he completed his very first marathon at the age of 78, proving that age is just a number. He began the day expecting to run only a few miles, but when his grandchildren cheered him on at Mile 6, he made a decision: why not go all the way to 13.1 miles? With grit, determination, and a strong will, he pushed through to the finish



Sewa volunteers and community members at the Chevron & Aramco Houston Marathon

line. He called it one of his most meaningful accomplishments and shared his intent to return next year—fully prepared. His dedication towards spirituality and meditation provided the fuel needed to complete. He too participated in Run for a Reason, raising funds for Sewa while achieving this personal milestone.

Their journeys—one built on years of endurance and discipline, the other sparked by family encouragement and sheer determination—reflect a shared belief: service and purpose can be pursued at any stage of life. Together, they inspired many in the community through their examples of commitment, philanthropy, and perseverance.

Sewa's broader presence at the marathon amplified that spirit: 120+ Sewa runners took the course starting at 6:30 AM. Sewa volunteers reported by 6:30 AM at the Mile 11.5 Half Marathon Refueling Station, supporting 15,000+ runners with water and Gatorade and completing cleanup by 11:30 AM. Sewa also hosted a break-

fast booth near the GRB Convention Center, serving hot tea and breakfast for runners and volunteers.

The Chevron & Aramco Houston Marathon drew 30,000 runners, 7,000 volun-

About Sewa International

Sewa International, a leading Hindu faith-based Indian American nonprofit organization with 43 Chapters in twenty-five US States, has extensive experience in di-



Left to right: Cardiologist Dr. Randeep Suneja; entrepreneur and philanthropist Swatantra Jain, along with his grandchildren

teers, and an estimated 250,000 spectators, with participants from all 50 U.S. states and 118 countries—and with women making up 51% of Half Marathon runners.

This was the fourth year of Sewa's engagement in the biggest sporting extravaganza of Houston. This is also the second year of Sewa being an Elite Charity, supported by the Marathon Committee's "Run for A Reason" program. Nikhil Jain, president of the Houston Chapter of Sewa International, said, "Our heartfelt thanks to volunteers, runners, donors, partners, and the Chevron Houston Marathon organizers for making this experience—and its impact—possible. It is community spirit, commitment, and deep engagement with community leaders that we cherish in Sewa."

saster rescue, relief, and rehabilitation operations, having responded to more than 25 disasters in the US and abroad.

Among its accolades, Sewa International has been recognized by Charity Navigator - the premier nonprofit rating agency - as the number five among the "10 Highly Rated Charities Relying on Private Contributions". Sewa International has, for the past three years, continuously scored the topmost-rated 4-star ranking from Charity Navigator and has earned perfect scores for Financial Health, Accountability & Transparency.

For more information on Sewa International Houston and its activities, please visit <http://www.sewausa.org/houston>

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Indian-American Israni announces Congressional bid from California

WASHINGTON: Indian-American attorney and educator, Rakhi Israni on Tuesday (20 Jan.) announced her campaign for California's 14th Congressional District, entering the race with a message centered on rising costs, political division, and the need for reform-focused leadership.

Israni announced a campaign video released on social media, highlighting her

announce my campaign for Congress."

She said the current political climate demanded leadership that could move away from confrontation and focus on practical outcomes.

"Today's politics are defined by division and extreme rhetoric, so it is crucial for the safety of our communities that we elect a member of Congress focused on solving

dian Americans: Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Pramila Jayapal, Shri Thanedar, and Suhash Subramanyam.

"I am ready to lead, to restore justice and truth to our government, and focus on finding solutions to lower the skyrocketing costs crippling families in the Bay Area and across the country," she added.

and community assistance. It also pointed to her involvement with interfaith councils and national nonprofit boards as evidence of long-standing civic engagement.

California's 14th Congressional District

"Today's politics are defined by division and extreme rhetoric, so it is crucial for the safety of our communities that we elect a member of Congress focused on solving problems and lowering the temperature while hate and division infect our democracy," Israni said

background as an educator, attorney, and mother of four, and framing her candidacy around what she described as a moment of responsibility in public life.

"This moment calls on each of us to serve a purpose greater than ourselves and to stand firmly on the side of truth," Israni said in the video.

"It is the same set of values my husband and I are passing down to our four children, and it is with these values I an-

problems and lowering the temperature while hate and division infect our democracy," Israni said.

Positioning herself as a problem-solver, she said her priority would be to address the economic pressures families face. If elected, she would be the second Indian American woman to serve in the House of Representatives and the first from California.

The US Congress currently has six In-

According to her campaign, Israni has lived in Fremont for more than two decades, where she has raised her family and built her professional career. She cited her experience founding and leading a national test-preparation company, which she said drew on her background as an educator and enabled her to mentor thousands of students.

Her legal work, the campaign said, has included representing underserved clients in family court and assisting elderly residents with estate planning. She has also been active in local schools, serving as PTA president at the elementary, middle, and high school levels attended by her children.

The campaign highlighted her volunteer work with a large faith-based humanitarian organization, where she said she used her legal expertise to support crisis relief



Rakhi Israni

covers parts of the eastern Bay Area and includes diverse suburban communities with a significant population of professionals, immigrants, and families. The district has been a focal point in recent elections amid broader debates over the cost of living, education, and governance in California. IANS

Avtar Singh Walia named Top Restaurant Owner of the Year by IAOTP

Michelin-Starred Restaurateur Honored for Transforming Indian Fine Dining in America

AJAY GHOSH

LAS VEGAS, NV: In a glittering ceremony at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, Avtar Singh Walia, renowned for his transformative impact on Indian cuisine in America, was honored as a Top Restaurant Owner of the Year by the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP).

In addition, Tamarind Tribeca, owned by Avtar Singh Walia, was chosen as Top Restaurant of the Year for 2025 by IAOTP.

The annual gala in December 2025, which brought together global industry leaders, celebrated Mr. Walia's decades-long dedication, vision, and leadership in the culinary world. "It was truly humbling for me and my beloved Restaurant, Tamarind to be chosen as the top in the world from among the hundreds that were considered for this great honor," said Mr. Walia. "I want to thank the International Association of Top Professionals for bestowing this honor on me and Tamarind. The honor is a testament to Indian cuisine going mainstream across the globe."

