



'Dragon and elephant can dance together'

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'I'm President of European Council but also an OCI'

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CHRISTIANS UNSAFE IN PAK

Pakistan: Christian minorities continue to face deep-rooted discrimination, exploitation

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according to a report in Pakistan Christian Post.

Farzana Imran, a leader of LEAD Ministries - a non-profit, evangelical Christian organization - condemned what she termed as harassment and inhumane behavior of influential employers who hire underage girls from Christian families at nominal pay and abuse them. She stressed that such practices showcase the deep-rooted discrimination and exploitation faced by Christian minorities, especially young girls, who are involved in domestic labor.

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R-Day at the iconic Gadar Memorial, SFO

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New Indian Consular Center opens in Seattle

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INDIA POST

SURVEY
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This week's question

Will Iran negotiate with US without going to war?

Last week's result

Can EU defend Greenland against US take over?

YES 16% NO 84%



Chief Guest President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen is being received by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the national flag hoisting (left) and a view of the Ministry of Culture tableau during the 77th Republic Day Parade, at Kartavya Path, in New Delhi (DPR PMO/ANI Photo)



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Alia Bhatt on 'Border 2'



Actress Alia Bhatt gave a special shout-out to her 'dear friend' Varun Dhawan after witnessing his powerful performance in "Border 2"

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CHRISTIANS UNSAFE IN PAK



Christian rights advocates and civil society groups have severely condemned the incident of a 13-year-old Christian girl being allegedly abused in Pakistan

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Pakistan: Christian minorities continue to face deep-rooted discrimination, exploitation

QUETTA: Christian rights advocates and civil society groups have severely condemned the incident of a 13-year-old Christian girl being allegedly abused in Pakistan, urging the country's authorities to protect vulnerable children from similar acts of violence and humiliation in the future.

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Another leader of LEAD Ministries, Pastor Imran Amana, stressed that lack of access to education is a key reason for pushing Christian children into exploitative labor. He said, "This is why we continuously urge our community to prioritize education for their children."

LEAD Ministries founder Sardar Mushtaq Gill stressed that minority women

and girls are disproportionately impacted by illiteracy, poverty and social marginalization.

"Human rights activists argue that incidents like this underscore the urgent need for stricter enforcement of child labor laws,

tion in the future," it added.

Earlier this month, a federal court in Pakistan ordered the police to find and present a 13-year-old Christian girl who was kidnapped, converted and forcibly married to a Muslim man, local media reported.



Leader of LEAD Ministries, Pastor Imran Amana, stressed that lack of access to education is a key reason for pushing Christian children into exploitative labor. He said, "This is why we continuously urge our community to prioritize education for their children."

accountability for abusive employers, and targeted social protection for religious minorities. They warn that without systemic change, poverty and discrimination will continue to trap Christian families in cycles of exploitation and fear," a report in Pakistan Christian Post stated.

"The case has renewed calls for authorities to investigate the alleged abuse, ensure justice for the victim, and take concrete steps to protect vulnerable children from similar acts of violence and humilia-

A two-judge bench of Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) ordered police to present Maria Shahbaz and 30-year-old Shehryar Ahmad in court. Supreme Court Attorney Rana Abdul Hameed said that Ahmad abducted Maria Shahbaz on July 29 last year, forcibly converted her to Islam and married her, Christian Daily International reported. Justice Ali Baqar Najafi and Justice Karim Khan Agha admitted the petition filed by Maria's father, Shahbaz Masih.

"After our petitions for the child's recov-

ery were rejected by the sessions court in Lahore and the Lahore High Court, we decided to challenge those decisions before the FCC, Christian Daily International-Morning Star News quoted Hameed as saying.

"We informed the court that the girl is a minor and is being subjected to rape under the guise of Islamic conversion and marriage," Hameed said.

According to Hameed, Lahore police colluded with the suspect, resulting in magistrate court discharging the complaint of girl's family. He said, "The girl was forced to record a statement claiming she had willingly converted to Islam and married Ahmad."

"She also falsely stated that she was an adult, despite official documentary evidence proving that she is a minor and below the legal age of marriage under provincial child marriage laws, which prohibit the marriage of girls under 16," Christian Daily International-Morning Star News quoted Hameed as saying.

Shahbaz Masih, a driver and father of five, said that his neighbor, Ahmad, kidnapped his daughter when she was going to a nearby shop from her home. Masih registered a First Information Report (FIR) with Nawab Town Police Station in Lahore. However, police told him that Maria had recorded a statement on July 31, 2025, before Model Town Judicial Magistrate Hassan Sarfaraz Cheema claiming she had willingly converted to Islam and married Ahmad. *IANS*

Have dragon and elephant dance together: Chinese President extends R-Day greetings to India

BEIJING/NEW DELHI: Chinese President Xi Jinping extended his greetings to President Droupadi Murmu on India's 77th Republic Day while reflecting on the pragmatic approach from both countries of prioritizing dialogue, confidence-building measures, and regional engagement.

"President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message to Indian President Droupadi Murmu on India's 77th Republic Day. It should be the right choice for China and India to be good-neighborly friends and partners that help each other succeed, and have the dragon and the

elephant dance together," Xu Feihong, the Ambassador of China to India, posted on X.

Earlier in the day, the Chinese Ambassador also attended the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi.

"Glad to join the 77th Republic Day celebrations of India," he said in another post on X.

Last November, Xu Feihong had highlighted that China is ready to work with India as a doer in high-level practical cooperation.

"In the 15th Five-Year Plan period,

China will continue to strengthen the foundation of the real economy, accelerate high-level sci-tech self-reliance, and expand high-standard opening-up. This will create more cooperation opportunities for all countries, including India," he had said while addressing a seminar on 'China's 15th Five-Year Plan: New Blueprint for China's Development, New Opportunities for China-India

Cooperation'.

"We will upgrade traditional industries

such as chemical and machinery, which is expected to unlock about \$1.4 trillion of new market space in the next five years. We will foster emerging industries such as new energy and new materials, which is expected to give rise to several trillion-dollar new growth engines. We will strategically invest in future industries such as bio-manufacturing and sixth-generation mobile communication, with the scale added over the next decade equivalent to building an entirely new high-tech industrial ecosystem for China," the Ambassador had mentioned. *IANS*



"India comes out on top," US Trade Representative Greer says India gains access to EU markets after FTA

WASHINGTON DC: United States Trade Representative Jamieson Greer has said that India stands to benefit the most from the recently concluded Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the European Union, citing greater market access, labor advantages, and potential mobility opportunities for Indian workers.

In an interview with Fox News, Greer said the agreement must be viewed in the

context of shifting global trade dynamics under US President Donald Trump's push to prioritize domestic production.



Jamieson Greer

He noted that the European Union, being highly trade-dependent, is increasingly looking beyond the US for export markets.

"Strategically, it's important to understand that because President Trump has prioritized domestic production and essentially started charging a fee for other countries to access our market, these

countries are trying to find other outlets for their overproduction," Greer said.

"And so the EU is turning to India to try to find a place. The EU is so trade-dependent they need other outlets if they can't keep sending all their stuff to the United States. I've looked at some of the details of the deal so far. I think India comes out on top on this, frankly," he added during his interview with Fox News.

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According to Greer, India is set to gain enhanced access to European markets and may also benefit from expanded mobility provisions. He highlighted India's competitive advantage, pointing to its low-cost labor and growing manufacturing base.

"They get more market access into Europe. It sounds like they have some additional immigration rights. I don't know for sure, but President von der Leyen of the EU has talked about mobility for Indian workers into Europe. So, I think on net,

they expect India to wind down this purchase.

India's going to have a heyday with this," he said.

"They have low-cost labor, and it looks like the EU is doubling down on globalization when we're trying to fix some of the problems of globalization here in the US," the US Trade Representative added.

When questioned about the Tariff structure on India in respect to purchasing Russian oil, the US Trade Representative said

"They have made a lot of progress on this. I am in frequent contact with my counterpart in India. I have a great working relationship with him, but they still have a ways to go on this point. They like the discount that you get from Russian oil, so it's hard for them. The Treasury Department has put into place, you know, a few weeks ago now, more significant sanctions, so we expect India to continue to wind that down, but we're watching it closely," he said. ANI

India outpaces US on trade as tariff push falters

WASHINGTON: India has surged ahead of the United States on trade deal-making this year, sharpening anxiety in Washington as the Trump administration's tariff-driven strategy struggles to deliver results, according to comments by Henrietta Treyz, co-founder of Veda Partners.

"Down in (Washington) DC, the agitation is over the fact that India now has inked 100 percent more deals than Donald Trump this year," Treyz told CNBC in an interview, pointing to growing frustration among US lawmakers over the administration's inability to translate aggressive trade rhetoric into concrete agreements.

Treyz recalled the administration's pledge earlier this summer to deliver rapid progress on trade. "In the 90 deals in 90 days period of time this summer, if you'll recall that when (Treasury) Secretary (Scott) Bessent and USTR (Jamieson) Greer were out there, they promised those 90 deals in 90 days," she said.

The reality, she added, has fallen well short of those expectations. "We have two deals in 10 months, and those are with Cambodia and Malaysia," Treyz claimed, noting that "the South Korea deal has not moved forward."

She described the situation as particularly troubling for US lawmakers because

"Down in (Washington) DC, the agitation is over the fact that India now has inked 100 percent more deals than Donald Trump this year," Treyz told CNBC in an interview, pointing to growing frustration among US lawmakers over the administration's inability

of where trade relations were before the current administration took office. "The irony and the trouble for lawmakers in India outpaces US on trade as tariff push falters. Is that going into this administration, 96 percent of trade with South Korea was covered by a free trade agreement,"

Treyz said. "We had zero percent tariffs."

Against that backdrop, Treyz said the administration's use of tariffs as leverage has failed to produce breakthroughs with key partners. "Now the cudgel that Trump has been blasting the EU, Japan, and South Korea with all year is not bearing fruit," she said.

Domestic political costs are also mounting, she added, as public opinion turns against higher tariffs. "For lawmakers, the concern is that Americans don't like the tariffs," Treyz said. "50 percent of Americans want the Supreme Court to strike them down." IANS

Canadian PM Carney to visit India in March first week: Reports

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is set to visit India in the first week of March, the Globe and Mail reported citing Reuters.

As per the Globe and Mail the visit of the Canadian PM would see the signing of deals on uranium, energy, minerals and artificial intelligence, Dinesh Patnaik, India's High Commissioner to Canada said in an interview.

It further reported that Canada's Energy Minister Tim Hodgson is visiting India this week who while confirmed that PM Carney would visit India, did not mention any dates.

"There are plans for the Prime Minister to visit at some point this year, it will depend on the progress we make," Hodgson said in a Sunday interview.

As per Globe and Mail, formal negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with India should also start in March, Patnaik said.

Citing Patnaik it further reported that PM Carney would sign smaller agreements with the India on nuclear energy, oil and gas, environment, AI and quantum computing as well as deals on education and culture during his visit, with a 10-year \$2.8-billion uranium supply deal is likely to be included.

While Hodgson did not confirm the deal, he said that Canada is happy to sell uranium under the Canada-India nuclear co-operation agreement as long as India abides International Energy Agency safeguards.

As per Globe and Mail, Patnaik said that the visit of Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to Canada will also take place soon, adding that National Security Advisor Ajit Doval will visit Ottawa next month as part of regular engagements between India and Canada to exchange intelligence and discuss security measures.

Earlier, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had a productive conversation with Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand, focusing on strengthening India-Canada bilateral ties. They discussed deepening cooperation in various sectors, including economic partnership, artificial intelligence, and high-level exchanges.

These developments follow as US President Donald Trump warned Canada against making trade deals with China. ANI

'I'm President of European Council but also an overseas Indian citizen': Antonio Costa

NEW DELHI: European Council President Antonio Costa showed his overseas Indian card during the joint press meet here in the national capital and underlined how the conclusion of negotiations holds a special meaning for him.

"I'm the President of the European Council, but I'm also an overseas Indian citizen. Then, as you can imagine, for me it has a special meaning. I'm very proud of my roots in Goa, where my father's family came from and the connection between Europe and India is something personal to me"

"We conclude today our trade negotiations. We relaunched at the latest meeting that I had the pleasure of hosting in May 2021 in my previous capacity. Our summit sends a clear message to the world. At a time when the global order is being fundamentally reshaped, the European Union and India stand together as strategic and reliable partners. Today, we are taking our partnership to the next level. As the two largest democracies in the

world, we are working hand in hand to deliver concrete benefits for our citizens and to shape a resilient global order that underpins peace and stability, economic



European Council President Antonio Costa

growth and sustainable development," he added.

He shared that EU and India must work together towards shared prosperity and security.

"Trade is a crucial geopolitical stabilizer

and the fundamental source of economic growth. Trade agreements reinforce rules-based economic order and promote shared prosperity. That's why the FTA is of historic importance", the European Council President remarked.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the conclusion of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA), describing it as "not just a trade agreement, but a blueprint for shared prosperity."

The Prime Minister noted that India-EU relations have grown exponentially in recent years, rooted in shared democratic values, economic synergy, and strong people-to-people ties, acknowledging that the India-EU trade stands at EUR 180 billion.

Highlighting expanding areas of cooperation, PM Modi said India and the EU have forged partnerships spanning strategic technology, clean energy, digital governance, and development cooperation, leading to decisions that will benefit all sections of society. ANI

Mary Millben backs PM Modi, urges Trump to pivot

WASHINGTON: In a forceful message on global leadership and diplomacy, singer and actress Mary Millben lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's handling of US-India tensions and urged Washington to "pivot" its approach, saying dignity and strategic restraint had elevated PM Modi's standing on the world stage.

While reaffirming that President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Modi share a personal rapport, Millben said "true friendship always admits wrongdoing or, in this case, wrong approach," adding that she and "many in America disapprove of the hostile rhetoric recently from the Trump Administration towards India."

