

# USA INDIA TODAY

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## Two US Navy pilots shot down over Red Sea in apparent 'friendly fire' incident

Dubai : Two US Navy pilots were shot down on Sunday over the Red Sea in an apparent "friendly fire" incident, the US military said, marking the most serious incident to threaten troops in over a year of America targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels. Both pilots were recovered alive after ejecting from their stricken aircraft, with one suffering minor injuries. But the shootdown underlines just how dangerous the Red Sea corridor has become over the ongoing attacks on shipping by



the Iranian-backed Houthis despite US and European military coalitions patrolling the area. The US military had conducted airstrikes targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels at the time, though the US military's Central Command did not elaborate on what their mission was and did not immediately respond to questions from The Associated Press. The F/A-18 shot down had just flown off the deck of the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft

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**ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ 1993/5'-9" ਰਵਿਦਾਸੀਆ ਲੜਕਾ**, ਸਿੱਖਿਆ: ਬੀ.ਐਸ. ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ ਸਟੇਟ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਸੈਕਰਾਮੈਂਟੋ (ਸੈਕਰਾਮੈਂਟੋ ਸਟੇਟ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ) ਤੋਂ ਸਿਵਲ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰਿੰਗ, ਕੰਮ: ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ ਡਿਪਾਰਟਮੈਂਟ ਆਫ ਟ੍ਰਾਂਸਪੋਰਟੇਸ਼ਨ (ਕੈਲਟ੍ਰਾਂਸ) ਵਿਖੇ ਟ੍ਰਾਂਸਪੋਰਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰ, ਲਈ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037. ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 114, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**American Citizen 1993/5'-9" Ravidasia boy**, Education: B.S. Civil Engineering from California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State University) Work : Transportation Engineer at The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) looking for girl. Contact : (510) 943-8037. Box No. 114. USA Punjab today.

**ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਰਾਮਗੜ੍ਹੀਆ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕਾ 1995/5'-6"** ਬੇਅ ਏਰੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਈ ਸਕੂਲ ਤੋਂ ਗ੍ਰੈਜੂਏਟ, ਰਿਟੇਲ ਸਟੋਰ ਮੈਨੇਜਰ ਅਤੇ ਸੀ.ਡੀ.ਐਲ. ਆਪ੍ਰੇਟਰ ਲਈ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 116, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**American Citizen Ramgarhia Sikh Boy** 1995/5'-6" Living in Bay Area, High School Graduate, Retail Store Manager & CDL Operator looking for girl. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 116, USA Punjab Today

**Cosmopolitan Hindu Brahmin, MBA** from Mumbai (1979), 5'11". Homeowner, residing in a Los Angeles suburbs, working in a management position for healthcare industry. Seeking a cultured and educated partner aged 35-42 for early marriage. Open to all backgrounds, with no caste restrictions. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 113, USA Punjab Today

**ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਨਮਿਆ (ਲਾਸ ਏਂਜਲਸ, ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ)** ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕਾ, 1993/5'-8", ਦਿਆਲੂ, ਨਿਮਰ ਸੁਭਾਅ, ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ-ਲਿਖਿਆ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਜਾਂ ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਤੋਂ ਕੁੜੀ ਲੱਭ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਲੜਕੀ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ 24 ਤੋਂ 30 ਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ: (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ: 121, ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ

**US born (Los Angeles, CA) sikh boy, 1993/5'-8"**, Kind, humble, educated looking for girl from USA, Canada or UK. Girl should be between 24 to 30 years. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 121, USA Punjab Today

**ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਜੱਟ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕਾ 1992/5'-8"** ਆਪਣਾ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ, ਜਨਮ ਸਥਾਨ ਰੁੜਕੇਲਾ ਲਈ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਲਿਖੀ, ਸੁੰਦਰ ਲੜਕੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 124, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**American Citizen Jatt Sikh Boy 1992/5'-8"**, Own business, birth place Roorkela. Looking for educated and beautiful girl. Contact : (510) 943-8037, Box No. 124, USA Punjab Today

**ਵਰਕ ਪਰਮਿਟ 'ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਰਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੜਕਾ 1993/5'-5"** ਇਲੈਕਟ੍ਰੀਕਲ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰਿੰਗ 'ਚ ਗ੍ਰੈਜੂਏਟ, ਲਾਸ ਏਂਜਲਸ 'ਚ ਆਪਣਾ ਲੀਕਰ ਸਟੋਰ, ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ ਲਈ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਜਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੀ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ: (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ: 126, ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ

**Hindu boy living in America on work permit 1993/5-5"** Graduate in Electrical Engineering, Now owner of Liquor store market in Los Angeles and own house. Looking for girl from Hindu or Sikh Family. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 126, USA Punjab Today

**ਵਰਕ ਪਰਮਿਟ 'ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਰਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਜੱਟ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕਾ 1988/5'-11"** ਇਲੈਕਟ੍ਰੋਨਿਕਸ ਐਂਡ ਮਾਸ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰ, ਆਈ. ਟੀ. ਜੌਬ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਲਈ ਜੱਟ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਜਾਂ ਗਰੀਨ ਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਲਡਰ ਲੜਕੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 127, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**Jatt Sikh boy living in USA on work permit 1988/5'-11"**, Engineering in Electronics and Communication, preparing for IT job. Looking for Jatt Sikh citizen or green card holder girl. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 127, 'USA Punjab Today'

### ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ (GROOM WANTED)

**ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ (ਅਮਰੀਕਾ) ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1996/5'-3"** ਲਈ ਰਾਮਗੜ੍ਹੀਆ, ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੜਕੇ (ਸਿਮੀ ਵੈਲੀ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਇਛੁੱਕ) ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 103, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**California (America) resident sikh girl 1996/5'-3"**, looking for well educated Gursikh ramgharia family's boy. (willing to move to Simi Valley). Contact : (510) 943-8037. box no. 103 USA Punjab today.

**ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1991/5'-4"**, **Communication Operator** at Kaiser Permanent and Business Owner, ਲਈ ਚੰਗੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 115, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**US citizen Sikh girl 1991/5'-4"**, **Communication Operator** at Kaiser Permanent and Business Owner, looking for boy from good family. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 115, USA Punjab Today

**ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1993/5'-6"** ਲਈ 6 ਫੁੱਟ ਕੱਚ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਉਮਰ 30 ਤੋਂ 37 ਦੇ ਦਰਮਿਆਨ ਹੋਵੇ, ਡਾਕਟਰ, ਫਾਰਮਾਸਿਸਟ ਜਾਂ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 117, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**US Citizen Sikh Girl 1993/5'-6"**, **Looking for US Citizen Boy** from Gursikh family. He should be 6 feet tall, Age between 30 to 37, Doctor, Pharmacist or Engineer preferred. Contact : (510) 943-8037, Box No. 117, USA Punjab Today,

**ਭਾਰਤ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੀ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਲੜਕੀ 1996/5'-4"** ਫਾਰਮਾਸਿਸਟ ਡਿਪਲੋਮਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਲਈ ਚੰਗੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 120, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**Hindu girl residing in India, 1996/5'-4"** **Diploma in Pharmacist**, looking for boy from good family. Contact : (510) 943-8037, Box No. 120, USA Punjab Today,

**ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ 1990/5'-7"** ਡਾਕਟਰ (**Gastroenterologist Specialist**) ਸੈਨਜੋਸੇ (ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ) ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਲਈ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਜਾਂ ਡੈਂਟਿਸਟ ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 122, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**US Citizen Sikh girl 1990/5'-7"** **Doctor (Gastroenterologist Specialist)** residing in San Jose, California. Looking for a Doctor or Dentist. Contact: (510) 943-8037, Box No. 122, USA Punjab Today,

**ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸਿਟੀਜ਼ਨ ਲੜਕੀ 1982/5'-10"** ਤਲਾਕਸ਼ੁਦਾ, ਕਾਨਵੈਂਟ ਸਕੂਲ ਤੋਂ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ, ਅਰਥ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਾਸਟਰ, ਫਾਰਚੂਨ 500 ਕੰਪਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਜੈਕਟ ਮੈਨੇਜਰ ਲਈ ਵਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ: (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ: 125, ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ

**US Citizen Girl 1982/5'-10"** **Divorced, Educated from Convent School**, Masters in Economics, Project Manager with a Fortune 500 company. Looking for a boy. Contact : (510) 943-8037, Box No. 125, USA Punjab Today

### ਜੀਵਨ ਸਾਥਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ (LIFE PARTNER)

**ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਪੱਕੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਸਿੱਖ 1974/5'-9"**, ਤਲਾਕਸ਼ੁਦਾ, ਟਰਕਿੰਗ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ, ਪਿਟਸਬਰਗ (ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ) ਨਿਵਾਸੀ, ਲਈ 30 ਤੋਂ 40 ਸਾਲ ਦਰਮਿਆਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਾਥਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ : (510) 943-8037, ਬਾਕਸ ਨੰ 123, 'ਯੂ.ਐਸ.ਏ. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਟੂਡੇ'

**US Permanent Resident Sikh 1974/5'-9"**, **Divorced, own trucking business**, living in Pittsburgh (California) looking for life partner age between 30 to 40. Contact : (510) 943-8037, Box No. 123, USA Punjab Today,

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**VARINDER (510) 943-8037**

# Bullying Prevention of Sikh American Children!

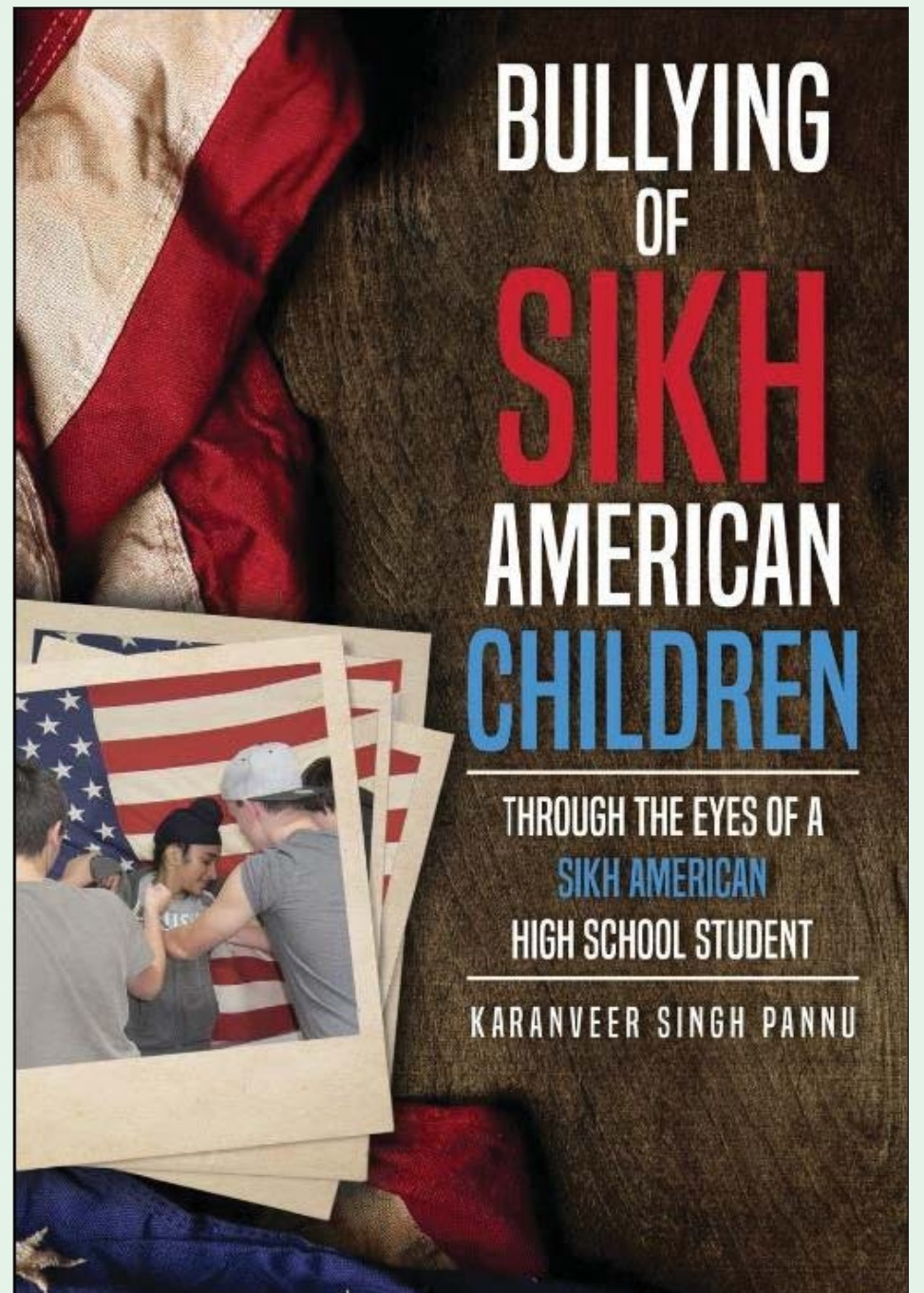
In late 2015 a young Sikh American high school senior from New Jersey published a comprehensive solution-oriented book on the serious bullying issues facing Sikh American children in schools across America. The book gives a background about the Sikh Religion, the turban and the history of Sikhs in America. A detailed bullying survey of nearly 1,000 Sikh children was done across the US. Several child psychiatrists were interviewed to get practical solutions in order to mitigate bullying. The author not only brought out some rarely discussed topics but further suggested many solutions based on his own life and personal experiences which could help not just his peers from within the Sikh American community but for any and all children who are bullied every day in schools across our country.