The IAOTP recognition is reserved for

a select few in each discipline, chosen for their outstanding achievements, leadership abilities, and community contributions. This year, Walia's name rose to the top, a testament to his perseverance, innovative approach, and the enduring legacy he has built over nearly forty years.

The President of the International Asso-

ciation of Top Professionals (IAOTP), Stephanie Ciriaco, stated: "Choosing Mr. Walia for this honor was an easy decision for our panel to make. He is inspirational, influential, and a true visionary and thought leader. We cannot wait to meet him and celebrate his accomplishments at this year's gala."

Decades of Dedication and Innovation

Looking back, Mr. Walia attributes his success to his perseverance, work ethic, and the mentors he has had along the way.

Mr. Walia's journey began in the late 1970s after immigrating from Punjab, India. Starting as a warehouse manager for Gucci and later working at New York's Tandoor restaurant, he quickly discovered his true passion lay in the world of food. His first, major role in hospitality came at Akbar restaurant on Park Avenue, where, as manager, he cultivated his dream of opening a fine dining establishment that would showcase the flavors and elegance of Indian cuisine.

That dream came to fruition in 1986 when he co-founded Dawat, partnering with celebrity chef Madhur Jaffrey. Dawat quickly gained a reputation for introducing New Yorkers to a refined, authentic take on Indian food.





Hyderabad Based BeSpoke AI Stylist Uses Fashion AI to Solve Personalization Challenges in Fashion Retail

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad-based BeSpoke AI Stylist Pvt Ltd, founded in 2025 by Neeraj Bansal, is building an artificial intelligence-powered fashion discovery and personal styling platform designed to improve how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase apparel online. As fashion ecommerce continues to scale, shoppers increasingly struggle with relevance, fit, and styling confidence, leading to high return rates and poor discovery outcomes. Leveraging advances in fashion AI and personalization, BeSpoke AI Stylist is positioning itself as an AI stylist and virtual stylist that shifts online fashion from product-led browsing to styling-led decision making.

Unlike conventional ecommerce platforms that rely on large catalogues and generic recommendation engines, BeSpoke AI Stylist functions as a digital personal stylist and fashion assistant. The platform analyses individual preferences, lifestyle context, body type indicators, budget, occasion, and a user's existing closet to curate complete outfit recommendations rather than isolated products. This makes BeSpoke AI Stylist both an intelligent outfit planner and closet organizer, helping users plan what to wear while enabling brands to reach the right audience without competing primarily on discounts or ad spend. The experience

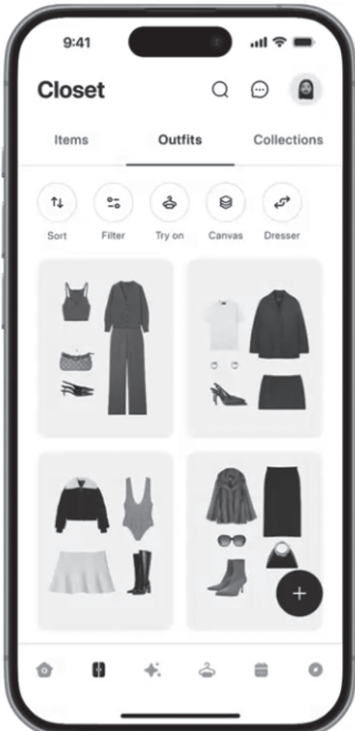
is delivered through a consumer-facing style app built for daily decision-making.

The company's technology and infrastructure strategy has received validation through its inclusion in several global startup ecosystems, including the NVIDIA Inception Program, AWS Startup Program, Google Startup Program, and the MongoDB Startup Program. Participation in these ecosystems supports the company's AI model training workflows, data processing capabilities, and platform scalability, reflecting growing confidence from global technology providers in its intelligence-driven consumer experience approach.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer Neeraj Bansal said the platform is focused on solving fundamental decision-making problems in fashion rather than adding another shopping interface. "Fashion platforms have digitized inventory well, but they have not changed how people actually decide what to wear. We are building an AI fashion system that understands a user's closet, context, and preferences, and explains why something works. That clarity turns shopping into a confident decision instead of trial and error," he said.

BeSpoke AI Stylist is currently available on mobile platforms.

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



LIFELONG AND FINDYOURFIT BRING BACK WELLNESS CARNIVAL TO DELHI, CHAMPIONING HOLISTIC HEALTH WITH MILIND SOMAN

NEW DELHI: Lifelong, one of India's leading consumer lifestyle and fitness brands, has partnered with FindYourFit to bring back the seventh edition of The Wellness Carnival, a one-day celebration of holistic health and well-being, scheduled for January 31, 2026, at Sunder Nursery, Delhi, headlined by fitness icon Milind Soman. The collaboration reflects Lifelong's continued focus on promoting active, balanced and wellness-led lifestyles across India.

Curated as an immersive wellness experience, The Wellness Carnival will bring together fitness, mental well-being and community engagement through a diverse lineup of activities. As part of the Carnival, Milind Soman will lead a 5 km community run, followed by an interactive session on how running and movement can be seamlessly integrated into everyday life, reinforcing the belief that fitness should be accessible, inclusive and sustainable. The event is expected to witness participation from over 2000 wellness enthusiasts, fitness professionals and families from across the city.



Milind Soman

Himanshu Mehta, Head of D2C Marketing, Lifelong Online, said, "The Wellness Carnival reflects what Lifelong stands for, making fitness and well-being simple, inclusive and sustainable. We're proud to support a platform that inspires healthier choices through movement, mindfulness and community."

Shivalika Bhasin, Brand Partnerships Manager at Lifelong Online and spokesperson for FindYourFit,

said, "At Lifelong, we've always believed that wellness is not a destination, it's a way of life shaped by everyday choices. The Lifelong Wellness Carnival beautifully brings together movement, mindfulness and community in a format that feels inclusive and accessible and easy for everyone. Through our association, we want to support people and initiatives that inspire healthier choices, mindful living and make well-being a shared, joyful experience."

Arushi Lohani, Co- Founder at FindYourFit added, "With each edition, The Wellness Carnival continues to evolve as a space where people can explore wellness beyond workouts.