She said she had "and will continue to encourage President Trump to approach India as a friend and ally," urging a policy reset grounded in respect, alliance, and shared democratic values. IANS

आप कड़ी मेहनत करते हैं। इसलिए, हम आपके लिए स्वास्थ्य योजना ढूँढ़ना आसान बनाते हैं।

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कलिफ़ोर्निया के लिए दिल से



CoveredCA.com

New Indian Consular Center opens in Seattle

WASHINGTON: Indian authorities have announced the opening of a new Indian Consular Application Center in Seattle to improve access to consular services for the Indian diaspora in the Pacific Northwest.

The center at 1015 2nd Avenue, Suite 804, Seattle, WA 98104 is now co-located with the Indian Consulate in Seattle, an official release said recently.

Officials stated the move is aimed at making services easier to access for Indian nationals and other applicants in the region.

The visa application center was inaugurated in the presence of government and non-government dignitaries. More than 300 members of the Indian American community from Seattle and nearby states attended the event.

The Seattle center will operate as a single location for a wide range of services. These include applications for Indian visas, passports, Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI), renunciation of Indian citizenship, Police Clearance Certificates, the Global Entry Program (GEP), and Miscellaneous and Attestation services.

The Indian Consulate in Seattle said the newly co-located offices of the Indian Consular Application Centre with the Consulate in the Federal Reserve Building are "expected to enhance operational efficiency and provide consular applicants with a one-stop facility for submitting applications and resolving queries."

VFS Global, which provides outsourced consular services for India in the United States, said the new center is part of a broader effort to streamline the application process and improve service delivery.

Several applicant-focused changes have been introduced under the expanded network. The centers will now remain open on Saturdays. Return courier services are included in standard service fees. Services such as photographs, photocopies, and form filling are available at no extra cost within the center. IANS

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

8 India Post

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January 30, 2026



Republic Day celebrations held at the iconic Gadar Memorial, SFO; hosted by CGISF



VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

The 76th Republic Day of India was celebrated with pride and solemnity at the Consulate General of India (CGI), San Francisco, in the presence of members of the Indian diaspora, community leaders, and distinguished guests at the iconic Gadar memorial.

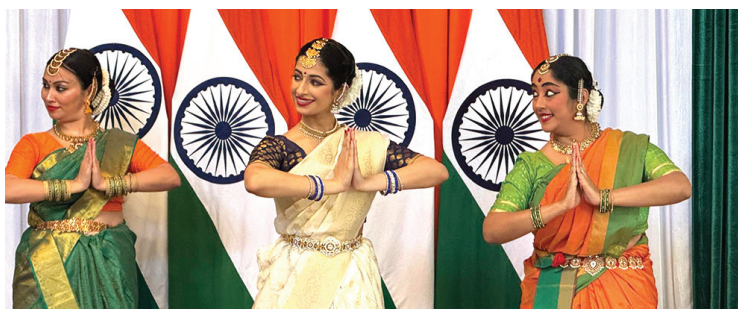
The celebrations began with the hoisting of the National Flag by the Honorable Consul General of India, Dr Srikar Reddy followed by the singing of the National Anthem. The occasion marked India's adoption of its Constitution and reaffirmed the nation's enduring commitment to democratic values.

Addressing the gathering, the Consul General Dr Reddy spoke on key excerpts from the Honorable President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu's Republic Day address, highlighting India's progress, democratic resilience, inclusive development, and the vital role played by citizens at home and abroad in nation-building. The Consul General emphasized India's achievements in

governance, innovation, women-led development, and its growing global engagement.

The Consul General expressed sincere appreciation to the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) for their continued support and

active engagement with India's growth and global standing. Acknowledging their contributions across business, technology, education, culture, and public service, the Consul General thanked the NRI community for



acting as vital ambassadors of India's values and traditions abroad. He noted that the strength of India's global partnerships is deeply rooted in the dedication and achievements of its diaspora, whose commitment continues to strengthen ties between India and the United States.

The program also featured patriotic renditions and cultural elements that reflected India's rich heritage and unity in diversity. The celebrations served as an occasion to strengthen bonds within the Indian community and reaffirm shared values of freedom, equality, and constitutional ideals.

The Consulate General expressed its appreciation to the community members and volunteers whose participation made the Republic Day celebrations meaningful and memorable. The flag hoisting at the Gadar Memorial reinforces the importance of preserving history while educating younger generations about the contributions of freedom fighters who operated far from home but remained deeply connected to India's destiny.



VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

The Consulate General of India hosted a community banquet as part of the Republic Day celebrations, bringing together elected officials, community leaders, and members of the Indian diaspora to commemorate India's 76th Republic Day in a spirit of unity, pride, and cultural vibrancy on Jan 26 at the consulate premises.

The banquet was graced by the presence of the Mayor of San Francisco and the Mayor of Milpitas, whose participation underscored the strong and growing ties between India and the Bay Area, as well as the important role played by the Indian American community in the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the region.

Addressing the gathering, the Consul General of India, Dr Srikar Reddy extended warm Republic Day greetings to the attendees and highlighted the significance of the Indian Constitution as the cornerstone of the world's largest democracy. The Consul General spoke about India's democratic values, inclusive growth, and



global engagement, while acknowledging the contributions of the Indian diaspora in strengthening India-U.S. relations.

The Consul General also expressed heartfelt appreciation to the diaspora community for their continued support, active engagement, and commitment to preserv-

ing India's cultural heritage while contributing meaningfully to their adopted homeland. The address emphasized the role of the diaspora as a bridge between the two nations.

Cont'd on page 16





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Indian National flag hoisted at San Francisco City Hall in symbol of friendship and unity



VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

SAN FRANCISCO, CA: The Indian National Flag was ceremonially hoisted at the iconic San Francisco City Hall in a moment of pride, unity, and celebration of the strong cultural ties between India and the United States. The flag hoisting was led by Penny Coulter, Chief of Staff for Protocol, representing the City and County



of San Francisco.

The event was attended by Dr. Srikar Reddy, Consul General of India in San Francisco (CGISF) and DCG Rajesh Adhla, underscoring the significance of the occasion and the enduring partnership between India and the Silicon Valley. The presence of the Consul General highlighted India's close engagement with local governments and



the vibrant Indian diaspora in Northern California.

Several community members, civic leaders, and representatives from diverse organizations graced the occasion, reflecting San Francisco's multicultural spirit and, active role played by the Indian-American community in the city's social, cultural and economic life.

The ceremony served as a powerful reminder of shared democratic values, mutual respect, and the growing people-to-people connections between India and the United States. Attendees expressed pride in witnessing the Indian tricolor flying at one of San Francisco's most prominent landmarks, symbolizing friendship, inclusivity, and global cooperation.

As risks escalate, wave of community resistance spreads

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

As immigration enforcement actions intensify across the country, communities are responding with a growing wave of resistance from lawsuits and civil rights complaints to school-based organizing and coordinated local defense efforts. American Social Media (ACoM) held an online briefing on the Jan 23rd, invited immigrant rights advocates, community organizers, legal scholars, and immigration lawyers to discuss how communities can respond to the increasingly risky enforcement environment nationwide through legal action, school protection, mutual aid networks, and organized action.

Amanda Otero, parent from Minnesota Public Schools, and co-executive director

of Take Action Minnesota shared that local parents and community members quickly organized "shelter school" initiatives, patrolling around schools to ensure students could safely enter and leave. They also provided assistance through community networks, offering transportation, food,

Amanda Otero, parent from Minnesota Public Schools, and co-executive director of Take Action Minnesota shared that local parents and community members quickly organized "shelter school" initiatives, patrolling around schools to ensure students could safely enter and leave

rent, and utility subsidies to immigrant families who were afraid to leave their homes. She noted that over 1,000 parents

within the Minneapolis Public School system alone participated in these initiatives, and this model is spreading to other school districts across the state.

Vanessa Cárdenas, Executive Director of the immigration advocacy group America's Voice, pointed out that the re-

rapid deployment of hundreds of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers, prompting the community to quickly shift its strategy to one centered on "rights education, community defense, and mutual support." She explained that the organization implemented "Know Your Rights" training, ICE officer identification, a hotline, and door-to-door mobilization of residents to participate in watchdog operations. This enabled the community to respond promptly to unexpected law enforcement situations, while also mobilizing hundreds of volunteers to provide support such as transportation, shopping, childcare, and payment of living expenses.

Mark Tushnet, Professor Emeritus at Harvard Law School, points out that during the era of the "Fugitive Slave Laws" in the 19th century, street interventions and legal battles also occurred in Northern cities. Although these often failed to immediately stop the system from functioning, they successfully ignited public opinion and promoted broader social change. He believes that the significance of current street actions and legal challenges lies not only in whether they are won, but also in revealing the injustice of the system and prompting more people who were previously uninvolved to rethink the boundaries between state power and civil rights.

cent immigration enforcement operation in Minnesota is one of the largest deployments in U.S. history, with the federal government mobilizing nearly 3,000 law enforcement personnel to a single city. She stated that this shows the federal government is unlikely to back down in the short term, and the official claim that it is "only targeting felons" has been shattered in reality, with the enforcement action impacting overall community safety and basic rights.

Seri Lee, Deputy Director of the Chicago community organization ONE Northside, stated that the area faced a

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Invest India Business Forum in Seattle showcases India Investment opportunities in AI, Ag-Tech, Quantum, Photonics, Higher Edu and Healthcare

Largest Trade Mission from State of Washington set to visit India!



SEATTLE: In partnership with Montana World Affairs Council and ZOHO, Consulate General of India Seattle hosted the second edition of Invest India Business Forum at the Bell Harbor International Conference Center today.

CEOs and senior executives of several multinational companies from the Greater Seattle area, along with local dignitaries attended, which included representatives from Microsoft, Salesforce, Amazon, T-Mobile among others. Leading Industry

mission ever to visit India from 28 January to 07 February 2026. The delegation includes nearly 30 plus members from Port of Seattle, City of Bellevue Economic Development, Mayor of Redmond, and senior leadership of Microsoft, Amazon and Boeing. Ms. Rebecca Lovell, Interim President & CEO of GSP addressed the gathering and looked forward to developing stronger commercial and investment ties between Seattle and India.

The event also showcased various ex-

mand in recent years after US granted market access to Indian pomegranates in 2023. Other items on display included ODOP (One District One Product) cultural heritage items from all 28 States of India, Araku coffee from the foothills of eastern ghats of Southern India and some of India's finest wines and hand-crafted spirits.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Eric Wexler, CEO of Providence, commended India's healthcare potential and highlighted

technology solutions such as its Office Suite, sending a positive signal of encouragement to Indian startups.

The Invest India Business Forum was also attended by a large delegation of senior business leaders from the Montana World Affairs Council. It may be noted that a youth delegation led by Montana World Affairs Council had recently visited India and Montana State Governor Greg Gianforte had hosted a welcome reception at the State Capitol in Helena.



experts from the fields of Artificial Intelligence, Photonics, Quantum Computing, Ag-Tech, Healthcare and Higher Education made detailed presentation on the investment opportunities and the presented on the successful state of progress in those sectors in India and their investment potential.

As a follow up from today's Invest India Business Forum (IIBF), Greater Seattle Partners (GSP), along with Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce will be leading Washington State's largest trade

periential Indian products on display for tasting and exports to the US Pacific Northwest, which included the premium Indian "Bhagwa Variety" pomegranates for tasting and these would be very soon available at local retail stores in USA. These Bhagwa variety of Indian pomegranates produced in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka, are renowned worldwide for their rich flavor, deep red color and high nutritional value. Since India is one of the leading producers of pomegranates in the world, there has been an increased de-

Providence's recently inaugurated Global Capability Center in Hyderabad, which is projected to create more than 2000 new jobs. The facility will focus on building AI-enabled advanced healthcare technology solutions by leveraging India's talent pool.

Representative of ZOHO showcased how AI driven locally developed data models were being utilized in India, as it pushes for digital self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat) and data sovereignty. It may be noted that Government of India has recently adopted Zoho's

The Invest India Business Forum (IIBF) aimed to deepen economic ties between US Pacific Northwest and India by presenting India's investment potential in key priority sectors. Additionally, the Forum also served as a platform to showcase Indian export-ready products with strong potential in the Greater Seattle market. As such, IIBF aimed to complement Consulate's ongoing efforts to advance 3Ts - Trade, Tourism & Technology by promoting investments, industry linkages and exports.

Indian diplomatic missions celebrate Republic Day across US

WASHINGTON: Indian diplomatic missions and consulates across the United States celebrated the 77th Republic Day of India with flag hoisting ceremonies, diaspora participation, and readings of the President of India's address.

At the Embassy of India in Washington, Ambassador Vinay Kwatra unfurled the tricolor at India House. The embassy said the President's address to the na-

tion on the eve of Republic Day was relayed during the event.

The embassy said the ambassador presented awards to winners of a competition held to mark Vishwa Hindi Diwas. It added that members of the Indian diaspora took part in the celebrations.

In Seattle, the Indian tricolor was unfurled at the Federal Reserve Building as Republic Day celebrations began with the hoisting of the national flag. India in

Seattle thanked Seattle Mayor Katie Wilson for attending and for reaffirming the friendship between India and Seattle.

"The new office of the India Consular Application Center (co-located with the Consulate now) was also inaugurated," the post said. It added that more than 300 members of the Indian American community joined the celebrations.

In New York, the Consulate celebrated the 77th Republic Day with a

flag hoisting by Consul General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan. He read the President of India's address to the nation.

The post said the address highlighted the values of the Constitution and the role of citizens in India and the Indian diaspora abroad in building a Developed India@2047. It thanked members of the diaspora for attending despite extreme weather conditions. IANS

Indian American candidate Rakhi Israni seeks to re-engage communities in Congressional run

WASHINGTON: Calling for a return to "duty and decency" in policymaking, Indian American candidate Rakhi Israni said she is running for Congress to re-engage communities that feel locked out of decisions shaping their daily lives, from affordability to healthcare.

Israni, who announced her Congressional run last week, said she decided to enter the race after years of working on service and policy issues, at a time when she believes public discourse has drifted away from solving real problems.

"Problems are not getting solved," Israni told IANS in an exclusive interview, adding that quality of life has deteriorated even as political rhetoric grows louder and less reflective of people's concerns. Her campaign raised more than USD1 million in the first 24 hours of her announcement.