This ground breaking book was personally attested by President Barak Obama in April 2016 and won the National Bullying Prevention Award by the School Safety Council in March 2018.

Currently this amazing book is in 41 school districts on the Eastern seaboard and is being used in Middle and High Schools, including in High Schools for AP Phycology, AP History and AP English courses.

ASC has trained over 8,000 bullying prevention specialists and diversity directors across the country.

Professor J.W. Whitlow, Jr. (PhD), Rutgers University, states, *"In this examination of the bullying experienced by Sikh-American children, Karanveer Singh has done a masterful job of combining his personal experience with an historical background of the Sikh community and systematic empirical research on bullying. His book is a significant addition to the national discussion of bullying and offers a multi-faceted perspective on bullying that both informs and makes sensible recommendations on ways to reduce it. This is a remarkable work that addresses the bullying experienced by an understudied group."*



[www.bullyingsikhamericanchildren.org](http://www.bullyingsikhamericanchildren.org) |  
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# Two US Navy pilots shot down over Red Sea in apparent 'friendly fire' incident

(Contd. from Page No. 1)

carrier, Central Command said. On December 15, Central Command acknowledged that the Truman had entered the Mideast, but hadn't specified that the carrier and its battle group were in the Red Sea. "The guided missile cruiser USS Gettysburg, which is part of the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group, mistakenly fired on and hit the F/A-18," Central Command said in a statement. From the military's description, the aircraft shot down was a two-seat F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet assigned to the "Red Rippers" of Strike Fighter Squadron 11 out of Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia. It wasn't immediately clear how the Gettysburg could mistake an F/A-18 for an enemy aircraft or missile, particularly as ships in a battle group remain linked by both radar and radio communication. However, Central Command said that the warships and aircraft earlier shot down multiple Houthi drones and an anti-ship cruise missile launched by the rebels. Incoming hostile fire from the Houthis has given sailors just seconds to make decisions in the past. Since the Truman's arrival, the US has stepped up its airstrikes targeting the Houthis and their missile fire into the Red Sea and the surrounding area. However, the



presence of an American warship group may spark renewed attacks from the rebels, like what the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower saw earlier this year. That deployment marked what the Navy described as its most intense combat since World War II. On Saturday night and early Sunday, US warplanes conducted airstrikes that shook Sanaa, the capital of

Yemen that the Houthis have held since 2014. Central Command described the strikes as targeting a "missile storage facility" and a "command-and-control facility," without elaborating. Houthi-controlled media reported strikes in both Sanaa and around the port city of Hodeida, without offering any casualty or damage information. In Sanaa, strikes

appeared particularly targeted at a mountainside known to be home to military installations. The Houthis later acknowledged the aircraft being shot down in the Red Sea. The Houthis have targeted about 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip started in October 2023 after Hamas' surprise attack on Israel that killed 1,200 people and saw 250 others taken hostage. Israel's grinding offensive in Gaza has killed more than 45,000 Palestinians, local health officials say. The tally doesn't distinguish between combatants and civilians. The Houthis have seized one vessel and sunk two in a campaign that has also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by separate US- and European-led coalitions in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets, which have also included Western military vessels. The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the US or the United Kingdom to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran. The Houthis also have increasingly targeted Israel itself with drones and missiles, resulting in retaliatory Israeli airstrikes.

## Rocket from Yemen strikes Tel Aviv, injuring 16



Tel Aviv : A rocket fired from Yemen hit an area of Tel Aviv overnight, leaving 16 people injured by shattered glass, the Israeli military said on Saturday, days after Israeli airstrikes hit Houthi rebels who have been launching missiles in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

Another 14 people had minor injuries as they rushed to shelters when air raid sirens sounded before dawn, the military said.

The Houthis in a statement on Telegram said they had aimed a hypersonic ballistic missile at a military target that they did not identify. Israel's military said it was investigating.

"A flash of light, a blow and we fell to the ground. Big mess, broken glasses all over the place," said Bar Katz, a resident of a damaged building.

The Houthis' media office later reported airstrikes on Yemen's Houthi-held capital, Sanaa. US forces conducted airstrikes against a missile-storage facility and a command facility operated by the Houthis, the US Central Command said in a statement on X.

The attack on Tel Aviv came after Israeli airstrikes on Sanaa and the port city of Hodeida killed at least nine people on Thursday. The strikes came hours after

a missile from Yemen hit a school building in central Israel. The Houthis also claimed a drone strike targeting an unspecified military target in central Israel that day.

Israel's military says the Iran-backed Houthis have launched more than 200 missiles and drones during the 14-month Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. The Houthis have also attacked shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and say they will not stop until there is a ceasefire in Gaza.

The Israeli strikes on Thursday caused "considerable damage" to the Houthi-controlled Red Sea ports, UN spokesman

Stephane Dujarric said. The Hodeida port has been key for food shipments into Yemen in its decade-long civil war.

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill a dozen children

Mourners in Gaza held funerals for 19 Palestinians - 12 of them children -- killed in Israeli strikes on Friday and overnight.

One strike hit a residential building in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, killing at least seven, including five children and one woman, and injuring 16 others, health officials said.

In Gaza City, a strike on a house killed 12, including seven children and two women, according to Al-Ahli Hospital where the bodies were taken. One man cradled a tiny shroud-wrapped body as mourners gathered.