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Philosophy

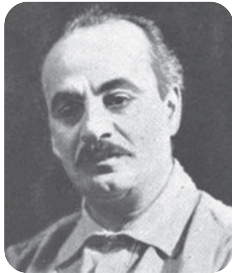
KAHLIL GIBRAN

Is not religion all deeds and all reflection, and that which is neither deed nor reflection, but a wonder and a surprise ever springing in the soul, even while the hand hew the stone or tend the loom?

Who can separate his faith from his actions, or his belief from his occupations? Who can spread his hours before him, saying, "This for God and this for myself" This for my soul, and this other for my body?"

All your hours are wings that beat through space from self to self. He who wears his morality but as his best garment were better naked. The wind and the sun will tear no holes in his skin.

And he who defines his conduct by ethics imprisons his song-bird in a cage. The freest song comes not through bars and wires. And he to whom worshipping is a window, to open but also to shut, has not yet visited the house of his soul whose windows are from dawn to dawn.



Ramana Maharishi

tween two gardens.

Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

In the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures. For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange,

I am ungrateful to those teachers.

March on. Do not tarry. To go forward is to move toward perfection. March on, and fear not the thorns, or the sharp stones on life's path. Trust in dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.

We choose our joys and sorrows long before we experience them. Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding. Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror.

Your daily life is your temple and religion

He who wears his morality but as his best garment were better naked. The wind and the sun will tear no holes in his skin

Your daily life is your temple and your religion. Whenever you enter into it take with you your all. Take the plough and the forge and the mallet and the lute, the things you have fashioned in necessity or for delight.

For in revery you cannot rise above your achievements nor fall lower than your failures.

And take with you all men: For in adoration you cannot fly higher than their hopes nor humble yourself lower than their despair.

And if you would know God be not therefore a solver of riddles. Rather look about you and you shall see Him playing with your children. And look into space; you shall see Him walking in the cloud, outstretching His arms in the lightning and descending in rain. You shall see Him smiling in flowers, then rising and waving His hands in trees.

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight. Sadness is but a wall be-

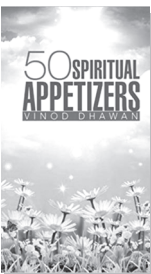
Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing. And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb. And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

Keep me away from the wisdom which does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh and the greatness which does not bow before children.

Excerpted from 'The Prophet'. The 143rd birth anniversary of Kahlil Gibran was observed on January 6

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Greenland, great power politics, and India's strategic imperative: a realist geopolitical analysis

PIYUSH CHAUDHARY

At first glance, Greenland may seem irrelevant to Indian strategic planners. With a population of around 57,000 and located thousands of kilometers from South Asia, it appears far removed from India's immediate concerns. Yet recent developments have revealed how Greenland has become a geopolitical flashpoint, exposing deeper realist dynamics of power competition, resource access, alliance shaping, and strategic positioning among major powers. These developments matter even to distant states because structural shifts in global power reshape the international environment in which all states operate.

Geography as Structural Power

In realist international relations, as articulated by theorists like Kenneth Waltz, states operate in an anarchic system where no authority enforces peace or order. Under such conditions, geography becomes a structural determinant of power, not a backdrop. Greenland's location, lying

allied deterrence and early warning.

Arctic as New Theatre of Power Competition

Realist theory predicts that great powers will seek to secure relative advantage and prevent rivals from dominating key strategic spaces. The Arctic, previously seen as peripheral has become precisely such a space. Climate change is accelerating this shift: the Arctic is warming nearly four times faster than the global average, reducing sea ice and exposing new maritime routes and resource potential.

Routes such as the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage can significantly shorten shipping distances between Asia and Europe by up to 40 % compared with the traditional Suez route, reshaping future global trade patterns and imposing new considerations for naval logistics and commercial connectivity. For realist scholars like Alfred Thayer Mahan, command of sea lanes and strategic waterways is central to global power.

Greenland's proximity to emerging Arctic sea lanes thus increases its structural significance, making it a pivot in geo-economic as well as military competition.

In early 2026, Denmark's top Arctic commander publicly emphasized that Greenland's defense posture focuses on potential Russian activity, not internal allied conflict, underscoring how seriously European NATO members view Arctic security

between North America and Europe and guarding the gateway between the Arctic and the North Atlantic, exemplifies this logic. The island sits astride the GIUK gap (Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom), a critical maritime and air corridor for monitoring naval and submarine access between the Arctic and the wider Atlantic. This corridor has been central to NATO strategy since the Cold War, and its importance persists in light of renewed Russian military activity in the Arctic.

In early 2026, Denmark's top Arctic commander publicly emphasized that Greenland's defense posture focuses on potential Russian activity, not internal allied conflict, underscoring how seriously European NATO members view Arctic security. Denmark has pledged significant investments into Arctic defense, around 42 billion Danish crowns (roughly \$6.5 billion), including new naval vessels and surveillance assets, signaling Greenland's growing role in

Resource Competition and Material Interests

Beyond geography, material resources anchor Greenland's geopolitical value. The Arctic and Greenland are believed to hold vast deposits of critical minerals, including rare earth elements, uranium, nickel, iron, and other materials crucial for advanced technologies, defense systems, and clean-energy infrastructure. A 2023 European Commission survey identified that Greenland could contain deposits of 25 of the 34 materials considered critical for industrial and technological development.

(The author is a final-year political science student and geopolitical researcher specializing in great power politics, climate security, and international strategic affairs. He writes on contemporary global issues with a policy-oriented lens) South Asia Monitor

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

Lodha Developers' net debt rises 15 percent in Q3

MUMBAI: Real estate firm Lodha Developers Limited has reported a 15 percent increase in its net debt during the October-December quarter (Q3 FY26), reaching Rs 6,170 crore.

The rise is attributed to the company's aggressive land acquisitions aimed at expanding its business, according to its key business updates to exchanges.

For comparison, the company's net debt was Rs 5,370 crore at the end of September 2025.

Despite the increase, Lodha Developers said its net debt remains well within manageable limits.

"Even with significant investments in business development over the first nine months of this fiscal year, our net debt stood at Rs 61.7 billion, well below our ceiling of 0.5x net debt to equity," the company noted.

During the December quarter, Lodha acquired five land parcels across key regions, including the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Delhi-NCR, and Bengaluru.

These acquisitions were made through outright purchases as well as partnerships with landowners.