Israni said the decision to run came together quickly after the seat in California's 14th Congressional District became open. The district is currently represented by Democratic Congressman Eric Swalwell, who is running for governor. "This opportunity came up, and I was asked to run for it," she said, describing the move as sudden but necessary to "wake up the community" and encourage greater participation in policy making.

Israni said she is "a mother of four, an attorney, an entrepreneur, and an educator," and stressed that family and service have guided her choices. She said her involvement in handling issues such as food insecurity, homelessness, housing, and affordability convinced her that she could have a larger impact by seeking federal office.

Describing the 14th District, Israni said it covers parts of the Bay Area, including Fremont, Hayward, Pleasanton, Livermore, and Dublin. Indian Americans are present in sizeable numbers in these areas.

She noted that the district is about "40 percent Asian" and has one of the largest populations of Indian registered voters in

the country. She described it as an educated district with above-average income and home ownership, where families are focused on stability and opportunity for

cost of living, affordability, and access to basic needs such as healthcare.

She said her approach has been shaped by listening to the people affected

policymaking has increasingly become about "social media retweets or likes," rather than solutions. She said politics has catered to "the noisier few," leaving many people feeling unheard. "Most people just want to be heard," she said, adding that restoring a sense of duty and decency is essential to rebuilding trust.

Asked about competition in the race, Israni said her biggest challenge would come from those who prefer the status quo and want to dictate how people should think or live. She said she hopes voters become more engaged with policies and their long-term impact, especially on children and future generations.

On foreign policy, Israni said that while her primary responsibility as a member of Congress would be improving life in her district, she sees strong US-India ties as important, particularly given the district's proximity to Silicon Valley. She said strengthening relations between "the two largest democracies in the world" is relevant to the technology sector and to the broader well-being of people in the region. IANS



their children.

On her campaign priorities, Israni said the central focus is restoring attention to the quality of life. "The main priority is bringing back a focus to the quality of life for people," she said, pointing to the rising

by policies and understanding where changes can benefit the largest number of families.

Responding to a series of questions, Israni was critical of how Congress has functioned in recent years, saying

During GHS 2026 in Orissa, historic number of donors register for AAPI's Stem Cell Donor Drive

We received 238 Stem Donors who registrations at our Stem Donor Registry during the Global Healthcare Summit held in Bhubaneswar, Orissa from Jan 9-11, 2026," said Dr. Sashi Kuppala, Chair of the Stem Cell Drive. "To put it in context, we would have had to do 20 drives to get those many registrations in the United States. Thanks to Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, we successfully launched the project in India."

This initiative was started by Dr. Satheesh Kathula, hematology Oncologist, Past President of AAPI, during his presidency year. Under the leadership of Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, AAPI President this

year, AAPI launched the AAPI Stem Cell Drive India during the Global Healthcare Summit in Odisha, with the help of faculty and GAIMS

Dr. Amit Chakrabarty expressed his "deep gratitude to the many AAPI members, and the students and staff at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences, who have

determine donor compatibility, are inherited and vary by ethnicity. I'm thankful to our local AAPI Chapter leaders, members and volunteers across the nation who have initiated and are spearheading the Bone Marrow and Stem Cell Registration across the nation, joining hands with the national AAPI in our efforts in creating awareness and enrolling more youth and adults to be part of this noble mission."

During the inaugural ceremony of GHS, Prof. R C Das, Dean and Principal of KIMS stressed the importance and urged the medical students at KIM to come forward and register for Stem

Donorship. The students were then led to pledge and commit to encourage Stem Donorship among the patient population they are committed to serve.



overwhelmingly supported and participated at AAPI's Stem Cell Drive during the GHS in Orissa."

Highlighting the need for and the importance of Stem Donors, Dr. Chakrabarty said, "Stem cell transplants are a vital treatment for blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma HLA markers, which

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Washington State Senate passes Resolution No. 8674 honoring India's 77th Republic Day; States of AK, NE, OR & SD mark occasion

SEATTLE: The 77th Republic Day of India was celebrated in Olympia (Washington) with the passing of a unique resolution (SR-8674) in the Washington State Senate. The resolution acknowledged India's strong traditions of democracy, the contributions of the large Indian American population in the State and the role of Indian Consulate in fostering a stronger multifaceted relationship with the State. The resolution also mentions agriculture, trade, technology, critical and emerging technologies as shared priorities between India and Washington State.

The resolution was proposed by Indian American State Senator Manka Dhingra (45th Legislative District) and supported by State Senator Vandana Slatter (48th Legislative District) and was adopted with bipartisan support by all the Senators present in the session. To mark the occasion, a special reception was hosted by the Consulate at the State Capitol in Olympia where several State Senators, members of Washington State House of Representatives and dignitaries participated.

Several States of the US Northwest, in the Consulate's jurisdiction, including Alaska, Nebraska, Washington, Oregon and South Dakota, issued special proclamations honoring the Republic Day celebrations by the Consulate. Several Governors and dignitaries of the US Pacific Northwest region congratulated India with their messages:

Governor of Montana Hon'ble Greg Gianforte acknowledged the "contributions of the Indian and Indian American



community" to Montana's cultural, educational, and economic life, and how their commitment to innovation and learning enriches its society.

Governor of South Dakota Hon'ble Larry Rhoden said, "Congratulations on the 77 years of the Republic of India. I am confident that the United States and India will continue to build even stronger relationship."

Governor of Nebraska Hon'ble Jim Pillen spoke about the "shared values" between India and Nebraska, particularly through collaboration in trade, technology, agriculture, and culture.

Chair of Gates Foundation Mr. Bill Gates said, "Indian innovation is serving people at scale, not just in India, but across the global south. That's true in health, in agriculture, in digital public infrastructure and in new technologies like AI"

US Rep. Kim Schrier (Washington's 8th Congressional District) said, "On behalf of the people of Washington, I wish all of you a happy Republic Day as bright as your tricolor flag and as meaningful as the values and freedoms that your democracy represents. May the friendship between our peoples continue to grow ever stronger in the years ahead."

Further to the above, two separate events were hosted by the Consulate on 26 January 2026. Consul General unfurled the Indian tricolor atop the Federal Reserve building in downtown Seattle and read excerpts from Hon'ble President's address. Hon'ble Mayor of Seattle Katie Wilson and a 30-member delegation from Montana graced the occasion as guests of honor. The celebrations also featured soulful rendering of patriotic poems and traditional Kuchipudi dance performance.

Later in the evening, a grand reception was hosted at the Bell Harbor Conference Center in Seattle with participation from several Washington State leaders, CEOs of leading tech companies and prominent Indian American leaders.

Dignitaries who graced the event included First Lady of Washington State Ms. Colleen Ferguson, Commanding

general of I Corps and JBLM, Washington Lt Gen. Matthew W. McFarlane, Attorney General of Washington State Nick Brown, King County Executive Girmay Zahilay, CEO of Puget Sound Transit Dow Constantine, Mayors of the Cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Kent, Normandy Park, Deputy Mayor of Seattle Brian Surratt, Seattle Police Chief Shon Barnes and Chairman of Puyallup tribe Bill Sterud.

During the evening reception, six recently elected Indian American members of city councils in Washington State were recognized for their contributions to public service and for enhancing the profile and representation of the Indian Americans in local governance structures. Dignitaries and guests also viewed the One District One Product (ODOP) cultural heritage items from all 28 States of India which were exhibited on the sidelines of the event.

It may be noted that, as part of the morning flag unfurling ceremony, the newly co-located offices of the Indian Consular Application Center with the Consulate in the Federal Reserve Building, were also inaugurated. The co-location is expected to enhance operational efficiency and provide consular applicants with a one-stop facility for submitting applications and resolving queries.

Los Angeles County Commission for women to host Women's Civic Engagement event

Empowering Women to Lead Through Wellness and Political Readiness

The Los Angeles County Commission for Women, the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), and NWPC LA Metro will host a women's civic engagement event: Empowering Women to Lead: Leadership, Wellness & Political Readiness on January 31, 2026, at the YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles in downtown Los Angeles.

The goal of the event is to encourage and support more women to pursue civic engagement roles in their community. The event also aims to create space for women leaders to prioritize mental well-being through a series of educational workshops, leadership training, and wellness resources that empower women with the tools and support networks to confidentially step into leadership roles.

When: Saturday, January 31, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Where: YMCA of Metropolitan LA, 401 S. Hope Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071

Who:

The Los Angeles County Commission for Women

The National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)

NWPC LA Metro

Honorable Betty Yee, Former California State Controller

Honorable Fiona Ma, California State Treasurer

Honorable Cindy Wu, Vice President, NWPC Foundation

Regina Smith, LACCW President

We encourage you to arrive early for the Pre-Conference Walk. See you Saturday!

More Community stories on page 16

Tech News

Gold, silver prices touch new highs amid sharp decline in US dollar

MUMBAI: Gold and silver prices continue to scale record highs on 28 January, amid strong buying demand, weakening dollar, and rising geopolitical tensions, raising safe haven demand.

MCX gold February futures rose 2.97 percent to Rs 1,62,387 per 10 grams around 11.30 am. Meanwhile, MCX silver March futures rose 6.21 percent to Rs 3,78,401 per kg.



International markets also saw gold and silver touching records as caution grew due to ongoing policy uncertainty, fresh tariff threats, and criticism of the Federal Reserve from the US administration.

US gold futures April contracts rose above \$5,200 an ounce, supported by a sharp decline in the US dollar. The dollar fell to its weakest level in four years after President Donald Trump played down worries about the currency's strength, said Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities, Mehta Equities Ltd. *IANS*

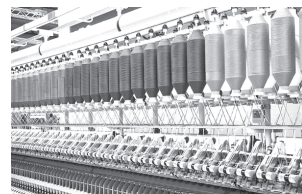
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January 30, 2026

India-EU FTA sparks cheer among Surat textile traders



AHMEDABAD: The signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the European Union has triggered a wave of optimism among textile traders in Surat, one of India's largest textile hubs.

The agreement, finalized 27 January, is expected to significantly boost exports by providing Indian textile products with improved access to markets across 27 European countries. *IANS*

Trade deal unlocks access to \$572.3 billion EU pharmaceuticals and medical devices market

NEW DELHI: The free trade agreement (FTA) between India and the European Union (EU) unlocks access to the \$572.3 billion EU pharmaceuticals and medical devices market, giving impetus to the Indian pharmaceuticals sector, according to the government.

According to the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, this would enable pharma industries to scale, generate employment, and reinforce India's positioning as a reliable partner in the pharmaceuticals sector underlining its growing stature as the pharmacy of the world.

It is expected to expand skilled jobs, industrial employment, stronger MSME participation and, strengthen global supply chain integration, the ministry added.

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers, JP Nadda, said that the FTA opens new doors for pharmaceuticals and medical devices.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President António Costa witness the exchange of an MoU during the joint Press Statement, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal also present. *(ANI Photo/Rahul Singh)*

"Access to the \$572.3 billion Pharma and MedTech market in EU and liberalized tariffs for Indian medical devices will accelerate growth in this high-value sector," said Nadda.

"Under the visionary leadership of PM Narendra Modi, India continues to expand its presence as a reliable global partner in

healthcare and manufacturing," the minister added.

The FTA is an important milestone in one of India's most strategic economic partnerships.

Designed as a modern, rules-based trade partnership, the FTA responds to contemporary global challenges while enabling deeper market integration between the

world's 4th and 2nd largest economies.

It will give preferential market access to drive faster growth in high-value segments, liberalize tariffs for key 'Made In India' medical devices, ensure growth across inorganic and organic chemicals, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, soaps and detergents and help in capacity expansion and MSME cluster development to drive sectorial growth.

It will also open major expansion opportunities across hubs in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Coastal export hubs will be able to scale Export-led growth to support employment and processing intensive sectors.

The India-EU FTA reinforces shared values, fosters innovation, laying the foundation for inclusive, resilient and future-ready growth for both India and Europe, said the ministry. *IANS*

Elon Musk, Vinod Khosla clash over 'white people' row on social media

NEW DELHI: A heated exchange between SpaceX founder Elon Musk and venture capitalist Vinod Khosla erupted on social media after Musk posted that the global population share of white people is declining.

Responding to Musk, Khosla accused the US billionaire entrepreneur of promoting the WAGA, short for 'white America great again' agenda, and not MAGA (Make America Great Again).

Khosla, a prominent Silicon Valley investor, urged non-white employees at Musk's companies to join his company.

"All non-whites in Tesla and SpaceX and all decent whites

should quit and join our portfolio. Email us your LinkedIn!" Khosla said.

Musk lashed out at Khosla, calling him "pompous," adding that his partner is half-Indian.

"You've also gone full r***rd. My partner, Shivon, is half Indian, and my eldest son with her is named in honor of the great Indian physicist Chandrasekhar," Musk posted on social media platform X.

The row follows earlier controversy this month after Musk appeared to endorse a post suggesting white men could face existential risk if they became a minority.

Musk reacted with a "100" emoji, which was widely inter-

preted as being supportive of the argument.

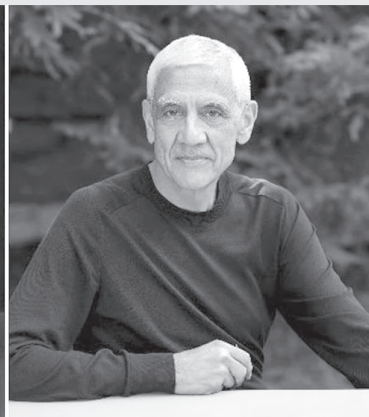
Musk has framed his views on



migration as a concern over public safety, economic strain, and social cohesion, rather than

race.

The Tesla owner had earlier said that the US has "benefited



Elon Musk and Vinod Khosla

immensely" from talented Indians who moved there and helped build its technology and business

sectors.

People of Indian origin, especially engineers, scientists, and entrepreneurs, made huge contributions, he noted, adding that they continue to make major contributions across industries.

The H-1B visa program is vital to the US economy, Musk said, but warned that some firms have "gamed the system," stating that the problem is misuse rather than the program itself.