Later on Saturday, al-Awda Hospital said an airstrike hit a house in Nuseirat and killed four people including two children, with 14 other people wounded. Israel's military said it was checking the report.

## Pak slams US official over allegations on missile capabilities

Islamabad : Pakistan on Saturday condemned remarks made by a US official regarding its missile capabilities, calling the allegations "unfounded" and "unhelpful" for the bilateral relationship. The Foreign Office termed the claims raised by US Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer as "unfortunate," warning that such accusations towards a major non-NATO ally would harm the overall ties between the two nations.

In response to media queries on Finer's remarks, Pakistan's Foreign Office issued a statement saying, "The alleged threat perception from Pakistan's missile capabilities and delivery means, raised by the US official, are unfortunate. These allegations are unfounded, devoid of rationality and sense of history." The statement emphasised that Pakistan and the US have maintained a positive and broad-ranging relationship

since 1954, and cautioned that the recent spate of allegations would be detrimental to that relationship, especially in the absence of any credible evidence.

"Pakistan has never had any ill-intention towards the



US in any form or manner, and this fundamental reality has not changed. On the contrary, Pakistan has made monumental sacrifices for this relationship and continues to suffer hugely in sustaining the onslaught of the aftermath of US policies in the region," it said.

It is regrettable that the US official alluded to bracketing Pakistan with those who are perceived to be in an adversarial relationship with the US, the statement added.

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# Top New York cop resigns amid sexual misconduct allegations

New York : The highest-ranking uniformed officer in the New York Police Department has resigned amid allegations that he demanded sex from a subordinate in exchange for opportunities to earn extra pay.

Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch accepted Chief of Department Jeffrey Maddrey's resignation on Friday night, effective immediately, according to a department statement on Saturday.

Chief of Patrol John Chell will take over as the interim chief of the department, and Philip Rivera will assume Chell's duties as the head of the patrol division, the NYPD said.

Late on Saturday, Tisch replaced the head of the internal affairs bureau, which investigates alleged police misconduct, saying in a statement that the unit "must always be dedicated to preserving integrity and rooting out corruption in all its forms". She appointed Edward Thompson as the interim chief after Miguel Iglesias was relieved of his command.

The NYPD declined to comment on the allegations against Maddrey other than to say it "takes all allegations of sexual misconduct seriously and will thoroughly investigate this matter".

A lawyer for his accuser, Lt Quathisha Epps, said the move was overdue.

"This should have been done a long time ago," lawyer Eric Sanders said by phone on



Saturday. "This has been years in the making, this kind of behaviour. This is not shock for anyone who understands how things work in this department."

On Saturday, Epps filed a complaint against the city with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, claiming that Maddrey engaged in "quid pro quo sexual harassment" by coercing her to "perform unwanted sexual favours in exchange for overtime opportunities in the workplace".

Epps, who holds an administrative post in Maddrey's office, said that when she finally pushed back at Maddrey's demands, he retaliated by claiming she was abusing overtime, prompting the department to launch a review.

Sanders said his client was then suspended without pay despite putting in her retirement notice earlier this week.

Epps was the department's top earner in fiscal year 2024, earning more than USD 400,000, according to local media reports -- more than half of it in overtime pay.

"Ms Epps has endured profound harm at the hands of individuals who exploited their positions of power for personal gain," Sanders said in a statement. "The retaliation she faced for standing up to this abuse underscores the need for immediate reforms to address systemic failures within the NYPD."

Spokespersons for the department declined to comment on the complaint, but Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's

office said it is investigating.

"These are extremely serious and disturbing claims that allegedly occurred at NYPD headquarters in Manhattan," the office said in a statement.

Mayor Eric Adams, a former police captain, said at an unrelated event on Saturday that the allegations against Maddrey were "extremely concerning and alarming" and that the department was conducting a full review, the New York Post reported.

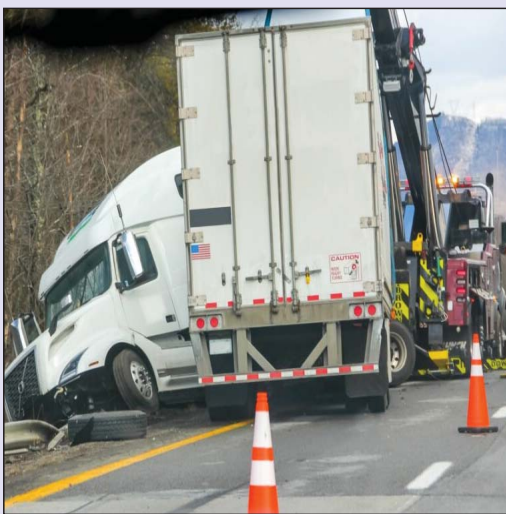
Maddrey's attorney, Lambros Lambrou, did not respond to a request for comment on the various allegations. However, in a statement to the New York Post, he dismissed Epps' claims as "completely meritless".

"What a convenient time to accuse somebody of misconduct after she is caught stealing time," Lambrou told the paper. "She is obviously drowning and in the deep end of the pool without a lifesaver. She wants to take down as many people as she can."

Sanders responded that any overtime his client worked was at the request of Maddrey and approved by him and other department officials.

Meanwhile, Maddrey has been the subject of other misconduct allegations, including one from a police captain who says she rebuffed with his unwanted advances for years.

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# 5 die as car ploughs into German market; 7 Indians among 200 hurt



Magdeburg : German authorities are investigating a Saudi man with a history of anti-Islam rhetoric as the suspected driver in a car-ramping attack at a Christmas market in the city of Magdeburg which killed five people, officials said on Saturday.

The Friday evening attack on crowds of market visitors gathered to celebrate the pre-Christmas season comes amid a fierce debate over security and migration during an election campaign in Germany, where the far right is polling strongly.

"What a terrible act it is to injure and kill so many people there with such brutality," Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in the central city, part of the former East Germany, where he laid a white rose at a church in honour of the victims.

"We have now learned that over 200 people have been injured," he added. "Almost 40 are so seriously injured that we must be very worried about them." A 50-year-old Saudi doctor who has lived in Germany for almost two decades was arrested at the scene. Police searched his home overnight.

The motive remained unclear and police have not yet named the suspect. He

has been named in German media as Taleb A. A spokesperson for a specialist rehabilitation clinic for criminals with addictions in Bernburg confirmed that the suspect had worked as a psychiatrist for them, but had not been at work since October due to sickness and holiday leave.

