



(Representative Image)

Raja Krishnamoorthi Raises Concerns Over J-1 Visa Delays

SAH Staff Reporter

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi has raised concerns over reports that physicians from India who matched into U.S. residency and fellowship programs are facing “unexpected” J-1 visa denials and administrative hurdles under the Trump Administration. He warned that such disruptions could worsen physician shortages and affect access to healthcare in rural and underserved communities across the United States.

“At a time when America already faces serious physician shortages —

especially in rural and underserved communities — the last thing we should be doing is creating arbitrary barriers that prevent qualified doctors from beginning training,” said Congressman Krishnamoorthi in a statement. “These physicians followed longstanding legal pathways, earned placements through an extraordinarily rigorous and competitive process, and are scheduled to begin caring for patients in communities across the United States that urgently need doctors.

The Trump Administration must provide transparency, ensure fair and timely visa processing, and prevent disruptions

that could leave hospitals short-staffed and patients without care.”

According to the statement, the concerns follow reports from physician organizations, including the Osmania GandhiKakatiyaandTelanganaMedical Alumni Association of America (OGK-TMA), regarding an increasing number of matched medical residents encountering “visa refusals, prolonged administrative processing, or cancellations of previously valid visitor visas” despite securing accredited U.S. residency placements and completing required observership programs.

(Contd. on page 2)

Rubio Says India Key to Indo-Pacific Partnership

T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the relationship between the United States and India remains at the “cornerstone” of Washington’s approach to the Indo-Pacific region, underscoring the growing strategic, economic, and diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Speaking at the U.S. Embassy Support Annex Dedication Ceremony in New Delhi on May 23 alongside U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gorr, Rubio highlighted the importance of the bilateral partnership and pointed to the role of the Quad grouping in advancing regional cooperation.

“It is this relationship between our two countries that is at the cornerstone of our approach to the Indo-Pacific. A lot of people aren’t aware of this, but I was sworn in as Secretary of State on Tuesday or Wednesday – it was a Tuesday after the inauguration,” Rubio said, adding that his first official meeting as Secretary of State was with the Quad nations.

Rubio noted that the United States deliberately chose India as the venue for a subsequent Quad meeting as a “tangible sign” of India’s growing importance in America’s Indo-Pacific strategy.

(Contd. on page 2)



(Photo courtesy: X@SecRubio)

Gen Z Turns Satire Into Protest

R. Suryamurthy

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) is not a real political party. It has no Election Commission registration, no formal leadership and no serious electoral ambitions. Yet, within days, it has become one of India’s loudest political conversations — powered not by rallies or speeches, but by memes, reels and dark humor.

What began as an internet joke after reported remarks by Supreme Court Justice Surya Kant comparing critics and sections of unemployed youth to “cockroaches” and “parasites” quickly spiraled into a full-fledged online satire movement. Instead of taking offence, young Indians embraced the insult.

“Fine, we are cockroaches,” the internet replied. “We survive everything.”

The symbolism struck a nerve. Cockroaches survive poison, disasters, pandemics and



(Photo courtesy: X@CJP_for_India)

collapsing systems. For millions of frustrated young Indians battling unemployment, exam scandals and shrinking opportunities, the metaphor felt oddly fitting. The movement reportedly took off after US-based Indian Abhijeet Dipke amplified it online around May 16. Soon, Instagram, X, YouTube and WhatsApp were flooded with AI-generated cockroach politicians, parody manifestos, rap videos and mock campaign slogans. Profile pictures turned into insect icons. Satirical “membership drives” claimed lakhs of supporters.

The joke worked because the anger beneath it was real.

India’s educated youth face rising anxiety over jobs, competitive exam leaks such as the NEET-UG controversy, inflation and a growing sense that mainstream politics no longer speaks their language.

(Contd. on page 2)

SAH Founder Honored on Capitol Hill

Pooja Bhardwaj

The recognition of T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman on Capitol Hill during Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month is being seen as a reflection of the growing influence of diaspora-focused journalism in the United States.

Jayaraman, founder and editor-in-chief of South Asian Herald (SAH), received a Congressional Record and Medal recognizing him among the top 20 Asian Americans in the country during a May 19 ceremony at the U.S. Capitol.

Presented by US Lawmaker Jonathan L. Jackson, the Congressional tribute praised Jayaraman as “a distinguished

journalist, scholar, editor, and storyteller” whose work has amplified the voices of Indian Americans and the broader South Asian diaspora. The remarks have been entered into the Congressional Record and will be archived

at the Library of Congress.

Founded in 2024, South Asian Herald was launched to provide deeper coverage of South Asian American communities and issues often overlooked in mainstream media.

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T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman being honored on May 19, 2026, on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. (Photo courtesy: SAH)

India Calls for ‘Zero Tolerance’ on Civilian Deaths



India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Harish Parvathaneni, speaking at the UNSC Open Debate on May 20, 2026, at the United Nations in New York. (Photo courtesy: Screenshot/X@IndiaatUN)

T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

India has reiterated its call for “zero tolerance” toward the loss of civilian lives during armed conflicts at the annual United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Open Debate on the “Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” held May 20 at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Speaking at the debate, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations,

Harish Parvathaneni, congratulated China on assuming the UNSC presidency for the month and welcomed the convening of the annual discussion on civilian protection in conflict zones.

“India reaffirms its strong commitment to the UN Charter and stresses that protecting civilians at all times, including conflict situations, is a central element of maintenance of international peace and security,” Ambassador Harish said, noting that more

than 37,000 civilian deaths were recorded across 20-armed conflicts in 2025. While the figure marked the first decline after three consecutive years of increases, he said the numbers remain alarmingly high.