Addressing concerns over immigrants stealing jobs from US locals, Musk said his companies struggle to find highly skilled people, and global talent helps him bridge the talent gap. *IANS*

Amazon's 'accidental' layoff mail sparks fresh fears of job cuts at AWS

NEW DELHI: An internal Amazon Web Services (AWS) email, seemingly sent by mistake referencing "organizational changes," heightened speculation that US tech giant Amazon may announce another round of layoffs, though employees were already expecting one despite no official announcement.

The message, sent by Colleen Aubrey, senior vice president of applied AI solutions at Amazon Web Services (AWS), acknowledged, "changes like this are hard on everyone" and said they were intended to position the vertical for "future success," according to multiple reports.

The email, which referenced a post by Amazon HR chief Beth Galetti, suggested that some staff had already been notified of their status.

The message, which was seemingly sent by accident, included the subject line "Project Dawn" and appeared to be re-

called shortly after it was sent.

Amazon did not clarify about "Project Dawn", or if the message was released prematurely.

Job cuts could affect teams across



AWS as well as Amazon's core retail and stores operations, media reports said, citing people familiar with the matter.

In October 2025, Amazon reduced 14,000 white-collar employees from its workforce, around half of its total target

30,000. The magnitude of job cuts next week is expected to be of the same level, as per the sources.

The Seattle online retailer had linked the October round of job cuts to the rise of artificial intelligence software in an internal letter.

Later, however, CEO Andy Jassy told analysts during the company's third-quarter earnings call that the reduction was not "really financially driven" or "AI-driven." He said, "it's culture," alluding that the company had too much bureaucracy.

Though the job cut affecting 30,000 employees would be the largest layoff in Amazon's three-decade history after 27,000-job cuts in 2022, it would represent a small portion of Amazon's 1.58 million employees.

Affected workers could remain on the payroll for 90 days, during which time they could apply for jobs internally or seek other employment, according to reports. *IANS*

Hanwha Aerospace wins \$1.9 billion Norway rocket deal

SEOUL: Hanwha Aerospace has secured an estimated \$1.9 billion project to supply its K239 Chunmoo multiple rocket launcher systems to Norway, with the official contract expected to be signed this week, informed industry sources said.

The contract, expected to be signed Friday (30 Jan.), in Oslo by Hanwha Aerospace and the Norwegian Defense Materiel Agency (NDMA), sources with direct knowledge of the matter told Yonhap News Agency while speaking on condition of anonymity.

Kang Hoon-sik, South Korea's presidential chief of staff is expected to attend the signing ceremony, according to the sources.

Kang is currently visiting Canada as part of a trip widely believed to be aimed at supporting the country's defense exports.

Just before his departure from Seoul, Kang said he would also travel to Norway to discuss ways to expand defense cooperation between the two countries.

The deal comes as Norway seeks to bolster its long-range precision strike capability amid heightened security concerns in Europe.

According to the sources, the deal includes an offset requirement, a standard requirement under Norway's defense procurement rules, the sources said.

For all defense projects exceeding 50 million Norwegian kroner (US\$5.2 million), foreign suppliers are required to provide industrial cooperation equal to 100 percent of the contract value, typically through a technology transfer and partnerships with local companies.

The agreement marks Hanwha Aerospace's latest major success in the Nordic defense market, following its previous contracts to supply K9 Vidar self-propelled howitzers to Norway in September.

Industry observers say the deal further underscores Hanwha's growing footprint in Europe and its ability to meet stringent operational and industrial requirements set by European defense customers. *IANS*

Govt's multi-year semiconductor push showing real results: Ashwini Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said, the government's multi-year, ecosystem-driven approach to semiconductor development is delivering tangible results.

He said that India steadily moves towards building a strong and self-reliant chip design and manufacturing ecosystem.

Speaking after interacting with semiconductor chip design companies approved under the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme of the Semicon India Programme here, he said that the meeting focused on reviewing the progress of these companies, understanding their design innovations and reaffirming the government's commitment to strengthening domestic semiconductor capabilities.

"The semiconductor program was conceived in 2022 with a clear long-term vision laid down by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to build the entire semiconductor ecosystem, rather than implementing isolated schemes," Vaishnaw said.

"The goal is to transform India from a services-led economy into a product-

driven nation with strong capabilities in critical technologies," he added.

Highlighting the success of the DLI Scheme, Vaishnaw said that while expectations were modest in the beginning, the program now supports 24 startups.

"Several of these companies have already completed tape-outs, validated their



Ashwini Vaishnaw

products and gained market traction," Vaishnaw stated.

"This has proven the effectiveness of the government's approach of removing key hurdles faced by semiconductor startups by providing access to advanced

design tools, IP libraries, wafer support and tape-out facilities," he explained.

The Minister noted that the support being provided under the India Semiconductor Mission is among the most comprehensive in the world.

He said the government now plans to scale up the program and enable at least 50 fabless semiconductor companies in the next phase.

"India is well on track to produce globally competitive fabless companies in the coming years," Vaishnaw mentioned.

The DLI-supported companies are working across a wide range of semiconductor design areas, including indigenous system-on-chips and application-specific integrated circuits for surveillance, networking and embedded systems.

Their work also covers RISC-V based processors, AI-enabled low-power chips for IoT and edge applications, telecom and wireless chipsets, power management ICs, and solutions for strategic sectors such as automotive, energy, space and defense. *IANS*

Jashn restaurant opens in Santa Clara, bringing authentic and ever-evolving Indian flavors to the Bay Area

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

SANTA CLARA, CA: The Bay Area's vibrant culinary scene welcomed an exciting new addition with the grand opening of Jashn, a contemporary Indian restaurant in Santa Clara that celebrates regional flavors, bold spices, and culinary innovation in November 2025.

Jashn stands out by offering unique and lesser-known Indian dishes rarely found on standard menus. Signature offerings include the aromatic Donne Biryani, a Karnataka specialty traditionally served in a woven palm-leaf container, and the soulful Ghate Ki Sabji, a rich and flavorful Rajasthani delicacy made with gram flour dumplings simmered in spiced yogurt gravy. These dishes reflect Jashn's commitment to showcasing India's diverse regional cuisines.

Chef Vittal Shetty's vision focuses on



showcasing India's vast regional diversity through food, while Reshmi Nair brings a strong emphasis on quality, consistency, and guest experience. Together, they envisioned Jashn as more than just a restaurant—it is a celebration of India's culinary heritage, where time-honored recipes meet thoughtful innovation.

Their commitment to authenticity is reflected in every aspect of Jashn, from sourcing spices directly from India to introducing rotating menus that highlight different regional cuisines. Under their leadership, Jashn aims to create a dining destination that feels both nostalgic and new, inviting guests



to rediscover Indian food in a fresh and exciting way.

The restaurant is backed by Jalsa Catering, its parent company, which has earned a strong reputation for delivering high-quality Indian cuisine at large-scale events, weddings, and corporate gatherings across the region. Drawing from Jalsa Catering's deep expertise and loyal following, Jashn brings the same authenticity and excellence into a refined restaurant setting.

Adding a dynamic twist to the dining experience, Jashn has announced plans to refresh its menu every two months, ensuring guests can look forward to new flavors, seasonal specialties, and regional highlights throughout the year. This rotat-



ing menu concept reflects the culinary diversity of India while keeping the dining experience fresh and exciting.

At the heart of Jashn's kitchen is Chef Sidesh Parab, whose culinary vision blends tradition with thoughtful innovation. With deep knowledge of regional Indian cooking and a passion for authenticity, Chef Sidesh curates menus that honor classic recipes while presenting them in a contemporary and approachable way for today's diners.

With its distinctive menu, commitment to authenticity, and the strong foundation of Jalsa Catering, Jashn is poised to become a new culinary destination in Santa Clara, offering guests a true celebration of Indian food—one that lives up to its name.



Indian Republic day celebrated at Consulate of India, San Francisco

Cont'd from page 9

The event featured a rich array of cultural performances by community artists, showcasing India's diverse traditions

through classical and contemporary dance and patriotic presentations. The performances were warmly received and added a festive and celebratory atmosphere to the evening.

During the interaction with the community, the Consul General also informed attendees that the Consulate General of India and the VFS Global Service Center remain open on Saturdays, a measure aimed at enhancing accessibility and improving consular services for the community. Through streamlined processes, expanded outreach, and the support of the VFS Global Service Center, the Consulate continues to enhance service delivery for passports, visas, OCI, and other consular matters. The



availability of consular and VFS services on Saturdays was highlighted as a key initiative to improve accessibility and reduce waiting times, reflecting the Consulate's ongoing efforts to respond to the needs of the community with professionalism and

efficiency. The Consulate General of India reaffirmed its dedication to engaging with the community and organizing inclusive events that celebrate India's heritage and strengthen bilateral relationships.



An evening where Fremont felt like one big family

ANITA KUMARI SRIVASTAVA

FREMONT, CA- On Jan. 25th, a recent vibrant evening at the Fremont Hindu Temple, spirituality met joy, culture met curiosity, and strangers became friends. Americans for Hindus (A4H) hosted a lively, multi-faith community gathering that brought together Americans from Jewish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese, German, Christian, Buddhist, and Hindu backgrounds, proving that unity can be both meaningful and fun. The event was co-hosted by Sebastian Steinbach, Founder of LeapForward, and Anita Kumari Srivastava, Founder & Chief Strategist of HappinessFactors and President of the San Jose Chapter of Americans for Hindus. Together, they curated an evening that blended ancient wisdom with modern community spirit. Guests were welcomed in true royal Indian style. Traditionally dressed Hindu women greeted attendees with warm smiles, aarti, and tika, a moment many first-time visitors described as "deeply moving" and "unexpectedly calming." The temple priest then led a powerful Hanuman Ji Aarti, setting a serene yet energizing tone



for the evening.

The spiritual journey continued with insightful talks on Hindu philosophy and inclusive values by Dr. Romesh Japra, Govind Ji, and Anita Ji, who highlighted Hinduism's timeless message of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam-the world is one family-and Sarva Mangal Mangalye, prayers that seek wellbeing not just for oneself, but for all. As the evening unfolded, spirituality seamlessly flowed into celebration. Traditional Indian dance performances delighted the audience, followed by a delicious vegetarian dinner that sparked animated cross-cultural conversations. Unity games broke down barriers, laughter echoed across the hall, and the night concluded with an energetic bhajan jamming session that blended devotion with joyful dance.

Attendees repeatedly praised the warmth of Hindu hospitality, the soothing power of the mantras, and the refreshing openness of the experience. Many shared that they felt relaxed, spiritually uplifted, and genuinely welcomed-some noting it was the first time they had experienced a prayer tradition that explicitly included the peace and prosperity of the entire community. In a time when division often dominates headlines, this evening at the Fremont Hindu Temple quietly made one thing clear: when culture, faith, and fun come together with sincerity, unity doesn't just sound good, it feels good. And for those who attended, it felt like coming home to a much larger family.



Chinese scientists identify key Ebola virus mutation

BEIJING: Chinese researchers have unveiled a crucial mutation in the Ebola virus that significantly enhanced its infectivity during a major outbreak, providing new insights for epidemic surveillance and drug development.

The study, published in the journal *Cell*, focused on the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from 2018 to 2020, the second-largest in history, which caused over 3,000 infections and more than 2,000 deaths, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The research tells us that during major emerging infectious disease outbreaks, real-time genomic surveillance and evolutionary analysis of the pathogen are crucial," said Professor Qian Jun from Sun Yat-sen University.

"This is not only able to warn of changes in transmission risk but also to prospectively assess the effectiveness of existing drugs and vaccines, guiding us to preemptively adjust control strategies," Jun added.

A key question drove the research, namely, beyond the impact of local healthcare challenges, did viral evolution itself contribute to the Ebola outbreak's prolonged duration?

"We have long been aware that key viral mutations often act as invisible drivers accelerating transmission during major outbreaks." *IANIS*

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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Pakistan: Mental health crisis and increase in suicides worrisome

ISLAMABAD: The absence of data regarding suicides allows universities in Pakistan to frame deaths as isolated incidents instead of symptoms of hostile environments, a report has detailed.

Last month, 22-year-old Muhammad Awais Sultan, a fifth semester Pharm D student at a private university in Lahore, died after committing suicide.

According to his classmates, Awais Sultan was struggling to meet attendance requirements of the universities and had several times requested authorities for leniency. However, the authorities rejected his request. After his death, students held protests to demand investigation in the case. The university had said that an initial inquiry report will be presented within 15 days. Even after many weeks, no report has been issued yet.

A report in leading Pakistani daily 'The Express Tribune' stated, "When students attempted to speak about their friend and possible reasons for

suicide, especially academic pressure, they were shut down, with comments such as, 'He must have been going through something personal'. This phrase reflects a larger societal attitude towards suicide. It individualizes the tragedy, empties it

peers who had lost a friend and classmate. In the weeks after Awais's death, suicide became a joke in everyday academic parlance. Students report being taunted for getting low marks with remarks such as, 'Ab tum to suicide nahi kar lo ge is par? [You

cards and lower OPD medical charges. However, there were no talks launched between the administration and students. Instead, students who demanded response were met with strict measures.

Within weeks of Muhammad Awais Sultan's death, another student tried to commit suicide at the same university. Ahsan Javed, a student leader involved in university protests and negotiations, noted that the second case could have been avoided if the first case of suicide was taken seriously.

"The idea that suicide is contagious is often invoked to justify silence. However, in this case, silence, it appears, is itself part of the risk. The choice of language, or the lack of it, around suicide discourse on campuses is telling. It borrows from criminality, emphasizing criminal intent, leading to shame and stigma, rather than care and understanding," an article in The Express Tribune magazine stated. *IANIS*



of context, and allows the institution to move on with impunity."

"Students who protested for Awais were ridiculed and infantilized, treated as unruly children rather than concerned

won't kill yourself over this, will you?]", it added.

In order to pacify the protesting students, the university announced minor concessions like reduced fines for missing student

Plastics emissions to double health risks worldwide by 2040: Study

NEW DELHI: Emissions from the global plastics system --greenhouse gases, air-polluting particles, and toxic chemicals released particularly from plastics production processes - could double health risks by 2040, if no meaningful action is taken to change current practices, according to recent study.