Posts on his X account, verified by Reuters, indicated support for anti-Islam and far-right parties, including the Alternative for Germany (AfD), as well as criticism of Germany for its handling of Saudi refugees.

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said the suspect's Islamophobia was clear to see, but she declined to comment on motive.

Taleb A appeared in a number of media interviews in 2019, including with German newspaper FAZ and the BBC, in which he spoke of his work as an activist helping Saudi Arabians and ex-Muslims flee to Europe. "There is no good Islam," he told FAZ at the time.

A Saudi source told Reuters that Saudi Arabia had warned German authorities about the attacker after he posted extremist views on his personal X account that threatened peace and security.

# NCB busts international drug racket; Three Nigerians among four held

Ahmedabad : The Narcotics Control Bureau, Ahmedabad has busted an international drug syndicate with the seizure of 2 kg ketamine and arrested four persons, including three Nigerian nationals, the NCB said on Sunday.

The accused conspired to traffic ketamine from India to foreign countries through courier parcels, the NCB said in a release, detailing the significant crackdown of the organised drug crime operating from Indian soil.

The value of the seized contraband was not specified.

Ketamine is a highly valued and sought after contraband in USA and also used as a "date rape" drug, the release said.

The NCB Ahmedabad received an initial input on December 3 that nearly 2 kg of ketamine concealed in spice packets of various brands was being shipped to the US through courier agencies, it said.

Extensive technical surveillance coupled with human intel led the drug law enforcement agency to zero in on a

person, Adnan Furniturewala, who once resided in Pune but later moved to the US, it said.

It further came to light that Furniturewala was deported to India after being booked in three cases of

continuously kept on changing his hideout and employed numerous tactics so as to dodge the agency," the release said.

"However, in a precisely executed operation that spanned through states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka, he was tracked and finally arrested on December 8 from an apartment in Bellahalli area of Bengaluru, Karnataka," it stated.

The probe further indicated the seized ketamine was supplied to him by a Nigerian syndicate operating from Delhi and supplying contraband through courier agencies, the NCB said. "Concerted efforts by the agency led to the

nabbing of Emmanuel Ifanyi Nwaobiara alias Mike along with his two associates Ekeleme Ahamefula Joseph and Emmanuel Osaja on December 18 from Mehrauli area of Delhi," it said.

Further investigation was being carried out by the NCB's Ahmedabad zonal unit to find out the source of the contraband, the release said.



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## North Korea slams South Korea-US-Japan talks on Indo-Pacific as 'insult' to peace Seoul



Seoul : North Korea on Saturday lambasted a recent trilateral meeting between South Korea, the US and Japan that discussed peace in the Indo-Pacific region, deriding the talks as an "insult" to peace.

North Korea's main newspaper criticised the trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue that took place in Tokyo on December 11, accusing Washington of being a "gangster-like"

country destroying peace and its Asian allies of being accomplices.

"The United States' history itself is one of war all around the world and its foreign policy is consistent with the evil of invading other countries and bringing destruction to peace and safety," Yonhap news agency reported, quoting the Roddong Sinmun.

The paper rejected Japan as a country seeking peace, citing its guidelines

for defence cooperation with the US and its security law that allows collective self-defence. It also labelled South Korea as being the "vanguard of US policies of invasion and war."

"The United States is an empire of evil and a gangster-like country destroying peace," it said. "Japan and puppet South Korea are accomplices no less guilty."

During this month's talks, the three countries acknowledged the need to explore ways to collectively contribute to peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, according to Seoul's foreign ministry. The meeting marked the second of its kind after its inaugural session in January.

The talks took place as South Korea, the US and Japan sought to deepen trilateral security cooperation amid evolving North Korean nuclear and missile threat.

## Malaysia agrees to resume 'no find, no fee' hunt for flight MH370, 10 years after plane disappeared

Kuala Lumpur : Malaysia's government has agreed in principle to accept a second "no find, no fee" proposal from a US company to renew the hunt for flight MH370, which is believed to have crashed in the southern Indian Ocean more than 10 years ago, Transport Minister Anthony Loke said Friday.

Loke said Cabinet ministers gave the nod at their meeting last week for Texas-based marine robotics firm Ocean Infinity to continue the seabed search operation at a new 15,000-square-kilometer (5,800-square-mile) site in the ocean next year.

"The proposed new search area, identified by Ocean Infinity, is based on the latest information and data analyses conducted by experts and researchers. The company's proposal is credible," he said in a

statement.

The Boeing 777 plane vanished from radar shortly after taking off on March 8, 2014, carrying 239 people, mostly Chinese nationals, on a flight from Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur, to



Beijing. Satellite data showed the plane deviated from its flight path to head over the southern Indian Ocean, where it is believed to have crashed.

An expensive multinational search failed to turn up any clues, although debris washed ashore on the east African coast and Indian Ocean islands. A private search in 2018 by Ocean

Infinity also found nothing.

Under the new deal, Ocean Infinity will get USD 70 million only if significant wreckage is discovered, Loke said. He said his ministry will finalise negotiations with Ocean

Infinity in early 2025. The firm has indicated that January-April is the best period for the search, he said.

"This decision reflects the government's commitment to continuing the search

operation and providing closure for the families of MH370 passengers," he added.

Ocean Infinity CEO Oliver Punkett earlier this year reportedly said the company had improved its technology since 2018. He has said the firm is working with many experts to analyze data and narrow the search area to the most likely site.

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# Man dressed up as Santa to surprise wife and kids, then killed them: Christmas murders that shook Texas

In Grapevine, known as the Christmas Capital of Texas, the festive spirit of Christmas morning in 2011 was shattered by a horrifying murder-suicide, carried out by a man ominously dressed as Santa Claus. When the police reached the house where the killings took place, they found seven bodies lying among gift wrapping paper.

Aziz Yazdanpanah, 56, an Iranian-born man killed his estranged wife, their two teenage children, his wife's sister, his brother-in-law and his niece at the family's Christmas gathering.

When Aziz arrived at the house, his niece texted her boyfriend complaining about his presence. "We just got here and my uncle is here too. Dressed as Santa. Now he wants to be all fatherly and win father of the year," she said.

Twenty minutes later, she and her family were gunned down. Dressed in a red and white Santa suit,

Aziz called 911 to report the murders before taking his own life.