The Mumbai-based company plans to develop primarily housing projects on these sites, with an estimated total revenue potential of Rs 33,800 crore.

In a notable move last month, Lodha Developers partnered with MRG Group to develop two projects in Gurugram -- marking its entry into the Delhi-NCR housing and commercial real estate market. *IANS*

Real Estate POST

28 India Post

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January 23, 2026

AMC clears encroachments near Vatva Lake, demolishes around 450 illegal structures

AHMEDABAD: The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) carried out a major demolition drive against illegal constructions in the Vatva Extension area of the city, targeting encroachments around a lake near the Vatva police station.

According to Zone-6 Deputy Commissioner of Police Bhagirath T Gadhvi, the operation focused on removing unauthorized residential structures and commercial shops built around the lake. He said approximately 450 illegal constructions were identified, and action was initiated to clear them. *ANI*

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

High-end housing becomes India's largest residential segment for 1st time

MUMBAI: India's residential market saw a structural shift in CY2025 as the high-end housing segment category became the market's leading segment for the first-time ever, accounting for about 26.8 percent of transactions, with around 27 percent share, a recent report said.

The report from CBRE South Asia Pvt said the segment's share has more than doubled since 2022 from 11.8 percent to 26.8 percent, driven by rising household incomes, lifestyle upgrades and sustained NRI interest.

Luxury segment recorded 70 percent year-on-year growth in 2025 with the fourth quarter alone witnessing roughly 62 percent annualized increase, the report said.

The Q4 2025 saw roughly 62,500 units sold and about 60,100 units launched, with Mumbai, Pune and Delhi-NCR supplying more than 60 percent of new launches.

Mumbai, Pune, and Delhi-NCR also dominated the supply side, contributing more than 60% of all new launches during the quarter.

"The emergence of the high-end segment reflects a maturing buyer base that is prioritizing



lifestyle, longevity, and asset quality. The sector will likely be anchored by calibrated supply infusion, ensuring that new inventory is aligned with delivery realities," said Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO, India, South-

"Although underlying fundamentals remain strong, macro-economic headwinds may prompt a segment of homebuyers to maintain a watchful stance in the near term. Still, sustained premiumisation

housing landscape in the coming quarters," he added.

The overall trend highlighted a maturing housing market, increasingly driven by quality, aspiration, sustainability, and long-term value creation.

Gaurav Kumar, Managing Director, Capital Markets and Land, CBRE India, said that the developers have closely aligned their offerings with demand dynamics.

RBI's monetary easing and GST rationalization continue to provide strong tailwinds, reinforcing confidence and demand in the housing sector, Kumar added. *IANS*

Luxury segment recorded 70 percent year-on-year growth in 2025 with the fourth quarter alone witnessing roughly 62 percent annualized increase, the report said

East Asia, Middle East & Africa at CBRE.

and rising aspiration would remain key drivers shaping India's

'India's property sentiment ticks up, market enters 2026 on steadier footing'

MUMBAI: The stakeholder sentiment in India's property market stabilized with a positive bias at the end of 2025, as market enters 2026 on steadier footing, a recent report said.

The report from Knight Frank and NAREDCO showed that the 'Current Sentiment Score' edged up to 60 in Q4 2025, up

from 59 in Q3, while 'the Future Sentiment Score' was 61, unchanged from the prior quarter, both remaining in the "optimistic zone."

"The readings underscore a market supported by improving macroeconomic visibility, easing inflation, and steady funding conditions," the report highlighted.

Around 52 percent respondents signaled improving economic momentum with 50 percent reporting improved funding availability, the report said.

Despite remaining below 2023-24 peaks, resilient office demand, improving liquidity, and stable domestic economic conditions support positive expecta-

tions amid global uncertainties.

The real GDP growth of 8.2 percent in Q2 FY2025-26 versus 5.6 percent a year earlier was cited as a confidence driver. Easing inflation, accommodative monetary conditions, and continued public capital expenditure have strengthened visibility on growth, the report said.

"High-frequency indicators continue to point to sustained economic momentum, helping offset global uncertainty and supporting real estate fundamentals," said Shishir Bajjal, International Partner, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India. *IANS*

Can you sell a property to a developer?

HARINI BALASUBRAMANIAN

Selling a house is a strategic move as it allows a property owner to secure funds for reinvesting in a bigger home. In many major cities in India, where land is limited and the scope for redevelopment is higher, many builders are eyeing redevelopment and joint development projects. Hence, selling a house to a builder can be a profitable option for property owners. However, this can be a legally complex process that involves multiple approvals and regulatory compliance. In this guide, we will delve into the legal aspects of selling a property to a developer in India.

Selling a property to a developer vs selling to a buyer

Selling a property outright to a buyer differs from selling it to a developer in many ways. In the former case, the sale process is simple and involves signing a sale deed and transferring property ownership to the new buyer. The approach of independent buyers is quite different when it comes to evaluating properties. Buyers mostly look at the livability aspects, the property's condition and location advantages. They may turn down an offer in case of construction and structural defects in the property and other issues that can result in high repair costs. On the other hand, builders evaluate the value of the property and land over which it is built, overlooking minor issues. This is because builders are most likely to demolish the house and reconstruct it, with the intention of selling it at a higher price.

Another aspect that distinguishes property sales to a builder is the selling season. Homebuyers look for resale proper-



ties during specific seasons, while builders may be active year-round. Besides, there may be no broker costs if the builder deals directly with the seller.

Types of sale transactions when selling to a builder

Property owners can choose different transaction methods when planning to sell their property.

Direct sale

This is a simple transaction in which the owner sells the property to the developer at a mutually agreed price. The process involves signing a sale deed and transferring ownership of the property to the developer. This is mostly seen in independent houses and small plots. The seller's responsibility ends after the property transfer is completed.

Joint development

This trend is seen in metro cities and urban areas where the development rights

of the property are shared between the landowner and the builder. A joint development agreement (JDA) is signed between the two parties. The builder takes responsibility for the reconstruction, including securing the necessary approvals. After development is completed, profits or revenue are shared between the owner and the builder as per the agreed terms. This pro-

cess is legally complex, involving registration of the JDA.