The research, published in The Lancet Planetary Health journal, identified health harms at every stage of the life-cycle of the plastics: from the extrac-

tion of fossil fuels, the feedstock for more than 90 percent of plastics, and material production, to their eventual disposal or release to the environment.

The modeling-based study compared the global human health impacts of several different future scenarios for plastics consumption and waste management between 2016 and 2040.

Under a 'business as usual' scenario, by 2040, the negative health impacts from plastics could double, with greenhouse

gas emissions and associated rising global temperatures accounting for 40 percent of the



health harms.

Air pollution -- predominantly from plastics production processes -- would account for 32

percent, and the impact of toxic chemicals released to the environment across plastics' life

cycles would account for 27 percent.

The remaining health risks (less than 1 percent), relate to

reduced availability of water, impacts on the ozone layer, and increased ionizing radiation, the researchers said.

"We found that emissions throughout plastics lifecycles contributed to human health burdens of global warming, air pollution, toxicity-related cancers, and non-communicable diseases, with the greatest harms from primary plastics production and open burning," Megan Deeney, from the London School. *IANIS*

India displays leadership in global agri-food sector at 'Gulfood 2026'

NEW DELHI: The government on Monday said that India marked a strong presence at 'Gulfood 2026', the world's largest annual food and beverage trade exhibition in Dubai, underscoring its growing leadership in the global agri-food and processed food sector.

The 2026 edition marks India's largest-ever participation, with more than 600 Indian companies exhibiting across a wide spectrum of categories including staples, fresh produce, processed foods, beverages, agri-tech, and food processing.

As Country Partner, India has been accorded prominent branding across exhibition venues under a unified design theme, along with dedicated conference sessions and enhanced B2B engagement opportunities.

Key products being showcased by India at Gulfood 2026 include Basmati rice, more than 10 Indian GI-tagged rice varieties, processed food products, millets, groundnuts, tea, spices, turmeric, organic

products, and fresh fruits and vegetables, according to Commerce Ministry.

The Indian Pavilion was inaugurated at the APEDA Pavilion, Dubai Expo City, by



Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, A. P. Das Joshi, in the presence of Ambassador of India to the UAE, Dr Deepak Mittal.

"The UAE is the largest market for

APEDA's scheduled products and serves as a gateway to the Gulf region, which is the largest destination for India's agricultural exports. The India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement has had a significant impact on bilateral trade, particularly in the food processing industry and agricultural exports," said the ministry.

In addition, more than 500 Indian companies, largely institutional and large players, are participating independently across both exhibition venues.

Another significant highlight of India's participation at Gulfood 2026 is the presence of eight startups under APEDA's BHARATI initiative, Bharat's Hub for Agritech, Resilience, Advancement and Incubation for Export Enablement.

According to the ministry, India's participation as Country Partner at 'Gulfood 2026' reflects the nation's commitment to delivering high quality, safe, sustainable, and innovative food products to global markets. IANS

Dutch authorities find bird flu antibodies in a cow, no active H5N1 virus detected

NEW DELHI: The Netherlands has identified antibodies of the bird flu virus in a dairy cow, but the risk of the H5N1 avian influenza virus spreading from animals to humans is very small, according to the Dutch authorities.

The Dutch agriculture minister, in a detailed letter, informed the country's parliament that the H5N1 virus was discovered in a dead cat that died last month.

Following this, authorities from the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) examined samples of blood and milk from cattle at the farm on January 15.

They found that a cow had antibodies to the virus in its milk, indicating a previous infection with the virus in that cow. No samples tested positive for the virus itself, and the officials also reported no further spread.

It is the first reported case of the deadly avian influenza virus having spread to cattle outside of the US. Antibodies against avian influenza have not previously been demonstrated in dairy cattle in Europe. IANS



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In Brief

German chancellor finds 'level of violence' in US 'worrying'

BERLIN: German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has called the "level of violence" in the United States "worrying" following recent fatal shootings by federal agents in the US state of Minnesota.

Speaking at a press conference in the northern German city of Hamburg, Merz was asked for his views on the incidents in which two American citizens were killed during US federal enforcement operations.

"I assume that the American authorities will now thoroughly investigate whether it was necessary to shoot in these cases and whether there really was a threat to the officers involved," Merz said.

The chancellor's remarks followed two deadly encounters this month in Minneapolis, the largest city in Minnesota. On a Saturday morning, Alex Pretti was shot and killed by federal agents, following a similar incident on January 7, when Renee Nicole Good was fatally shot by a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer.

Meanwhile, the White House defended the role of federal immigration enforcement in Minnesota and rejected criticism of its response to a fatal weekend shooting in Minneapolis, as President Donald Trump ordered senior officials to press state and local leaders to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Addressing a regular White House briefing, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said President Trump was closely monitoring developments following the shooting of an ICE agent. *IANS*

Immigration

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The governor said the inquiry covers public schools, colleges, and universities, as well as other areas where state funds may be involved

Texas Governor questions H-1B visas in State schools

WASHINGTON: Texas Governor Greg Abbott said his administration is examining the use of H-1B visas in the state's public schools, universities, and other taxpayer-funded institutions, questioning whether foreign workers are being hired for jobs that Texans can readily fill.

Speaking on The Mark Davis Show past Monday, Abbott said his office has begun collecting information from public agencies to determine "the extent to which Texas taxpayer dollars are being used to pay for any of these people," referring to H-1B visa holders working in state institutions.

The governor said the inquiry covers public schools, colleges, and universities, as well as other areas where state funds may be involved. He added that his office has sent inquiries to agencies across Texas and is seeking to compile details on the number of H-1B workers employed, the roles they fill, and the justification for their hiring.

"We have inquiries out right now to all of those agencies gathering the information that we need, and are hoping to be able to make an announcement later on this week about an action plan that Texas is beginning to

take," Abbott said during the radio interview.

Abbott emphasized, the H-1B visa program is administered by the federal government not by the states. Still, he said, Texas is examining what authority it may have when state funds are involved. "This is a federal program, only a federal program. It's

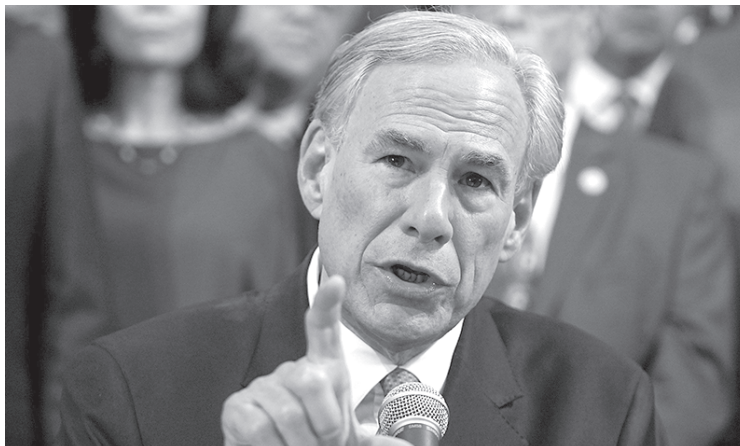
He said the review is focused on whether public institutions are relying on H-1B workers in positions that do not require unique or specialized skills. "For example, what job is it in our public schools in the State of Texas that these H-1B visa personnel are fulfilling that we can't fulfill here in our own public schools?" Abbott said. "I

set or whatever the case may be."

The governor also raised concerns about what he described as possible abuse of the visa program, echoing arguments made by some conservatives that H-1B visas have been misused. He referred to reports of multiple visa holders registered at a single address and said there has been "extraordinary controversy" surrounding how some H-1B workers were admitted.

Abbott suggested that some individuals who entered the US on H-1B visas may have overstayed or were insufficiently vetted, particularly during the Biden administration. "Some of these H-1B visa issues are people who were allowed in either under the Biden administration or even before that who've overstayed their visa," he said.

He linked the state's review to broader federal immigration enforcement efforts under President Donald Trump, saying Texas is in communication with the administration. "Obviously, we are in communication with the Trump administration," Abbott said, adding that the president has made the issue a priority. *IANS*



Texas Governor Greg Abbott

The governor also raised concerns about what he described as possible abuse of the visa program, echoing arguments made by some conservatives that H-1B visas have been misused

not a state program," he said, adding that his administration is looking at "what authority would we have to do anything about this."

don't see any reason why we need any H-1B visa employees in our public schools in the State of Texas, but we're going to find out if there's some unique skill

Scotland remains optimistic about visa clearance for T20 World Cup in India

NEW DELHI: Cricket Scotland is optimistic about getting Indian visas for its players, including fast bowler Safyaan Sharif, who has Pakistani heritage, in time for the T20 World Cup opener on February 7.

Cricket Scotland's CEO, Trudy Lindblade, said that the ICC can only give us assur-

ances on the bits they can control, and they are working to ensure Scotland's team gets the necessary visas.

The team is preparing to travel to India and is focused on sorting out all logistical details. Scotland was the beneficiaries of Bangladesh's last-minute withdrawal from the T20 World Cup

as the highest-ranked team that had not already qualified.

Scotland unveiled a 15-man squad set to fly to India later this week. Cricket Scotland is confident that Sharif, who was born in Huddersfield to a Pakistani father and a British-Pakistani mother before moving to Scotland aged seven, will be granted a visa in time for the team's open-

ing match against the West Indies in Kolkata on February 7.

"We are all committed [to] working with the ICC to make that happen. The visa piece is always slightly unknown, and it doesn't matter whether you've got three days or whether you've got 45 days," Trudy Lindblade, Cricket Scotland's chief executive, said

as per ESPNcricinfo.

"Certainly that's been our focus in the last 48 hours: just getting those visas done so our players are all ready to go. They're all in the middle of submitting their visas, and we will be there on the ground in India as quickly as we can, so it's just a matter of time now," he added. *ANI*

Trump sends agent to Minneapolis as protesters rage through the town

MINNEAPOLIS: After United States federal agents shot another individual in Minneapolis during an ongoing immigration enforcement drive, triggering widespread protests and renewed demands for President Donald Trump to withdraw heavily armed federal personnel from the city, Trump is now sending an agent named Tom Homan to Minneapolis to handle the situation there.

Dollar, Plus, Welfare Fraud that has taken place in Minnesota, and is at least partially responsible for the violent organized protests going on in the streets. Additionally, the DOJ and Congress are looking at "Congresswoman" Ilhan Omar, who left Somalia with NOTHING, and is now reportedly worth more than 44 Million Dollars. Time will tell all. Thank you for your attention to this matter! President DJT"

agencies that are operating in our city to do so with the same discipline, humanity and integrity that effective law enforcement in this country demands," he said, quoted by Al Jazeera.

The shooting occurred amid a sustained deployment of US immigration enforcement and other federal agents to Minneapolis, where they have been carrying out raids as part of Trump's anti-immigration push.

Al Jazeera stated that Minnesota Governor Tim Walz strongly criticized the federal operations, describing them as far removed from immigration enforcement.

"This long ago stopped being a matter of immigration enforcement," Minnesota Governor said during a news conference in Saint Paul.

"It's a campaign of organized brutality against the people of our state. And today that campaign claimed another life," said Walz.

Footage circulating online appears to show several federal officers restraining a man on the ground moments before multiple gunshots are heard. ANI

"I am sending Tom Homan to Minnesota tonight. He has not been involved in that area, but knows and likes many of the people there. Tom is tough but fair, and will report directly to me"

In a post on Truth Social, US President Donald Trump wrote, "I am sending Tom Homan to Minnesota tonight. He has not been involved in that area, but knows and likes many of the people there. Tom is tough but fair, and will report directly to me. Separately, a major investigation is going on with respect to the massive 20 Billion

On Saturday, last, Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara confirmed that a 37-year-old man succumbed to multiple gunshot injuries after being taken to hospital.

The victim, who was a resident of Minneapolis and a US citizen, according to O'Hara.

"Our demand today is for those federal

Courier in international elder fraud scheme sentenced after jury conviction in US

WASHINGTON: Atharva Shailesh Sathawane has been sentenced to 18 years in prison in the United States for his role in an international fraud scheme that targeted elderly victims and resulted in millions of dollars in losses, federal prosecutors said.

Sathawane, 23, was sentenced after a jury found him guilty of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering, according to a statement from the US Attorney's Office for the

"Elder fraud schemes like this one are taking place every day in every state, but especially in Florida due to our large population of retirees," Heekin said. He stressed the importance of educating the public to prevent seniors from being victimized and praised law enforcement for uncovering what he described as a complex international fraud scheme.

Sathawane had overstayed his student visa and was in the United States illegally at the time of the offenses, federal pros-

law enforcement. Authorities coordinated an undercover operation, and Sathawane was arrested when he arrived at the victim's residence to collect additional gold.

A subsequent search of Sathawane's cellular phone confirmed his involvement in the fraud network, investigators said. Over a four-month period, he made at least 33 trips to retrieve cash and gold from elderly victims.

Forensic analysis of the phone showed that Sathawane primarily operated in Florida but also traveled to Pennsylvania, Virginia, New Jersey, and New York to collect cash and gold from victims and deliver the proceeds to other co-conspirators.

Prosecutors said the fraud caused devastating losses. Numerous elderly victims lost their entire life savings or suffered substantial financial hardship as a result of the scheme.

Authorities said Sathawane personally took and laundered \$6,615,484.66 in cash and gold from victims. He also attempted to collect an additional \$1,363,395.98 in gold from two elderly victims. Those attempts failed after a concerned friend intervened in one case, and law enforcement arrested him during the second attempt. IANS

Sathawane, 23, was sentenced after a jury found him guilty of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering, according to a statement from the US Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida

Northern District of Florida. US Attorney, John P. Heekin, announced the sentence.

Trial evidence and court documents showed that Sathawane acted as a courier in a complex fraud operation that preyed on elderly victims, many of them retirees. Victims were convinced to liquidate their retirement accounts and convert their savings into cash, gold, or both.

YES Italy Strengthens Pan-India Presence with New Mumbai Office to Serve Growing Student Demand for Italy

MUMBAI: YES Italy has announced the opening of its new office in Mumbai, further strengthening its presence across India. The Mumbai office will offer end-to-end academic counseling services for students applying to Bachelor's and Master's programs at Italian universities, including guidance on course selection, applications, documentation, and visa processes.