Three minutes after the call, police arrived at the scene to discover a devastating tragedy. Aziz had fatally shot his estranged wife, Fatemeh Rahmati, 55, their 14-year-old son, Ali, and their 19-year-old daughter, Nona. He also killed his wife's sister, Zohreh Rahmati, 58, her husband, Mohamad Hossein Zarei, 59, and their 22-year-old daughter, Sahra.

The victims were shot in the head, chest and stomach multiple times. Two handguns were found at the scene.

A family friend told local news that Aziz was apparently told he wasn't welcome to the gathering and that may have been the final breaking point for him, the Independent reported.



The friend spoke to Aziz on Christmas Eve and he told him that "his sister-in-law had control over his wife and children and they would listen to her when she called him evil."

A recording of a 911 call made by Aziz captured the chilling last words of the killer who admitted to the dispatcher that he was shooting people.

In the call, he was heard saying "help" twice and then "I am shooting people," followed by heavy

breathing before the line went dead and he shot himself.

But before he killed himself, he tried to stage the scene by placing one of the two guns used in the hand of his dead brother-in-law.

Aziz's marital and financial troubles led him to kill his family, but have also said his exact thought process may never be known. Aziz was a former real

estate professional who was out of work at the time of the killings.

In August 2010, the couple filed jointly for bankruptcy. When the family's financial troubles intensified, Aziz's wife held down jobs at two spas to raise their children. In April 2011, she moved out of the family's home in into the apartment complex two miles away. Aziz remained in their home and continued to struggle financially.

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# The alarm over widening trade deficit is misplaced

**INDIA'S** September quarter (Q2)

growth came in at a disappointing 5.4 per cent. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lowered its growth projection for this year to 6.6 per cent, from its earlier forecast of 7.2 per cent. SBI economists put the likely growth rate for the year at 6.3 per cent.

These estimates combine with ordinary folks' lived experience of high prices and persistent unemployment and news flashes of a surge in the trade deficit to record highs, with the official narrative still clamouring that India remains the fastest growing

Articles Written By :  
TK ARUN

large economy.

The economic news is both worse than it looks in some ways and better than it looks in some other ways.

The unexpected spike in the trade deficit in November is no big deal, for example. It was caused by a surge in the import of gold. As global gold prices came down, importers more than doubled the imports of the precious metal — from \$7.13 billion in October to \$14.8 billion in November. The RBI has, of late, been shoring up gold reserves in the country's overall foreign exchange reserves as well.

What really matters is not so much the trade balance as a broader measure, the current account balance, which takes into account not just the balance in merchandise trade, but also the balance in export and import of services (computer-related services matter a lot), and inflows and outflows of income from the factors of production, labour and capital, comprising remittances, profits, royalties, interest.

The current account balance determines whether a country is a net supplier of savings to the rest of the world, running up a current account surplus, or a net drawer of external savings, running up a current account deficit.

When the current



account is in deficit, we end up owing foreigners money. How does that draw external savings into the economy? Let us consider savings and investment in real, rather than monetary, form.

Everything an economy produces in a year is either consumed, invested or exported. Yet, when we add up consumption, investment and exports, we do not get GDP, the value of everything produced in a year. That is because there is an element of imports in the things we consume, invest and even export — we import crude and export refined products, such as petrol and diesel, for example. So, GDP is the sum of consumption, investment and exports net of imports, exports and imports being seen comprehensively, including all services, covering factor services, apart from goods.

Savings are that part of the output that is not consumed. In other words, savings are equal to GDP

less consumption, meaning that savings are equal to investment plus net exports. If net exports, that is, the current account balance, is zero, that is, exports exactly match imports, savings would equal investment.

In a closed economy, what the economy can invest is necessarily what it saves, neither bigger, nor smaller.

If exports are less than imports, the current account balance (next exports) would be negative. Savings, remember, are the sum of investment and net exports. When the net exports element is negative, domestic savings are smaller than domestic investment by that element of net exports. In other words, domestic investment is greater than domestic savings, thanks to that current account deficit (CAD).

With a CAD, you either run down past reserves of foreign exchange or owe foreigners money. That is, foreigners must be willing to

finance your CAD. The amount of foreign savings your economy ingests is measured by your CAD, not by capital inflows, classified as foreign direct investments or foreign portfolio investments. These inflows remain as cash balances till they are absorbed into the real economy via financing a CAD.

This is why alarm over a trade deficit is misplaced. India's CAD for 2023-24 was 0.7 per cent of GDP and has nudged up to 1.1 per cent of GDP in the April-June quarter this year. A current account deficit up to 3 per cent is not only sustainable but also desirable, so that the economy can augment domestic savings to invest more and grow faster.

So, worry over a widening trade deficit is wholly misplaced. The only alarm on the external front is that we are unable to run up a current account deficit large enough to accelerate domestic investment and

growth.

Slowing growth is indeed a concern, as is the government's contradictory policy response. While the Budget did announce a massive capital outlay, spending has been deficient. At the end of October, while total receipts have been 53.7 per cent of the budget estimate (BE), capital expenditure has been just 42 per cent of BE, even as revenue expenditure has been 54.1 per cent of BE. Nor has there been any coherent policy to boost private investment.

A quarter of the manufacturing capacity has been lying underutilised since 2015-16. This dissuades capacity expansion. The government would rather sustain the narrative of corruption under the UPA than design new public-private-partnership policies for large, broad-based private investment in infrastructure.

Yet another dampener is the regressive tax reform.

The latest is the proposal to create a sixth slab for GST, beyond the existing range of zero, 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent. Now, a 35 per cent rate has been proposed, purportedly, for sin goods. More goods and services are liable to turn sinful over time. The net result would be loss of revenue and reinforcement of a culture of tax complexity, avoidance and evasion.

Higher import duties on gold and higher excise duties on cigarettes have both encouraged largescale smuggling. Higher rates on luxury goods would drive their purchases totally abroad. The goal in GST reform is convergence of rates and fewer slabs, not rate creep or retrospective levies.

The government should step up capital spending, keep GST stable and incentivise investment in food processing to escape seasonal price surges in vegetables that hold interest rates hostage.

# Why agri draft policy is not inclusive or progressive

**THE** draft National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing was circulated by the Centre to the states last month, inviting suggestions for its improvement. It has sparked a nationwide debate as well as apprehensions among different stakeholders. The draft accepts that small and marginal farmers are still not able to benefit from bumper production and growth in the agriculture sector. A significant gap still exists in rural and urban economies.