Redevelopment

Redevelopment trends are seen in cities such as Mumbai, Pune and Bangalore. In this model, housing societies allow developers to redevelop the society, which often has older buildings, and to construct new properties within the complex. Developers typically sign deals with existing building owners by selling the newly constructed properties. The redevelopment process is also complex, like joint developments, where builders sign redevelopment agreements and seek approvals from the society and other local authorities.

Why do builders buy private properties?

Builders see many advantages in purchasing private properties from owners. Firstly, the limited availability of land in urban areas, especially major metro cities, has increased the demand for resale properties. www.housing.com

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Luxury homes above Rs 1 crore capture 63% market share despite 11% market volume decline

NEW DELHI: Premium-housing units priced at Rs 1 crore and above saw 6 percent year-on-year (Y-O-Y) growth in unit sales during 2025, highlighting market premiumization trends despite an 11 percent decline in the overall residential market.

According to a press release by JLL, total residential sales fell to 270,323 units in 2025, yet the market demonstrated a clear shift toward higher price segments. Apartments priced above Rs 1 crore increased their market share from 53 percent in 2024 to 63 percent in 2025, while the mass segment's share contracted from 47 percent to 37 percent.

The surge in premium demand was most prominent in the Rs 1.5-3.0 crore category, which recorded a 19 percent increase in sales compared to the previous year. Despite the drop in volume, the total sales value across India climbed by approximately 11 percent Y-O-Y to around Rs 5,57,100 crore. This growth in value amid a decline in unit sales confirms a transition toward higher-value transac-

tions as buyers prioritize quality projects.

"India's residential market experienced a premiumization shift in 2025, with properties above INR 1 crore growing 6% Y-o-Y while mass housing below INR 1 crore fell by 30% during the period. Despite an 11% drop in total pan India housing unit sales, total sales value climbed by around 11% Y-o-Y to around INR 5,57,100 crores, demonstrating buyers' preference for qual-



ity developments over price premiums. This healthy sales value performance amid sales unit decline confirms the market's successful transition toward higher-value transactions, validating developers' premiumization strategies and buyers' appetite for premium offerings," said Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head of Research and REIS, India, JLL ANI

Market share of homes priced above Rs 1 crore reaches 63 pc in India in 2025

MUMBAI: The housing market in India demonstrated clear premiumisation trends with sustained demand in higher price segments, as apartments above Rs 1 crore increased their share to 63 percent in 2025 from 53 percent in 2024, reflecting buyers' preference for value-driven purchases despite overall volume decline, as per report showed.

This was especially evident in the Rs 1.5-Rs 3.0 crore category, which saw demand increase by approximately 19 percent compared to 2024, according to the report by JLL.

Chennai emerged as standout performer with exceptional 31 percent on-year growth, reaching 14,837-unit sales.

While all other cities saw a decline in

sales, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Pune each surpassed 50,000 units, collectively capturing 63 percent of annual sales. These three cities demonstrated market resilience during moderation phases, supported by robust employment, established infrastructure, strong purchasing power and quality lifestyle amenities, said the report.

The fourth quarter of 2025 saw varied city-level results, with Chennai and Delhi NCR sustaining their housing sales momentum, led by Chennai's remarkable 86 percent YoY growth.

Home prices across India's seven major cities sustained their upward momentum throughout 2025, with annual price appreciation ranging from 6 percent to 13 percent across markets. *IANS*

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

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India must recalibrate its grand strategy to face emerging geopolitical headwinds

SRIJAN SHARMA

2026 opened with displays of U.S. muscle power, intended to revive the Monroe Doctrine and reinforce American security dominance, an approach that had come under scrutiny after Israel's strikes on Qatar escalated tensions in the Middle East last year. The Trump administration made clear commitments regarding its sphere of influence and signaled its willingness to reassert the Monroe Doctrine in its National Security Strategy (NSS) released in November. Within two months, the U.S. carried out a military operation in Venezuela to topple the Maduro regime, demonstrating both its strategic will and seriousness in translating doctrine into action.

tion even declared that the Monroe Doctrine was over, favoring soft power to maintain influence.

In contrast, the Trump administration rechristened it the "Donroe Doctrine," which seeks not only to secure the U.S. sphere of influence but also to assert an overt America First mindset through dominant tactics reminiscent of the Cold War era. During Trump's first term, Washington gradually began rethinking the Monroe Doctrine and incorporating it into its strategic calculus, but this process remained cautious. In the second term, however, the Donroe Doctrine has been accelerated and implemented through three distinct strategies.

First is transactionalism, in

flected in withdrawals from international organizations, tariff politics, unilateral military actions, and power-centric approaches to conflict management. These actions are designed to foreground an American-first approach rather than collective or multilateral engagement. The sharp unilateralism of Trump's second administration is intended to send a strategic message to the global order about the revival of U.S. hegemony.

Although these features differ significantly from the original Monroe Doctrine, its core objective remains unchanged: protecting the U.S. sphere of influence. In essence, the Donroe Doctrine is a blueprint for blitzkrieg-style diplomacy that globalizes an America-first approach. It echoes the Cold War-era concept of "preponderant power," which argues that a single dominant state—such as the U.S. in the post-Cold War era—can prevent major wars by maintaining overwhelming military, economic, and political strength, thereby deterring rivals and enforcing stability.

India's Grand Strategy

India has placed strategic autonomy at the center of its approach to navigating the contested global order. This strategy rests on multi-vector diplomacy and diversification—moving beyond fixed superpower orbits while remaining engaged with them to advance India's interests. While lessons have been learned from the shortcomings of the Non-Aligned Movement, strategic autonomy has now evolved into a broader grand strategy through which India deploys both hard and soft power to assert and negotiate its security and strategic interests.

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

For detailed story visit
www.indiapost.com

These developments have prompted reflections on the global order entering yet another geopolitical churn. More importantly for India, they underline the urgency of revisiting its strategic autonomy and reassessing its grand strategy for navigating an increasingly contested global order

These developments have prompted reflections on the global order entering yet another geopolitical churn. More importantly for India, they underline the urgency of revisiting its strategic autonomy and reassessing its grand strategy for navigating an increasingly contested global order.