The move marks a strategic expansion of the organization's operations in India and aims to support the growing number of Indian students seeking higher education opportunities in Italy.

Services Offered at the Mumbai Office

The Mumbai office provides comprehensive support, ranging from university shortlisting and personalized academic counseling to assistance with preparing and submitting applications and documentation. Students also receive guidance on scholarships, eligibility criteria, and financial planning. The office supports students throughout the visa application process, ensuring clarity on requirements and thorough preparation. In addition, YES Italy offers pre-departure guidance and transition support, helping students adapt smoothly to life abroad and confidently navigate the initial stages of their international education journey.

Addressing the shift towards European study destinations, Ravi Srivastava, Co-Founder, YES Italy, said, "With the launch of our Mumbai office, YES Italy is strengthening its presence in Maharashtra to better serve the growing demand for Italy as a study destination. Mumbai is a key education hub, and this expansion allows us to work more closely with students, parents, and institutions while delivering faster, more personalized support".

Academic Pathways and Country Support

YES Italy offers guidance across a wide range of disciplines, including Fashion and Design, Business and Management, Engineering and Technology, Arts and Humanities, Medicine and Life Sciences, Architecture, and Hospitality and Tourism Management. (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.)

Pearls Group fraud: ED attaches 37 properties worth Rs 1,986 crore

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached 37 immovable properties, located in Ludhiana and Jaipur and valued at Rs 1,986 crore, in connection with the Rs 48,000 crore fraud committed under the garb of the real estate investment scheme, floated by Pearls Agrotech Corporation Ltd (PACL), an official said.

The 37 properties attached by the investigative agency were acquired by the company, with funds raised from the investors and thus constituted "proceeds of crime".

With this, the ED has attached movable and immovable assets of the firm valued at about Rs 7,589 crore, including properties located in India and abroad.

According to ED officials, the accused entity and individuals operated an illegal investment scheme, fraudulently aggregating over Rs 60,000 crore from lakhs of investors across the country, under the guise of the sale and development of agricultural land.

The investors were lured to invest through cash down payment and installment payment plans and were made to sign misleading documents, including agreements, powers of attorney, and other instruments.

In majority of cases, no land was ever delivered, and approximately Rs 48,000 crore remains unpaid to investors. *IANS*

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Banks in China unable to dispose collateral homes, system under strain: Report

NEW DELHI: China's rural banks are stuck with hundreds of foreclosed homes that couldn't get auctioned even at steep discounts, signaling deep stress in the property sector and financial system, a report has said.

The report in Modern Diplomacy said that the stress in the property sector spilled into local bank balance sheets and could widen into a major non-performing asset disposal cycle. *IANS*

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com



India's office market likely to outpace Asia-Pacific peers with 7-10 pc rental growth

NEW DELHI: India's office market is set to outperform the Asia-Pacific region in 2026, with prime office rents forecast to grow 7-10 percent, a report has said.

The report from real estate services firm Knight Frank stated that India has emerged as the region's growth engine, showing early signs of stabilization after two years of rental declines.

The growth is supported by strong leasing momentum, the expansion of Global Capability Centres (GCC), and rising demand for high-quality and future-ready office space.

India's three largest office markets - Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi-NCR - collectively recorded about 50 million sq ft of leasing in 2025, up 21 percent year-on-year, with the highest annual absorption on record across these markets, the report said.

Bengaluru led regional performance with 13.8 percent annual prime rental growth and a 7.4 percent quarter-on-quarter rise in Q4 2025, with CY2025 marked as the city's most prolific year on record in terms of area leased.

Total leasing commitments



across these three markets reached a record 50 million sq ft in 2025, driven by GCCs, flex operators, and IT outsourcing firms, and rents rose 5.8 percent YoY, the report said.

Mumbai and Delhi-NCR also saw steady rental appreciation in prime micro-markets and rising

interest from financial services, flex operators, and global corporates consolidating into higher-quality locations.

Across Asia-Pacific, over 100 million sq ft of new office space is expected in 2026, likely pushing regional vacancy and muting rental growth, while India's fun-

damentals should absorb over 43 million sq ft of completions in 2026 without materially weakening rental momentum, the firm forecasted.

Shishir Baijal, International Partner, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India, said occupier demand is expected to remain strong in 2026 with higher supply volumes supporting market traction during the year.

"Global Capability Centres, third-party IT businesses and financial services firms are not only expanding but also committing early to high-quality developments," said Baijal. *IANS*

India's three largest office markets - Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi-NCR -- collectively recorded about 50 million sq ft of leasing in 2025, up 21 percent year-on-year, with the highest annual absorption on record across these markets

Delhi Development Authority sets stage for city's first-ever Green Expo in Feb

NEW DELHI: Guided by Lieutenant Governor's successful experiments of rejuvenating the Yamuna floodplains by creating public green spaces like Asita, Baansera, Vasudev Ghat and Yamuna Vatika, which have not only rejuvenated the floodplains but also brought the people of Delhi closer to the River, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is set to host the first-ever DDA

Green Expo 2026 on February 14th and 15th at Baansera Park in the national capital.

Focused on sustainability, urban greening and nature-based solutions, the Expo will serve as a flagship national platform for envisioning the future of Indian cities, while underscoring DDA's continued commitment to embedding environmental sustainability and a climate-first approach into urban planning and city development.

Envisioned as a benchmark-setting national platform aligned with global best practices, the Expo will bring together international thought leaders, policymakers and urban practitioners to shape future-ready, climate-resilient cities in India.

The first-of-its-kind, two-day Expo will feature exhibitions, live demonstrations and expert-led sessions showcasing innovations and best practices in sus-

tainable urban ecosystems and green infrastructure, with a strong focus on scalable and replicable models for cities facing climate, water and environmental challenges.

Alongside the showcases, the Expo will facilitate panel discussions, knowledge exchanges and collaboration between government bodies, research institutions and the private sector, with strategic partnerships and memorandums

of understanding (MoUs) expected to be formalized to advance long-term, climate-responsive urban development.

Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and Chairman, Delhi Development Authority, said: "Cities today must move beyond conventional growth models and place sustainability, resilience and citizen wellbeing at the core of development. *ANI*

Features to check when renting a home with family

HARINI BALASUBRAMANIAN

Many families consider renting rather than buying a house for reasons such as temporary relocation to another city. However, like home buying, home renting must involve thorough research. Some tenants make renting decisions without clearly evaluating their needs. A family that rents a property must check for the availability of daily conveniences, play areas for children, accessibility to workplaces and schools, etc. Ignoring this vital aspect of home renting can affect comfort and finances, and may even result in frequent relocation. By proper need evaluation; a family can avoid making emotional decisions and shortlist properties that suit them the most. In this guide, we will discuss the key features a family must seek in a rental property.

Neighborhood and location advantages

Location is a foremost concern for any property seeker and is as essential as the property itself. A locality well connected to workplaces, schools and colleges, healthcare facilities, public transportation, and main roads, is a clear advantage for the home seeker. The availability of daily convenience stores, markets, shopping centers, etc., nearby is also necessary for providing a high quality of life to residents. When checking the neighborhood, a family should also ensure that there are well-

lit streets, safety measures and a sense of community. It can help if the family visits the neighborhood in person at different times of day to get a real picture of the area's live ability.

Number of rooms and layout

When finalizing a property to rent, it is

ing for a larger property like a 3BHK instead of a 2BHK is a better option. Similarly, for work-from-home plans, a bigger house will offer more comfort.

Further, choosing the right layout is crucial. An open floor plan will not offer privacy for a family with different needs. Instead,

Prospective renters should also ensure that the house layout ensures proper ventilation and natural lighting. Well-placed windows and balconies make the home spacious and pleasant. Flooring, kitchen fixtures and bathroom fittings are other essential features to check before selecting a house to rent.

Amenities within the society

Firstly, choosing a gated community over independent houses is a better option for families, as these residential complexes offer several amenities. Amenities like children's play areas, parks, club-houses, and recreational spaces such as jogging tracks, greenery, and outdoor areas for activities ensure a high-quality lifestyle. Reliable lifts, power backup, water supply, and parking spaces are basic requirements for families, and residential complexes generally provide such amenities. Some residential complexes also have shops and creche or day care facilities, which is an added advantage for families.

Gated communities also provide safety and security features such as access-controlled entry points, CCTV cameras in common areas, and visitor management. Inside the apartments, families should look for features such as intercom systems, window grilles and balcony railings, child-safety locks, fire alarms, and emergency exits. For the elderly, anti-slip bathroom flooring, lifts, ramp access, and minimal stair use are essential for safety and easy mobility.

Rental affordability

For any property seeker, setting the right budget prevents unwanted expenses and burden on savings. For renters, monthly rent, maintenance charges, parking fees, and utility payments add up to significant recurring expenses. Moreover, security deposit and brokerage charges are one-time expenses the tenant must bear. In Indian cities, landlords charge two months' rent as a security deposit, but this may vary by location. Brokers also charge around a month's rent as their fee. Affordability will depend on factors such as location, prevailing rates, and the tenant's negotiation skills.

Moreover, selecting the right property will impact affordability. For example, choosing a furnished property will cost more than an unfurnished or semi-furnished property. Ideally, A semi-furnished homes with in-built wardrobes, kitchen cabinets and basic lighting and fixtures offer the right balance between convenience and cost. www.housing.com

For detailed story visit
www.indiapost.com



crucial to understand a family's space needs. This way the renter can select the right BHK configuration for the family. Besides current space needs, a family should consider their future and family size, and make a decision accordingly. For example, if new members are to join, go-

having separate rooms, including a study space for children can give the right level of freedom and convenience. Moreover, if there are elderly parents in the family, ensuring safety measures such as window grilles and grab bars in the bathroom is a must.

Kowori Group Marks Brand Launch in Gurugram Signals Entry into South Delhi's Luxury Housing Market

NEW DELHI: Kowori Group, a new and premium entrant in the NCR realty market, announced its formal brand launch at an event held at The Leela Ambience, Gurugram. The occasion witnessed the presence of prominent stakeholders from the real estate industry, media, and the corporate fraternity, marking the group's official introduction to the market.

Alongside its brand unveiling, Kowori Group also announced its forthcoming entry into South Delhi with its first ultra-luxury residential project in Greater Kailash-I. Conceived as a boutique development, the project will focus on limited inventory, refined design sensibilities, and meticulous attention to detail, catering to discerning homebuyers seeking exclusivity and elevated living experiences.

Adding to the significance of the occasion, Bollywood actress Malaika Arora attended the event as the Guest of Honor.

Speaking on the vision behind the brand, she highlighted, "Luxury today is defined by thoughtfulness and purpose. Homes that prioritize intelligent design, quality execution and everyday comfort create a far more meaningful living experience. Kowori Group's vision reflects this shift, focusing



on refined design and lifestyle-led development rather than surface-level grandeur."

Rikhupriya, Co-Founder, Kowori Group, added, "At Kowori Group, our objective is to create homes where design excellence

and living comfort come together seamlessly. We believe that true luxury is thoughtful, understated and enduring, not superficial. Guided by this philosophy, our first ultra-luxury builder floor project in South Delhi, with its limited, boutique positioning, is envisioned to set a new benchmark for refined urban living."

Founded with the vision of redefining luxury living in NCR, Kowori Group is driven by the belief that design and livability are inseparable elements of a truly premium home. Every aspect of its development is thoughtfully curated to enhance everyday living. The group's philosophy transcends surface aesthetics, emphasizing simplicity, intelligence, and enduring value over fleeting trends or generic luxury.

(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.)

Alia Bhatt says Varun Dhawan has 'HIT IT OUT OF THE PARK' with 'Border 2'

Actress Alia Bhatt gave a special shout-out to her 'dear friend' Varun Dhawan after witnessing his powerful performance in "Border 2".

Alia took to the Stories section of her official Instagram handle and published the trailer of the war drama.

Calling "Border 2" a beautiful film, she lauded director Anurag Singh.

Alia further showered praise on the core cast of the sequel, including Sunny Deol, Ahan Shetty, Diljit Dosanjh, Mona Singh, Sonam Bajwa, and Medha Rana.

"Such a beautiful film..@anurag_singh_films what fabulous performance by the entire cast!!!! @iamsunnydeol @diljitdosanjh @ahan.shetty @sonambajwa @monasingh @medhaarana @anyasinghofficial (sic)," Alia's post read.

She went out to give a special mention to her 'Student of the Year' co-star Varun Dhawan for pouring his heart and soul into every single frame of the drama.

The 'Jigra' actress added, "& my dear friend has hit it out of the park!!! Doing what he does best pouring his heart & soul into every single frame..so happy for you @varundvn what a smashing start to the year!"

Alia concluded the post by congratulating the entire team of "Border 2".

IANS

Ankita Lokhande calls Usha Nadkarni a 'rockstar & inspiring'

Television superstar Ankita Lokhande recently showered praise on veteran actress Usha Nadkarni, who is fondly remembered as Savita Deshmukh from Pavitra Rishta, further calling her a "rockstar" and an inspiration.

Ankita shared a heartfelt note after attending the event of Usha Nadkarni's upcoming movie Gandhi Talks, that also stars South star Vijay Sethupathi.

Taking to social media, Ankita expressed her admiration and love for her former co-star whom she considers motherly.

Crediting her humility, honesty and commitment to her craft, the Pavitra Rishta star wrote, "Aai you are a rockstar and so inspiring in every way .. so much to learn from you.. how you till today so passionate so dedicated and so humble towards your art .. hats off to you.. love you aai for your straightforwardness yet so simple in every way #ushanatakarni." IANS

TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

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

Yuvika Chaudhary: Women unstoppable when they truly play

Actress Yuvika Chaudhary, who will be seen in the upcoming reality show "The 50", has spoken out against the double standards women often face in reality shows, where their emotions are frequently misunderstood or labeled as weakness.

Reacting to the perception that women are judged more harshly than men for displaying vulnerability or emotion, Yuvika said that when women step into the game with full conviction, they become an unstoppable force.

"Oh, come on. When a woman truly plays, there's no room for anyone else. If women step into the game fully, nobody can stand in front of them," she told IANS.