It admits that most farmers are struggling for optimum income due to

Articles Written By :  
BS SIDHU

highly fragmented landholdings, increasing cost of production, lack of demand-driven production, accessibility to good markets and optimum realisation of value for their produce.

The major marketing reforms proposed in the draft include permission to set up private wholesale markets and allow direct wholesale purchase from farm gate to organised retailers, processors, exporters and bulk buyers. It has also proposed for deregulation of perishables outside the market yard; declare cold storages, warehouses and silos as deemed market yards and permit establishment and operation of private e-trading platforms.

Other proposed reforms include single unified trading license and one-time levy of market fee across the state; rationalisation of market fee and commission charges and recognition of trading licenses of other states. It also provides for the exemption of market fees on direct sales by farmers' or farmers producer organisations (FPOs) at processing units or factories and the exemption of market fees on produce brought from other states for processing.

The farmers are protesting for the enactment of a law that ensures a



guaranteed minimum support price (MSP) for all crops. Such an assurance would protect their income and provide stability in agricultural markets. A legally binding MSP has also been recommended by the parliamentary panel on agriculture as a measure to provide financial stability to farmers. The MSP has to be the minimum benchmark to enable the farmers to realise a remunerative price for their produce. But the draft is silent on this issue and suggests 'Futures trading and options trading' as a price discovery and risk mitigating tool.

There are other apprehensions. Farmers are demanding India's withdrawal from the World Trade Organisation and the imposition of a ban on all free trade agreements. The draft policy is also silent about a clear commitment to such trade-related decisions, which affect farmers' income through highly unpredictable restrictions. These include export bans, stock

export prices, imposed on exports from India. Duties are also lowered on import of products which are often highly subsidised by the exporting countries.

The draft policy provides to establish private markets to facilitate the visibility of trade transactions and enhanced competition. Farmers, however, feel that the elimination of government protections would make them vulnerable to big corporates. The draft framework provides for direct purchase from farm gates, at deemed market yards and proposed deregulated market yards for perishables. But in the event of deregulation, these multiple channels of marketing can be unfair and manipulative.

The draft does not specify what type of financial and other support the government will provide to bridge the gaps between marketing and auxiliary infrastructure and carry out institutional reforms.

Suggestion to roll out a 'price insurance scheme' to

insure the farmers' income at the time of sowing is apprehended to apply to contract farming by corporates or FPOs operated by them. What will be the basis for compensation — the MSP or contracted price and how the government will ensure it in a deregulated market? The experience of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana in this context has not been encouraging for the farmers. The process of making payments to the farmers is also not trustworthy in an unregulated market.

Given this background, the effectiveness of an 'empowered agricultural marketing reform committee' is dubious. This appears to be a mechanism where all BJP-ruled states will be forced to accept the government's proposals so that any resistance at the national level due to genuine issues can be sidelined.

The draft envisages making intense efforts to bring all farmers under one or other farmers' organisations i.e.

cooperatives, FPOs, self-help groups, etc, to reduce their inaccessibility to market and price uncertainty. However, it has been observed that in many cases, the primary processing alone is not sufficient to enable the FPOs or other farmers groups to gain substantial income for their members. However, the provision related to value chain centric infrastructure (VCCI) does not commit firmly to providing all-out support to FPOs to set up the VCCI.

The 'ease of doing agri-trade' at the expense of protection of farmers' interests and 'promotion of contract farming' again reek of revival of the earlier farm laws. A narrative is building up among the farmers and other stakeholders that the reintroduction of basics of the repealed laws by the government under a new guise should be resisted.

The farmers' concerns about the weakening of the marketing infrastructure of markets, regulated by agricultural produce market committees (APMC) over

time, are also not ill-founded. The policy draft suggests that the states consider allowing the buying of contracted produce outside the mandi yard and waive off the market fee when produce is bought for the purpose of processing and export to give impetus to these sectors. Organised retailers, processors, exporters and bulk buyers will be able to make direct purchases from the farm gate or at deemed market yards where they can initially offer higher prices to the farmers due to lower taxes. It will also affect the income of APMC markets due to lower arrivals. Thus, over time, these will become unviable.

Though the draft policy takes cognisance of the fact that agricultural marketing is a state subject under the Seventh Schedule in the Constitution, its mere glimpse brings out the government agenda of addressing the long-standing challenges in agricultural marketing through a unified national approach.

To allay the fears of farmers and to make it inclusive, the policy framework should be redrafted after public consultations with farmer unions and meaningful engagement with state governments and experts. Public investment in agro-processing and cold chains should be increased to strengthen the agricultural marketing infrastructure.

Indian agriculture is facing a series of crises — income crisis due to the falling or stagnant incomes; degradation of natural resources; adverse impact of climate change, and last but not the least the loss of interest of the younger generation in agriculture. An inclusive and progressive agricultural marketing policy can go a long way in meeting these challenges by addressing major issues like the MSP, higher public investment and a participatory quick response system for responding to changes in the international market.

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When Diljit Dosanjh danced his way to the Jimmy Kimmel show, the natural destination of the who's who of the celeb world, it was a historic moment for Punjabi music. It's not just Diljit who is setting off an unprecedented hype and fan frenzy. Karan Aujla and AP Dhillon have joined the bandwagon of sold-out concerts across India. 'Unstoppable', 'livewire', 'heartthrobs' — adjectives fall short in describing their journey to success.

In 2023, Diljit became the first Punjabi singer to be part of the Coachella Festival in the US, where artistes of many musical genres perform. AP Dhillon was the first Punjabi language artiste to perform at the 2023 Juno Awards in Edmonton, Canada. Karan Aujla's concert at Rogers Arena (Vancouver) was the highest selling Punjabi show at the venue. If Kimmel introduces Diljit

Articles Written By :  
**NONIKA SINGH**

as the "biggest Punjabi artiste on the planet", hip-hop legend Nas calls 'Brown Munde' singer Dhillon the "newest, greatest artiste in the... world".

Millions of views and downloads have been a given in the Punjabi musical galaxy for long now. But to be trending on the UK Asian Music charts, topping the Billboard charts, Apple Music and more, clearly this is a different league altogether where Diljit no doubt stands way above others. At the O2 music arena in London, he was sold out for three nights. A resale portal put the price of his show tickets during his Dil-Luminati tour in lakhs.