The Donroe Doctrine

Under the Trump administration, the Monroe Doctrine has been reshaped into an offensive deterrent tool rather than a quiet diplomatic, soft-power, and collective-security construct. Earlier, the U.S. relied on pragmatic calculations and preventive diplomacy to address security and strategic challenges within its sphere of influence. The Obama administra-

which the U.S. focuses on maximizing interests through power bargaining, leaving little room for diplomatic maneuver. Trade negotiations during Trump's second administration exemplify this increasingly aggressive transactional approach.

Second is the use of credible threats-sanctions and the overt threat of force as instruments of coercive diplomacy to protect U.S. security and strategic space. While coercion has long been central to U.S. strategic thinking, it has become more direct and forceful under Trump's second administration, as demonstrated by Operation Absolute Resolve against Venezuela and the escalation of tariff wars.

Third is unilateralism, re-



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TRUMP ACCELERATES MULTIPOLAR WORLD-ORDER

Global geopolitics entered a turbulent phase marked by the resurgence of economic coercion, military intervention, and regional diplomacy that together could reshape the existing world order. Central to these changes is U.S. President Donald Trump's assertive use of tariffs as foreign policy leverage, most recently targeting several European allies over acquiring Greenland and a series of contentious military and diplomatic actions across the world.

At the core of economic restructuring is Trump's tariff escalation against eight major European countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Finland) in connection with his controversial push for control over Greenland. Announcing a baseline 10% tariff starting February 1, rising to 25% in June if demands aren't met, the move triggered market volatility, weakened the euro, and prompted concerns of a new trade war with U.S. allies. The International Monetary Fund has warned that these geopolitical tensions including Trump's trade actions, could threaten global economic growth and disrupt supply chains worldwide. Critically, this marks a shift from tariffs as defensive tools to instruments of strategic coercion, challenging traditional trade alliances. Europe's unified response condemning the tariffs and threatening countermeasures underscores widening rifts within NATO and the transatlantic alliance.

In Latin America, U.S. military intervention in Venezuela, including the capture of President Nicolas Maduro has tested international norms. Global reactions varied: many governments condemned the action as a breach of sovereignty, while some Western nations offered tacit support or cautious acknowledgment. Analysts see this intervention not only as a demonstration of American military reach but as part of a broader pattern where great powers seek influence by decisively shaping political outcomes beyond diplomacy.

In the Middle East, the shadow of conflict has persisted. Despite diplomatic efforts involving new frameworks like the "Board of Peace", an initiative championed by Trump to mediate the Gaza situation many global leaders express caution, fearing it could undermine the United Nations' role and create parallel power structures.

Meanwhile, conflict dynamics in Ukraine remain a central pillar of global instability. Recent escalations, including the use of ballistic missiles, continue to draw strong international response and highlights enduring tensions between Russia and the West, complicating prospects for a negotiated settlement.

In Iran, a combination of internal protests and external pressure has created a delicate balancing act. While widespread demonstrations have been met with harsh suppression; regional actors like Turkey have advocated restraint, highlighting a broader desire among some Middle Eastern nations to avoid direct confrontation.

Against the backdrop of U.S. China trade competition and ongoing geopolitical friction, these developments suggest a world transitioning toward MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER, where economic might, military capability, and diplomatic coalitions intersect in unpredictable ways. Echoing expert assessments, we may be seeing the erosion of a unipolar, rules-based order toward a landscape shaped by regional powers, flexible alliances, and transactional foreign policy.

The cumulative effect could be a more fragmented international system where strategic interests rather than collective frameworks guide major powers, presenting both risks of conflict and opportunities for new diplomatic configurations. As China has already acquired global economic powerhouse status, the present scenario may have accelerated it to become world leader, replacing America.

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author



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Ankita Lokhande recalls TOUGHEST CHAPTER of her life

Joining the "2026 is the new 2016" trend, a popular name in the television industry, Ankita Lokhande remembered 2016 as 'the toughest chapter of my life'.

She looked back at the time that broke her completely and changed her forever.

Refreshing your memory, 2016 was the year Ankita and late actor Sushant Singh Rajput reportedly broke up after years of being together.

Although Ankita did not mention anything clearly in her post, it is possible that she is hinting at her heartbreak after parting ways with Sushant.

Looking back at what she referred to as the toughest chapter in her life, Ankita shared on her Instagram, "2016 ki yaadein...The toughest chapter of my life...A year that tested me, broke me quietly, and changed me forever..And today, I only feel grateful and proud of how far I have come from there to here..(sic)." IANS

National Award-winning actor Akshay Kumar's security car was involved in an accident in the Juhu area of Mumbai recently.

As per the Mumbai Police, the incident took place at around 9:00 am no one from Akshay Kumar or his family was present in the car, which is used for Akshay Kumar's private security and his personal security personnel were present in the car.

Two people have been injured in a collision between a truck and a car. The injured have been taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Akshay Kumar has, over the years, been placed under heightened personal security owing to his high public profile, political visibility, and occasional threat perceptions linked to his celebrity status. As one of Bollywood's most recognizable figures, he regularly attends public events, film shoots, political functions, and international travel, all of

which increase exposure and vulnerability. Reports in the past have indicated that following specific threat inputs, government agencies assessed his risk level and provided state-assigned security cover, similar to what is extended to several high-profile actors in India.

Such protection typically includes armed security personnel, escort vehicles, and coordinated movement planning, especially during public appearances. While exact security categories are not always officially disclosed for privacy and safety reasons, the actor has often been seen moving with a trained security detail in Mumbai and other cities.

His frequent portrayal of nationalist and military roles, coupled with outspoken public positions on certain issues, has also been cited as a factor behind precautionary measures. It is important to note that security cover in India is periodically reviewed based on threat assessments by intelligence agencies and can be scaled up or down accordingly. IANS

AKSHAY KUMAR'S ESCORT CAR CRASHES INTO AUTO-RICKSHAW

TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

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



Suniel Shetty on health and wellness industry & 'Dhadkan'

Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty, who serves as the host and mentor on the streaming reality business show 'Bharat Ke Super Founders', has shared how he sowed the seeds of the health and wellness industry in his film 'Dhadkan'.

The actor spoke with IANS during the promotions of 'Bharat Ke Super Founders', and said in jest that he was the first mover in the health and wellness industry as his character of Dev in the film made an empire of INR 500 in a year simply by walking on foot.