The actress added that she sees her journey as more than just personal participation.

"That's how I feel. I'm here to represent all women and show the world that we have it all. Just take a stand for yourself," said Yuvika.

Yuvika has appeared in films such as Om Shanti Om, Summer 2007, and Toh Baat Pakki! In 2009. IANS

AKSHAY KUMAR AND KARISMA KAPOOR RECREATE 'DEEDAR' MOMENT

Bollywood diva Karisma Kapoor and Akshay Kumar treated fans with a dose of sheer nostalgia on the show Wheel of Fortune, as the latter revealed the actress being his life's first heroine ever.

The duo also recreated magic on stage by revisiting their memorable song 'Deedar Ho Gaya Mujhko Pyaar Ho Gaya', marking 34 years of the film Deedar and leaving fans thrilled.

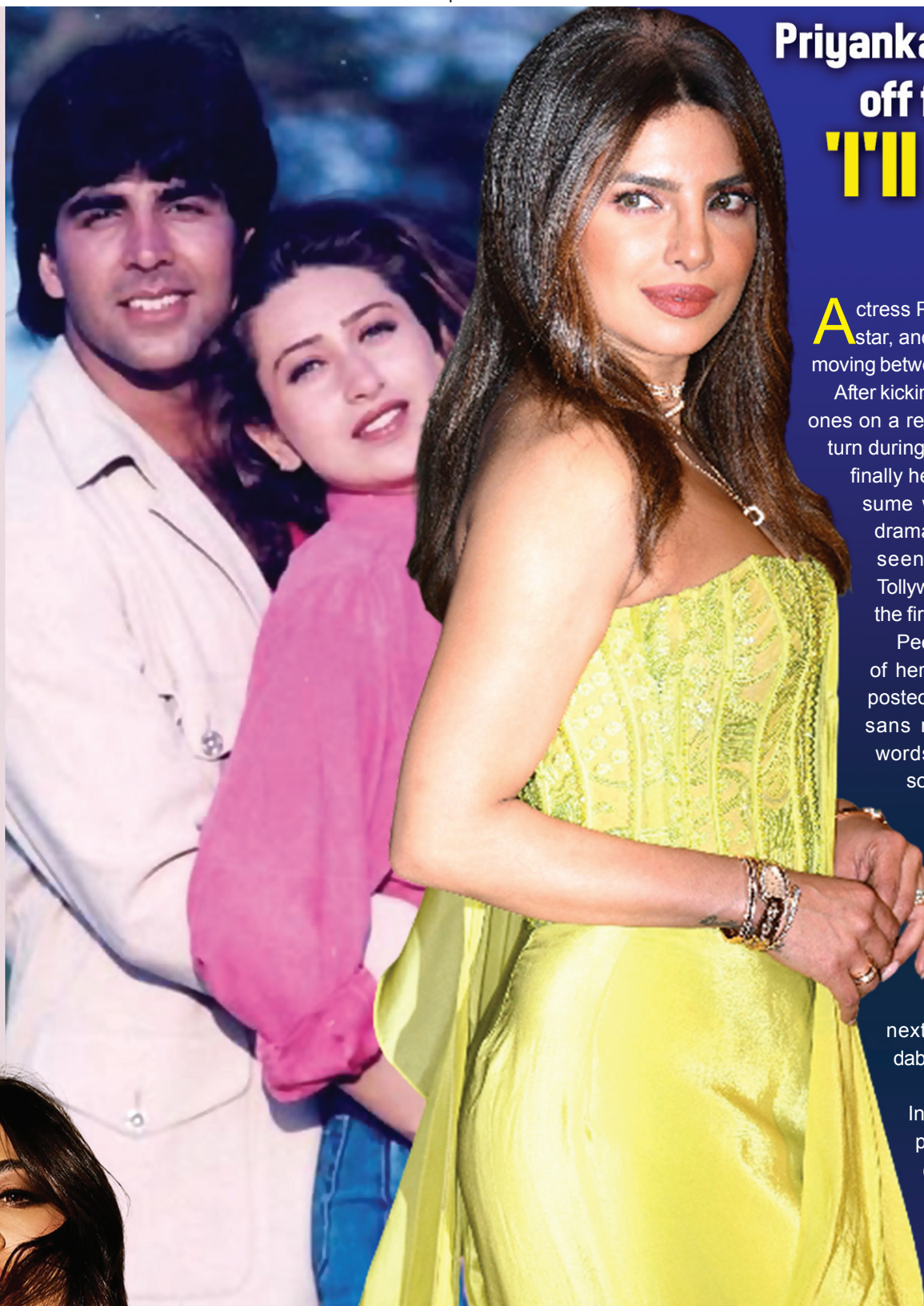
Karisma graced the show, along with Anu Malik and Mouni Roy, who joined in on the fun.

It was here when Akshay Kumar shared a heartfelt moment, saying, "As you all know, she is my first heroine. I did my first film with her, my first song with her. I want to tell you how beautiful you are."

To this, Karisma responds warmly, "Thank you."

In another promo Akshay joked, "Bandra main har building ke andar inke ek-ek flat hain."

Joining the banter, Anu Malik, who accompanied Karisma to the show, quipped, "Akshay never lies," while Karisma teasingly fires back, "You know, he owns entire Juhu!" **IANS**



Priyanka Chopra takes off for Hyderabad: 'I'll see you soon'

Actress Priyanka Chopra is a true global star, and thanks to her work, she keeps moving between continents.

After kicking in the New Year with her loved ones on a remote island and making heads turn during the Golden Globes, PeeCee is finally headed back to Hyderabad to resume work on her much-anticipated drama, "Varanasi", where she will be seen sharing screen space with Tollywood sensation Mahesh Babu for the first time.

PeeCee took to the Stories section of her official Instagram handle and posted a radiant selfie of herself in a sans makeup look, along with the words, "And she's off..I'll see you soon, Hyderabad. (sic)"

Recently, Mahesh Babu heaped praises on his "Varanasi" co-star after witnessing the trailer of her upcoming swashbuckler action thriller "The Bluff".

Mahesh Babu called PeeCee's performance in her next 'uncompromising and formidable'.

Re-sharing the trailer on his Instagram Stories, Mahesh Babu penned, "Loved the trailer... @PriyankaChopra is uncompromising and formidable yet again (collision emojis) Wishing the entire team of #TheBluff the very best for Feb 25th...(sic)," followed by hug emojis.

Grateful for the kind words, Priyanka penned, "Thank you my Dost", along with a red heart and folded hands emojis. **IANS**

Chitrangda Singh reflects on 'Battle Of Galwan'

Actor Chitrangada Singh, who will be seen portraying an army wife in Battle Of Galwan, says the role gave her a deeper understanding of the quiet strength carried by women from military families.

Growing up as the daughter of an Indian Army officer, she was familiar with uniforms, postings, and regimented discipline, but prepping for the Battle of Galwan gave her a deeper emotional gaze into that world.

Chitrangda said: "My father was in the Indian Army, and growing up, listening to his stories was normal for me, but playing the role of an army wife is different. When I met army wives, I understood my mother's silences, her pride mixed with worry."

"These women carry that same blend of strength and fear every day. I tried to bring that complexity to the role, not just the smile or the courage, but the part where you learn to hold it together even when your heart is breaking," she added. **IANS**





NEW YORK FASHION DESIGNER TINA TANDON ANNOUNCES INDIA LAUNCH WITH U.S. EMBASSY-BACKED EVENTS IN DELHI AND MUMBAI

MUMBAI: Renowned New York-based fashion designer Tina Tandon (<http://www.ttandon.com>) is set to officially launch her work in India, marking a significant moment in creative, cultural, and commercial collaboration between the United States and India. The India entry will be inaugurated with a special introductory event hosted at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, followed by an event in Mumbai, India's fashion and business capital.

The launch is supported by the U.S. Embassy, underlining the importance of creative industries as a bridge between nations and reinforcing the shared commitment of India and United States, to deepen trade, cultural exchange and, people-to-people ties.

Tina Tandon, who has built her career in New York's global fashion ecosystem, is known for her work that blends craftsmanship, storytelling, sustainability, and contemporary luxury. She offers two distinct brands and perspectives - representing her dual upbringing and identification - the

launch an Indo-Fusion collection in mainstream America, a category now rapidly growing in the US.

Her designs have been seen on various top fashion publications and personalities around the world, on Hollywood red carpets from Grammys to Emmys,

not just a business expansion, but a meaningful homecoming-bringing international design sensibilities back to Indian audiences while creating new opportunities for cross-border collaboration, as the Indian economy booms, and the Indian consumer fashion palette expands.

"This moment is bigger than fashion," said Tina Tandon. "It represents cultural and economic shifts, and revisiting dialogue, shared values, and the power of creativity to connect economies and cultures. India and the United States have shared one of the most important bilateral trade relationships in the world, and creative industries like apparel play a vital role in strengthening that bond."

Tina Tandon's India introduc-

tory event is being supported and backed by Indian consumer goods conglomerate - Venky's, and strengthened by partnership with the non-profit- I Am Peacekeeper Movement, a global initiative focused on peace, unity, and conscious leadership.

(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.)

THE LAUNCH IS SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. EMBASSY, UNDERLINING THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN NATIONS AND REINFORCING THE SHARED COMMITMENT OF INDIA AND UNITED STATES, TO DEEPEN TRADE, CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND, PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES



Contemporary American - T.Tandon (<http://www.ttandon.com>), and the Indo-fusion - Posh Pari Couture (<http://www.poshpari.com>). A pioneer and forward thinking Designer-Tandon was one of the first Indian-American Designers to

on numerous top Hollywood Best Dressed Lists, and on popular American television shows and news - from New York news channels to popular nationally televised American talk show-Tamron Hall.

Her return to India represents

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Dharmendra, Achuthanandan, Harmanpreet, Akash missile developer among 2026 Padma awardees



Dharmendra

NEW DELHI: Veteran actor Dharmendra and Left stalwart and former Kerala Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan have been awarded the Padma Vibhushan posthumously on the occasion of the Republic Day 2026, late JMM founder and former Jharkhand Chief Minister Shibu Soren, singer Alka Yagnik, and Malayalam superstar Mammotty the Padma Bhushan, and sportspersons Harmanpreet Kaur, Rohit Sharma, and Savita Punia the Padma Shri.

President Droupadi Murmu has approved the conferment of 131 Padma Awards, including 2 duo cases (where the Award is counted as one), an official statement said.

As per the list, announced on the eve of the Republic Day, five Padma Vibhushans, 13 Padma Bhushans and 113 Padma Shris have been awarded this year.

As many as 19 of the awardees are women, while the list also includes six foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI recipients. Sixteen awards are posthumous.

Announcing the second-highest national award for Dharmendra, it termed the late actor an "Enduring Hindi cinema legend who left an indelible influence on Indian popular culture through 300 films and a career spanning seven decades".

The other awardees of the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest national award, are former Supreme Court judge, Justice K.T. Tho-

mas, for contributing to judicial policy, and championing law reforms, classical violinist N Rajam, "who globalized Hindustani classical music in her 75-year career" and "pioneered Gayaki Ang vocal style and introduced Khayal Gayaki Ang" and Malayalam litterateur and journalist P. Narayanan.

The Padma Bhushan awardees include former Uttarakhand Chief Minister and Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari. US-based Dr Nori Dattatreya, late advertising maestro Piyush Pandey, tennis maestro Vijay Amritraj, banker Uday Kotak, veteran BJP leader and former MP V.K. Malhotra, and influential Kerala Ezhava community leader and SNDP Yogam supremo Vellappally Natesan.

Among the recipients of the Padma Shri are India women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur Bhullar, former Indian men's cricket team captain Rohit Sharma, space scientist A.E. Muthunayagam, veteran theatre ac-



V.S. Achuthanandan

tor Anil Kumar Rastogi, Karnataka social activist Anke Gowda, who built India's largest free personal library of over 20 lakh books, acclaimed actor Satish Shah (posthumous), women's hockey player Savita Punia, and Tollywood legend Prosenjit Chatterjee.

Other leading recipients include pediatrician Armida Fernandez, who established Asia's first human milk bank and revolutionized neonatal care, significantly reducing infant mortality, veteran hockey coach Baldev Singh, who transformed the women's hockey team, accomplished aerospace engineer Chandramouli Gaddamanugu, who directed the Akash Missile System from development to deployment in Operation Sindoor, prolific Carnatic vocalist duo Gayatri Balasubramanian and Ranjani Balasubramanian, and



Mammotty

paralympic gold medal-winning high-jumper Praveen Kumar.

The foreign recipients of the Padma Shri include globally acclaimed German musicologist Lars Christian Koch, who researched the theory and practice of North Indian classical music, acclaimed Russian Indology professor and linguist Liudmila Viktorovna Khokhlova, known for her contributions to Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, and Marwari studies, and Georgian Vladimer Mestvirishvili, the "legendary freestyle wrestling coach, who mentored Olympic medallists and helped shape India into a global wrestling powerhouse".

The Padma Awards are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. The Awards are given in various disciplines/fields of activities, viz., art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.

'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order, and 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field. /ANS



Harmanpreet Kaur



Rohit Sharma

Philosophy

SWAMI VIVEKANAND

There are some who are really the salt of the earth in every country and who work for work's sake, who do not care for name, or fame, or even to go to heaven. They work just because good will come of it. There are others who do good to the poor and help mankind from still higher motives, because they believe in doing good and love good.

The motive for name and fame seldom brings immediate results, as a rule; they come to us when we are old and have almost done with life. If a man works without any selfish motive in view, does he not gain anything? Yes, he gains the highest.

Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them lies such a mani-



Swami Vivekananda

velopment of power.

This self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or a Buddha. Foolish men do not know this secret; they nevertheless want to rule mankind. Even a fool may rule the whole world if he works and waits. Let him wait a few years, restrain that foolish idea of governing; and when that idea is wholly gone, he will be a power in the world.

The majority of us cannot see beyond a few years, just as some animals cannot see beyond a few steps. Just a little narrow circle - that is our world. We have not the patience to look beyond, and thus become immoral and wicked. This is our weakness, our powerlessness.