Diljit is ready to mock his not-so Anglicised upbringing while Aujla and Dhillon have foreign accents. All three, however, are rooted in terra firma. They talk brands but more than brands, they wear their hearts on their sleeves.

In 2020, when AP Dhillon came out with 'Brown Munde', the words 'Desi Jehe Geet Aa Trap Jehi Beat Aa' struck an instant chord with the Punjabi diaspora. But what explains the song's success on the world stage where the listeners don't quite understand the lyrics? The global sound Dhillon along with Gurinder Gill and Shinda Kahlon have managed to roll out is possibly the answer. Atul Sharma, noted Punjabi music director who gave us Surjit Bindrakhia's 'Duppata Tera Sat Rang Da', says, "They have mastered the techniques available worldwide. International level of recording, video presentation and more, they don't cut any corners. And when you marry technique with the inimitable Punjabi swing, a surefire formula for a hit is ready."

Yet, they hardly seem to be adhering to any pattern, except maybe coming across as earnest Punjabis. What you see is what you get. After all, humility and superstardom is a deadly combination which endears and awes fans. That they come from humble beginnings makes them all too relatable. Most youngsters can seek inspiration in their humungous success. Celebrated director Imtiaz Ali,



whose film 'Amar Singh Chamkila' once again established Diljit as an actor to reckon with, goes one step further. He defines Diljit's relatability so, "There is a simplicity and purity in Diljit and when people see him performing, they are reminded of what is good in them."

Interestingly, while these megastars are candid, they instinctively seem to know how much to reveal and what to conceal. Diljit might be in an "all-reveal" mode right now, yet is tightlipped about his wife. When rumour mills told us that Dhillon was dating 'October' actor Banita Sandhu, he neither made the relationship too obvious, nor the now-rumoured breakup public. Aujla may not have kept mum about his girlfriend-turned-wife, yet has limited the exposure. Thus, though they come across as everyday 'saade pind de munde', the mystique remains.

Ali talks of another disarming quality in Diljit: "While at one level Diljit is able to engage with a world audience, at another he is very comfortable with his own self. He knows how to connect with the outer world as well as inner." Lately, fans following Diljit's graph believe his entire aura has changed in recent years. On stage, he might scream Punjabi "aa gaye veh", betraying a regional bias, but associates share he chants 'Wahe Guru' and 'Om Namoh Shivay' and cuts the right picture of a secular Indian that India loves so much. Why, today, even spiritual gurus are citing his power to manifest stardom.

Whether what they are sharing is part of the brand strategy or not, when they — especially Diljit — speak, it seems like the gospel truth. Noted filmmaker Anees Bazmee, who has cast Diljit in the sequel of

the superhit 'No Entry', finds him "a pure soul with no traces of nautanki or dramebaazi". As the actor-singer sang for 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3', Bazmee vouches for his "buland aawaz" and extraordinary talent. Diljit himself says he isn't the best singer around, but his soulful voice and versatility need no endorsement.

Now the chicken and egg query — is Bollywood adding to their cult status, or are they encashing upon its pan-India reach? Take Aujla's 'Tauba Tauba' song of 'Bad Newz', which peaked at number one on Billboard India, and UK Asian charts and entered the Billboard Canadian Hot 100 at the 25th position in July 2024. Many reasons, including Vicky Kaushal's hook step choreography, are being attributed to the humungous success of the song. The truth is when Aujla wrote, sang and composed 'Tauba Tauba', he was already 'the Karan Aujla' and not any newbie. So when he enjoys the spotlight in the post-credit scenes with Vicky, the makers are not creating a space for him but capitalising on his fandom. Diljit may not have been as big a phenomenon when he made his Bollywood debut in 2016 with 'Udta Punjab', but he was already the superstar of Punjabi music and cinema. And today, if Ali calls Diljit a "national pride", Sharma feels, "These reigning stars of Punjab are way bigger than Bollywood, which is facing a crisis of its own."

Many trade pundits reason that since cinema is not working in theatres, Punjabi music has become another means of entertainment. While they incorporate world influences from house to trap to hip hop to R&B, their music has a stamp of its own. What's more, none of them are one-song

wonders. Around for 22 years, Diljit's hits 'G.O.A.T.', 'Proper Patola', 'Raat Di Gedi', 'Born to Shine' are far too many to be listed. Aujla is 27 and Dhillon 31; their age might belie us in assuming they are overnight wonders. But Aujla has time and again shared in chat shows how he began writing when he was in school as a cathartic tool to deal with his parents' loss at a very young age. Today, he has 52 singles as the lead artist to his credit. Dhillon's journey from the garage to the world stage is well documented in docuseries 'AP Dhillon: First of a Kind'.

Well-versed with contemporary sensibilities, the fact that they are based out of India helps them understand how to tap into the collective consciousness of the young, which is increasingly moving towards a common ground. With new demographics taking over, Sharma observes, "The world today has similar tastes." International collaborations like Diljit's with Colombian singer Camilo for the song 'Palpita' and US rapper Saweetie for the song 'Khutti' further secure their sway on audiences across borders and cultures. When Ed Sheeran sings parts of Diljit's song 'Lover' in Mumbai and a mashup of 'The Shape of You' and Diljit's 'Naina' with him in Birmingham, fans in both continents go berserk. On the ever-rising ascent of Punjabi music, five years ago, Tej Gobind Singh of White Hill Studios said, "Punjabi music is not a bubble that will burst."

Today, when Diljit sings 'Main Hoon Punjab', which Irshad Kamil wrote for the movie 'Chamkila', Punjabi music has become the de facto emblem of Punjab and these three its unicorns.

CHIEF EDITOR : VARINDER UBHI | PHONE : (510) 943-8037 WEEKLY ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

# USA INDIA TODAY

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## Trump nominates Indian-American Kash Patel as FBI Director



Washington : President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday nominated close confidante Kash Patel for the powerful position of Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, making him the highest ranking Indian American in his incoming administration. "I am proud to announce that Kash Patel will serve as the next Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Kash is a brilliant lawyer, investigator, and accountability, and the Constitution. Patel, 44, served as chief of staff to the Acting United States Secretary of Defense in the last few weeks of the Trump Administration in 2017. "Kash did an incredible job during my first term, where he served as Chief of Staff at the Department of Defense, Deputy Director of National Intelligence, and as an advocate for truth.

(Contd. to Page No. 4)

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