When asked what was his business in the film, and how he managed to build up the empire in a year, he told IANS, "By walking. Fitness is the biggest business. I got that awareness then, that's why today I have such a big business. So, I walked, got tired, fell, got up, walked, got tired. So, what was there in this? There was a lot of knowledge for mindset, mind and fitness". IANS

SONIYA BANSAL: 'I BELIEVE GROWTH HAS ITS OWN RHYTHM'



Actress Soniya Bansal is not someone who believes in chasing timelines or comparing herself to others. She wants her journey to unfold organically, without rushing milestones, as for her, longevity, self-growth, and inner clarity matter more than ticking boxes. Soniya believes that growth has its own rhythm. The 'Bigg Boss Season 17' contestant said, "I've never believed that there is a fixed timeline for success. Every individual comes with a different story, different responsibilities, and a different pace. When you start comparing yourself to others, you stop listening to your own journey. I feel it's far more important to understand where you stand, what you want, and move ahead

with clarity rather than pressure." Soniya further pointed out that in today's era of social media, it is extremely easy to portray a perfect life, but that is not always the case. She claimed that real growth takes place in silence while one works on inner strength. "We live in a time where social media makes it look like everyone has figured everything out, but that's rarely the truth. I consciously remind myself that growth doesn't have to be loud or visible all the time. Real growth happens quietly, when you're learning, unlearning, and becoming stronger from within," Soniya added. IANS

• "I've never believed
• that there is a fixed
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• When you start
• comparing yourself
• to others, you stop
• listening to your
• own journey

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KIRTI KULHARI'S MAIDEN FEATURE FILM 'KINARE' AS PRODUCER

Actress Kirti Kulhari has announced the completion of the shoot of her first feature film as a producer, marking a significant milestone in her career.

Sharing the update on Instagram, the actress said life has taught her that there is a "right time for everything," as she reflected on the emotional journey behind the project.

Sharing a few glimpses from her upcoming production, the actress wrote: "One thing life has taught me is - 'There's a right time for everything'. My heart is full of love and gratitude, and I feel it's the right time to share with you all something truly special that happened."

She added: I am proud to announce the completion of the shoot of my first #featurefilm as a #producer #kinare Produced by #kintsukuroifilms."

Expressing gratitude, she said the project came together after three years of persistence marked by repeated attempts, setbacks, learning, and growth.

"After 3 years of trying, failing, falling, learning, falling harder, rising again, and learning so much during this time, this finally happened."

The film is written and directed by Akbar Azam Quadri and shot by cinematographer Arjun Sundarram. Calling the film a result of collective passion, courage, vision and love for cinema, Kirti said she could not have imagined a better team for her first production venture.

"Written and directed by @akbarazamquadri and shot by @arjunsundarram, this film is a result of combined passion, courage, vision and pure love for #cinema I wouldn't have had it any other way or with anyone else on MY first, OUR first ...all of you are rockstars and rock solid. Co-produced and hugely supported by my dear friend @kaliabhi, this remains a testament to our friendship and growing trust." *IANS*



SAMEERA REDDY REUNITES WITH 'MUSAFIR' CO-STAR SANJAY DUTT

Actress Sameera Reddy decided to take the ongoing "2026 is the new 2016" trend a little further. She looked back not 10 but 20 years in 2006 as she reunited with her 'Musafir' co-star Sanjay Dutt.

Sameera took to her official Instagram handle and dropped a video in which she was heard saying, "Why 2016 trend, when you can go back to 2006" and shows a throwback picture with Sanjay.

Next, we see Sanjay indulging in some reading. However, as he notices Sameera, he greets her

with a warm hug.

Posting a clip of the fun meet on social media, Sameera wrote, "@duttсанjay 20 yrs & the vibe is still the same #2006 #2026 #musafir #sanjaydutt (sic)".

She further added the "Saaki" track by Sukhwinder Singh and Sunidhi Chauhan from "Musafir" in the backdrop.

Directed and produced by Sanjay Gupta, "Musafir" also stars Anil Kapoor, Aditya Pancholi, Mahesh Manjrekar, and Shakti Kapoor in key roles. *IANS*

SHRADDHA KAPOOR DECLARES MONDAY AS HER ‘SUNDAY’

Bollywood actress Shraddha Kapoor has decided to bend the rules of the week, declaring Monday as her personal 'Sunday'. Taking to Instagram, the actress, who is the most-followed Indian woman on Instagram, shared two laid-back selfies in which she is seen lounging on a couch, sporting glasses. She kept it casual yet chic in a beige top, perfectly capturing her relaxed mood.

Shraddha wrote in Hindi, "Mera Sunday Aaj hai, kya kar loge??? (My Sunday is today, what will you do???)".

Shraddha, who is the daughter of veteran actor Shakti Kapoor, began her acting career with a brief role in the 2010 heist film Teen Patti. She bagged her first major role in the teen drama Luv Ka The End in 2011.

However, her fandom skyrocketed with her work in Mohit Suri's romantic musical Aashiqui 2 in 2013. She also featured in Vishal Bhardwaj's acclaimed drama Haider, Ek Villain, ABCD 2, Baaghi, Chhichhore, Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar, Saaho, and the Stree franchise.

Shraddha is set to return with Stree 3. The third installment in the popular franchise is scheduled to reach the audience by August 2027.

She has also been roped in for a biopic based on the legendary Marathi folk performer Vithabai Narayangaonkar, and the forthcoming drama has been named Eetha.

The project will chronicle the journey of dancer Vithabai Narayangaonkar, who was one of Maharashtra's most prominent Tamasha performers of her time. IANS



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Puri in Odisha is one of the four must-visit pilgrimage sites for Hindus because of Jagannath Temple that forms the part of Char Dham in India. Puri is a beach city located on the coast of Bay of Bengal, which is one of the favorites among people of West Bengal for a short trip.

Having gained popularity among hippies back in the 1970s due to the legalization of Bhang, Puri is still a popular destination among backpackers, however, the availability of bhang is now limited. With a plethora of hotels and homestays, the local tourists like to stay near the New Marine Drive and the backpackers prefer to stay near Chakra Tirtha. The Rath Yatra (chariot festival) which takes place during the month of June-July should not be missed if you are planning to visit during this time.