Even the lowest forms of work are not to be despised. Let the man, who knows no better, work for selfish ends, for name and fame; but everyone should always try to get towards higher and higher motives and to understand them.

Self-restraint manifestation of greater power

Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also

festation of power.

In the first place, a man who can work for five days, or even for five minutes, without any selfish motive whatever, without thinking of future, of heaven, of punishment, or anything of the kind, has in him the capacity to become a powerful moral giant.

It is hard to do it, but in the heart of our hearts we know its value. It is the greatest manifestation of power - this tremendous restraint; self-restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing action. A carriage with four horses may rush down a hill unrestrained, or the coachman may curb the horses. Which is the greater manifestation of power, to let them go or to hold.

A Karma cannon-ball flying through the air goes a long distance and falls. Another is cut short in its flight by striking against a wall, and the impact generates intense heat. All outgoing energy following a selfish motive is frittered away; it will not cause power to return to you; but if restrained, it will result in de-

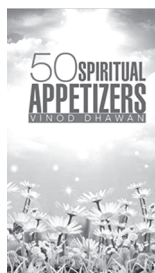
"To work we have the right, but not to the fruits thereof." Leave the fruits alone. Why care for results? If you wish to help a man, never think what that man's attitude should be towards you. If you want to do a great or a good work, do not trouble to think what the result will be.

We must do the work and find out the motive power that prompts us.

Excerpted from 'Karma Yoga'. The 163rd birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was observed on January 12

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Bangladesh drifting into a nexus of military dependency and proxy competition? Ominous consequences for India, south Asia

SALAH UDDIN SHOAIB CHOUDHURY

At a time when Bangladesh should be preparing for a democratic handover of power, the interim Yunus regime has instead unveiled a decision that could redraw the country's strategic trajectory for decades. The announcement of a proposed military industrial zone near the India-Bangladesh border - potentially involving China, Pakistan, and Turkey - has triggered quiet alarm in regional capitals and raised urgent questions about Dhaka's evolving security alignments.

The most striking of these decisions is the announcement of a large-scale defense industrial zone, informally dubbed a "Military Industrial Zone", near the Indo-Bangladesh border. According to media reports, approximately 850 acres of land in Mirsarai, Chittagong district - previously earmarked for an "Indian Economic Zone" - have now been reallocated for defense manufacturing purposes. The

credible media reports have already pointed to Turkey, China, and Pakistan as keen contenders for establishing military hardware manufacturing facilities within this new zone.

Growing Presence Of Pakistan, China

This revelation has raised eyebrows not merely because of who the interested partners are, but because of when and where the project is being advanced. Announcing a defense-industrial mega-project weeks before a national election violates the spirit, if not the letter, of caretaker neutrality. Although Chowdhury Ashik insisted the initiative would continue regardless of political change, describing defense industrial capacity as a "non-partisan national priority", defense manufacturing is never politically neutral - especially when foreign powers are involved.

Since the regime change of August 2024, Pakistan and China, in particular, have emerged as increasingly assertive actors in Bangladesh. Turkey has followed close behind. China is already deeply entrenched through infrastructure projects, most notably the long-discussed Teesta Barrage Project

Since the regime change of August 2024, Pakistan and China, in particular, have emerged as increasingly assertive actors in Bangladesh. Turkey has followed close behind. China is

timing alone is unusual. The geopolitical implications are far more serious.

Speaking to reporters, Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), justified the move by citing global trends. "In the current global context, demand for defense products is rising, and supply constraints have highlighted the importance of having domestic production capacity", he said.

He further noted that while Bangladesh currently has only one state-run arms manufacturing facility, the proposed zone would be developed by the private sector with both local and foreign investment, and that defense equipment produced there would be exported abroad.

What Chowdhury declined to clarify - calling the matter "diplomatic and bilateral" - was which foreign partners were expected to participate. Yet multiple

already deeply entrenched through infrastructure projects, most notably the long-discussed Teesta Barrage Project. On January 25, 2026, the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka formally announced its participation not only in the Teesta project but also in the construction of a Bangladesh-China Friendship Hospital.

These announcements came despite public warnings from newly arrived US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Brent Christensen, who cautioned against the long-term risks of deep Chinese military and strategic entanglement. Christensen's remarks were not casual diplomatic boilerplate. They sounded more like an early alarm bell.

(The author is a journalist, writer, and editor-publisher of the Weekly Blitz. He specializes in counterterrorism and regional geopolitics) South Asia Monitor

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www.indiapost.com

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

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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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Davos: Noise, narratives, and the reality beneath

COL KL VISWANATHAN (RETD.)

As world leaders and business executives departed Davos after the annual World Economic Forum, the prevailing perception was that U.S. President Donald Trump had dominated the meeting. That impression, however, holds only if media coverage is taken as the sole measure of dominance. As is often the case, media attention gravitated toward spectacle rather than substance.

In truth, there was little in Trump's address that was either new or disruptive enough to meaningfully alter global trajectories. The one moment that caused raised eyebrows was his apparent disowning of European

familiar choreography.

Having dispensed with the theatrics, it is worth turning to what Davos is ostensibly meant for: identifying underlying signals, forging deals, and gauging the direction of global capital.

Macroeconomics And Markets

The tariff narrative is beginning to sound stale. Beyond public posturing and ritual expressions of concern, the business community appears largely unconcerned—except to generate enough noise to mask the quiet mapping of alternative trade routes already underway. As one delegate put it rather succinctly: trade is like water; it flows

tificial intelligence, and financial technology. JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon warned that proposals to cap credit-card interest rates could prove economically disastrous, while other bankers acknowledged active efforts, largely out of public view, to influence affordability debates. As always, capital will find a way to move.

Cryptocurrencies and blockchain technologies featured prominently, though with a noticeably more subdued tone than in earlier years. Conversations reflected a mix of curiosity, limited experimentation, and lingering apprehension. Some banks admitted to small-scale trials; others remained firmly on the sidelines. Meanwhile, concerns regarding the independence of the U.S. Federal Reserve, broader macroeconomic fragilities, and potential asset bubbles, particularly in AI-related equities, continued to weigh on investor sentiment.

The Real Show: Technology

If Davos had a clear center of gravity this year, it was technology—not geopolitics. The tech industry arrived in force, underscored by high-profile appearances from Elon Musk and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang. The message was unmistakable: this is where attention, ambition, and capital are converging. With extraordinary sums being poured into artificial intelligence, unease among lenders and investors is understandable. Yet many executives were keen to reassure markets that fears of an AI bubble were overstated. While AI will undoubtedly displace certain categories of jobs, they argued, it will also create new ones.

(The author is an Indian Army veteran and a contemporary affairs commentator) South Asia Monitor

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military personnel who had fought alongside U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was an unbecoming remark from the U.S. president, unless, of course, that president is Donald J. Trump. Here, the lapse reflects political grandstanding more than deliberate policy intent.

Europe's response was predictable. Leaders publicly "stood up" to Trump, signaling resolve and unity. But did Europe truly have a choice? Such posturing was expected by Trump and by Europe's own domestic audiences, allowing space for negotiations to continue behind the scenes. Trade-offs, including discussions around Greenland framed under "recognized" Arctic security requirements, were already implicit. None of this represented a genuine rupture; it was

through the path of least resistance.

This sentiment was echoed by Canadian Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne during a discussion on tariffs. "When you talk to CEOs today, what do they want?" he asked. "Stability, predictability, and the rule of law. I would say it's in short supply." Trade, unsurprisingly, will gravitate toward regions where these fundamentals remain available in reasonable measure.

There was also sustained discussion around U.S. domestic policy choices and their global spillover effects. Financial institutions expressed cautious optimism about growth in the near term, even as they grappled with uncertainty stemming from shifting U.S. policies, geopolitics, ar-



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UNFINISHED MISSION

India became a Republic on 26 January 1950 with the adoption of its Constitution, committing itself to the ideals of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. After 77 years of becoming a Republic, it is important to critically examine whether India has achieved its obligations as envisioned by framers of its Constitution. The answer is complex: India has made remarkable progress in many areas, yet significant challenges remain.

India's greatest achievement as a Republic is the successful continuation of democracy. In a country marked by a vast diversity of language, religion, caste, and culture, India has conducted regular elections and maintained universal adult franchise since its inception. This alone distinguishes India from many post-colonial nations where democratic institutions collapsed. Independent constitutional bodies such as, the Election Commission, Judiciary, Armed forces, and Civil services have largely preserved the nation's democratic framework and territorial unity.

Economically, India has transformed itself from a newly independent, resource-constrained nation into one of a major economy. Food insecurity has largely been overcome, industrial and technological capabilities expanded, and India has emerged as a global player in information technology, AI, space science, pharmaceuticals, and diplomacy. Poverty levels, though still high, have reduced substantially compared to the early decades after independence.

However, fulfilling the obligations of a Republic go beyond economic growth and electoral democracy. Social justice, a cornerstone of the Constitution, remains incomplete. Caste discrimination, though outlawed, persists in subtle and overt forms across the country. Gender inequality continues to limit the freedom and opportunities of millions of women and the girl child. Marginalized communities often struggle to access quality education, healthcare, and employment, highlighting the gap between constitutional promises and lived realities.

Another major concern is equality before law. While the Constitution guarantees equal justice, in practice the legal system is often slow, costly and, intimidating for ordinary citizens. Delays in courts, influence of wealth and power, and uneven enforcement of laws weaken public faith in police and justice. A Republic cannot be considered fully successful if justice is perceived as selective for man of power rather than universal.

Furthermore, the spirit of constitutional values face growing stress. Freedom of expression, secularism and fraternity, is essential for national harmony; is frequently challenged by political polarization and social divisions. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had warned that political democracy without social and economic democracy would be fragile. This warning remains relevant today.

India has achieved great heights in economic prosperity surpassing major developed countries, expansion in infrastructure, major strides in information technology and many other areas. Further, India has fulfilled the structural obligations of a Republic by sustaining democracy, unity, and institutional governance. However, it has not yet fully realized the deeper constitutional goals of social equality, justice, and fraternity.

The Indian Republic is not a finished project; it is an ongoing journey. Its success ultimately depends not only on governments but also with its citizens to uphold constitutional values in every day life. A Republic is a shared responsibility. India's citizens need to contribute in every little way, for example, driving in lanes; follow civic laws; await their turn by standing in-lines and at the least, maintain rigorous health and hygiene standards at home and public spaces.

JAI-HIND!!

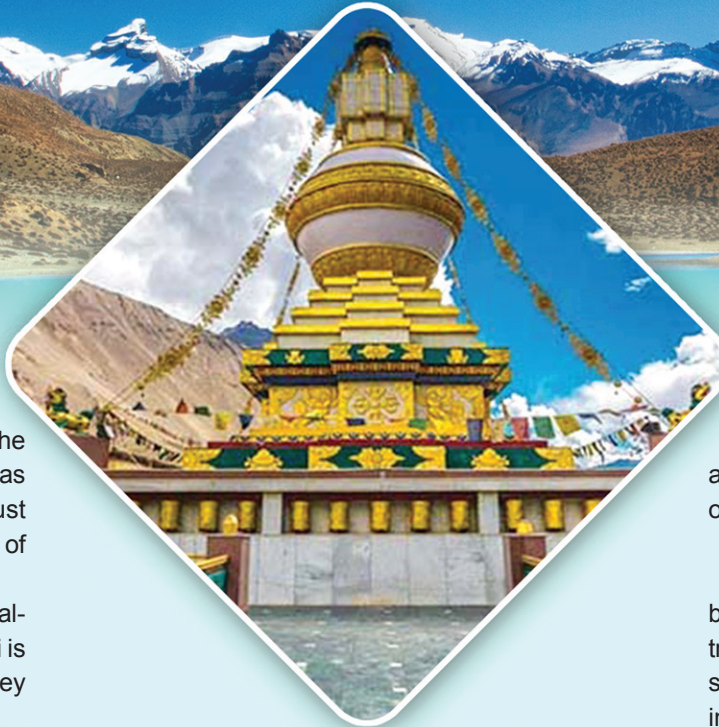
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Long winding roads and valleys that present unforgettable glimpses of cold desert and snow-crowned mountains welcome you when you set foot into Spiti Valley. Bordered on all sides by the Himalayas, Spiti Valley, located in Himachal Pradesh, has an altitude of 12,500 feet above sea level, and gets just around 250 days of sunshine in the year, making it one of the coldest places in the country.

The term Spiti means 'The Middle Land', as Spiti Valley separates India from Tibet. True to its name, Spiti is home to several monasteries. Notably the stunning Key Monastery that is over a thousand years old and is also the largest monastery to be found in the entire Spiti Valley.

Scantily populated, Spiti is an adventure lover's paradise, with a number of trekking trails and mountain passes that tourists can choose from. Kunzum La offers an incredible 360-degree view of Bara-Shigri Glacier (the second longest glacier in the world). All of these treks start from Kaza (Spiti's capital from where you make your base camp) to various peaks from where you can get panoramic views of the Himalayan Mountains.

An easy 1.5-kilometer trek along the Spiti River from Dhankar Monastery to Dhankar Lake promises gorgeous views of the villages below. The Dhankar Lake itself is a place where you can sit back and relax amidst the cool mountain air. Another mythical site to visit is the



Chandratal Lake, where the water keeps changing from reddish to orange to blue to emerald green as the day ends. With the thick Himalayan snow cutting Spiti off from the rest of the country for around 6 months a year, the summer months are the only time Spiti is directly accessible via motorway.

PLACES TO VISIT IN SPITI VALLEY

Key Monastery: The Key Monastery is a famous Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the Lahaul and Spiti District of India. Located at an altitude of 4,166 meters above sea level, the monastery is very close to the Spiti River in the Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh in India. Also known as the Kye Monastery and Ki Monastery, it is said to be founded by Dromton, who was a student of the famous teacher Atisha in the 11th century.

Chandratal Lake: Chandratal Lake is often referred to as one of the most beautiful lakes located at an altitude of about 4300 m in the mighty

Himalayas. The stunning lake is situated on the Samudra Tapu plateau in the Lahaul region of the Lahaul and Spiti district and is the source of the Chandra River. www.holidify.com

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