Known as the resting place of Lord Shiva, the majestic history and heritage of Puri date back to the 3rd century B. C. Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar complete the Golden Triangle of Orissa, with their religious significance and cultural heritage being the centers of tourism in this state. There are a lot of places near Puri that one must visit, like the Chilika Lake, Puri beach, Gundicha Ghar and the very famous Sun temple of Konark. Puri is soon turning into an industrial hub with major manufacturing companies coming here.

PLACES TO VISIT IN PURI

Sri Jagannath Puri Temple: Located in the sacred town of Puri, the Jagannath Temple or the pride of India was built in the 11th century by King Indradyumna. This glorious temple is the abode of Lord Jagannath who is a form of Lord Vishnu. It is the most revered pilgrimage site for Hindus and is included in the pious Char Dham Yatra with Badrinath, Dwarka and Rameshwaram. Apart from the main shrine that rises high, many minor temples within the complex will make you feel like you have entered God's home itself.

The splendid Oriya architecture of the Jagannath Puri Temple is an icing on the cake. The four gates are beautifully designed with intricate carvings. The

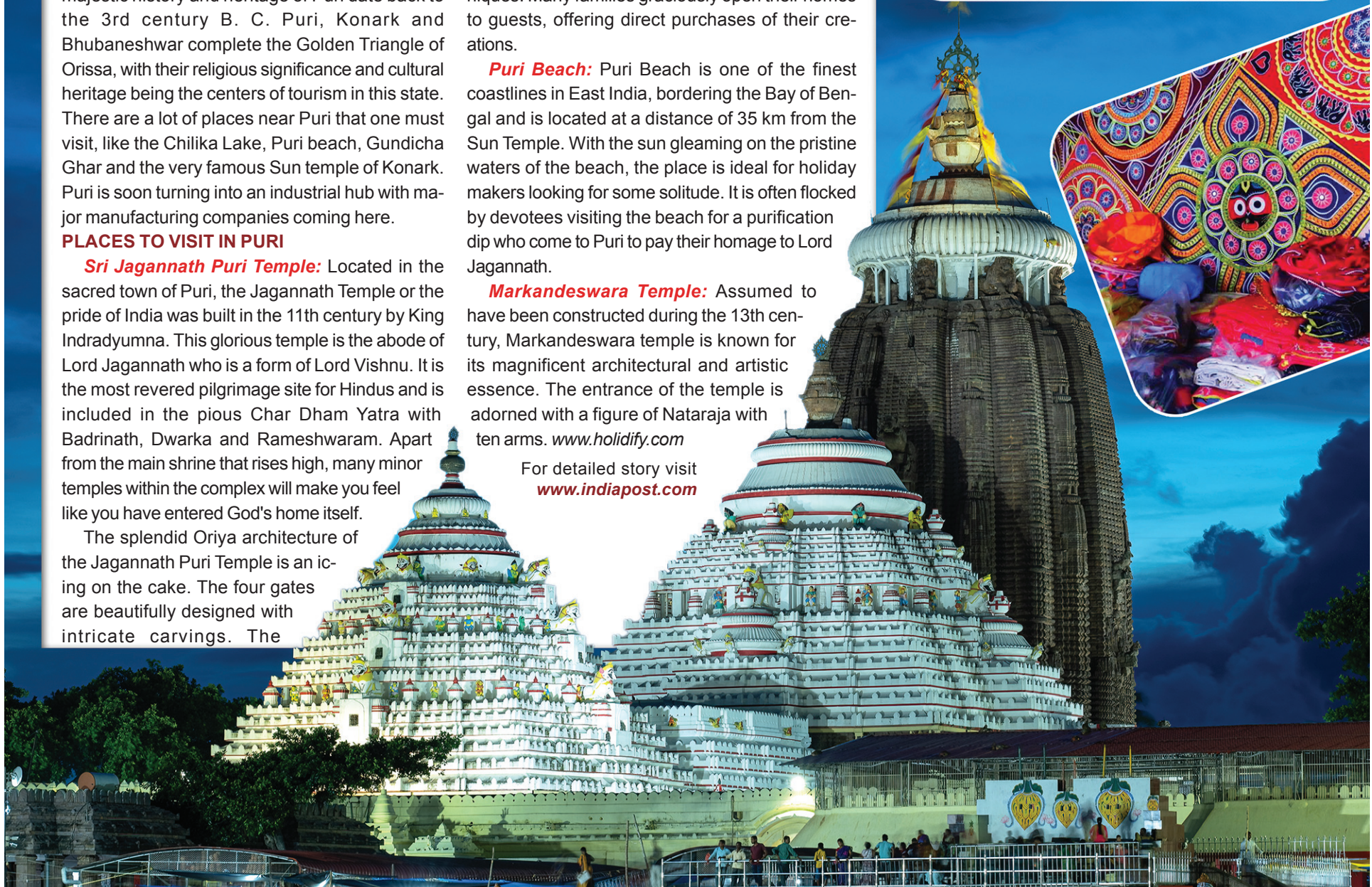
scrumptious Mahaprasad of the temple is something you should not miss. In one of the largest kitchens of India, the lip-smacking food is cooked in earthen pots for thousands every day and offered to devotees. The vibrant religious festivals of the town allure tourists in large numbers. The most awaited of them is the Rath Yatra celebrated with immense gusto. The colorful ambience, interesting rituals, vim and vigor of the pilgrims is worth witnessing.

Raghurajpur Artist Village: In 2000, Raghurajpur was honored as a 'heritage village' by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), fostering a renaissance of traditional art forms among its artisans. Both men and women actively engage in this artistic pursuit. These artisans warmly welcome visitors, readily sharing insights into the art's origins and techniques. Many families graciously open their homes to guests, offering direct purchases of their creations.

Puri Beach: Puri Beach is one of the finest coastlines in East India, bordering the Bay of Bengal and is located at a distance of 35 km from the Sun Temple. With the sun gleaming on the pristine waters of the beach, the place is ideal for holiday makers looking for some solitude. It is often flocked by devotees visiting the beach for a purification dip who come to Puri to pay their homage to Lord Jagannath.

Markandeswara Temple: Assumed to have been constructed during the 13th century, Markandeswara temple is known for its magnificent architectural and artistic essence. The entrance of the temple is adorned with a figure of Nataraja with ten arms. www.holidify.com

For detailed story visit
www.indiapost.com





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