He expressed concern over continued civilian casualties, mass displacement, destruction of critical infrastructure, and attacks on hospitals, schools, medical personnel, and humanitarian workers. “India calls for zero tolerance to the loss of civilian lives,” he said, adding that parties involved in armed conflicts must ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access while adhering to international humanitarian law.

Referring to UNSC Resolution 2286, adopted a decade ago to protect medical and humanitarian personnel, Ambassador Harish said repeated attacks on civilian facilities and aid workers reflected a “serious erosion” of respect for international humanitarian law. He emphasized that medical personnel and humanitarian workers “must be protected at all times.”

Citing the United Nations Secretary-General's report, he noted that the use of “missiles, bombs and other explosive weapons” in densely populated urban areas continues to be a major cause of civilian harm. He also raised concerns about the increasing use of drones and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, in armed conflict. According to him, such technologies must be used in accordance with international law and humanitarian principles, with safeguards in place to prevent misuse and unintended civilian harm.

Tulsi Gabbard Resigns as DNI

SAH Staff Reporter



Tulsi Gabbard. (Photo courtesy: X@DNIGabbard)

U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard has announced that she will step down from her position effective June 30, 2026, citing her husband's diagnosis with a “rare” form of bone cancer. Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence Aaron Lukas will serve as Acting Director of National Intelligence following her departure.

In an official letter addressed to President Donald Trump on May 22, Gabbard wrote, “I am deeply grateful for the trust you placed in me and for the opportunity to lead the Office of the Director of National Intelligence for the last year and a half. Unfortunately, I must submit my resignation, effective June 30, 2026.”

Gabbard said her husband, Abraham, was recently diagnosed with an “extremely rare form of bone cancer.” She noted that he faces significant medical challenges in the coming weeks and months, adding, “At this time, I must step away from public service to be by his side and fully support him through this battle.”

Raja Krishnamoorthi...

(Contd. from page 1)

“OGKMTA warns many of the affected physicians are scheduled to begin training this July in programs that serve communities already facing serious doctor shortages,” the statement noted. “The United States already faces a projected shortage of up to 86,000

physicians by 2036, with rural and underserved communities expected to face some of the deepest shortages.”

The statement further noted that international medical graduates account for more than one in four physicians in the United

States and play a critical role in staffing hospitals and clinics that face challenges recruiting doctors. It added that many physicians who enter through the J-1 visa pathway later serve in federally designated shortage areas through programs aimed at expanding healthcare access in rural and medically underserved communities.

Gen Z Turns...

(Contd. from page 1)

Gen Z, raised on algorithms and short-form content, has found a different vocabulary for dissent: absurdist humor.

This is a protest redesigned for the digital age.

Unlike student agitations of earlier decades, the CJP thrives online, where participation is instant, decentralized and relatively safe. A meme travels faster than a pamphlet. A satirical reel reaches more people than a street protest. Humor also provides protection. Governments can crack down on demonstrations more easily than on millions of sarcastic videos.

That explains why the movement has unsettled sections of the political establishment. Critics have dismissed it as foreign-influenced chaos, anti-government propaganda or just another passing meme. Some

have raised concerns over clips circulating through banned platforms like TikTok.

But reducing it to online mischief misses the larger story.

The CJP reflects a generation deeply disillusioned with institutions yet unwilling to remain silent. Its politics are messy, ironic and leaderless — but unmistakably political. It mocks not just one party, but the entire ecosystem of televised outrage, hyper-nationalism and scripted narratives.

Whether the movement survives another month may not matter much. Most meme revolutions fade quickly.

But the cockroach has already done its job. It has crawled into the national conversation and exposed an uncomfortable reality: beneath India's booming digital economy lies a generation that feels unheard, overqualified and increasingly cynical.

And in 2026, that frustration has found its mascot.

SAH Founder...

(Contd. from page 1)

Since then, the publication has expanded its reporting from community events to coverage of the White House, Capitol Hill, the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund.

The recognition comes at a time when South Asian Americans are gaining increasing visibility in politics, business, academia, and civic leadership, fueling greater demand for community-centered journalism and representation.

“This recognition acknowledges the importance of amplifying South Asian voices in America,” Jayaraman said, adding that the honor reflects the growing role of diaspora media in shaping public discourse and preserving community narratives in the United States.

Jayaraman expressed gratitude to Shri Thanedar, Suhas Subramanyam, Danny Davis, Cook County Commissioner, Kevin Morrison, and Global Eye Magazine Chairperson, Dr. Vijay Prabhakar, for the recognition.

Rubio Says...

(Contd. from page 1)

He also emphasized the relationship between U.S. President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, describing it as a longstanding “personal relationship” that began during Trump's first administration and has continued into the second term. Rubio said the rapport between the two leaders forms an important foundation for bilateral ties.

According to Rubio, the U.S.-India partnership has expanded significantly over the past year through investments, commercial engagement, and defense cooperation. He pointed to more than \$20 billion in investments by Indian companies in the United States and highlighted ongoing military exercises in the Indo-Pacific region.

Rubio also announced that the United States is introducing a new America First visa scheduling tool aimed at prioritizing business professionals who contribute to strengthening bilateral economic ties.

Referring to the inauguration of the new embassy facility, Rubio said the building represented more than infrastructure and reflected Washington's commitment to deepening ties with India. He added that the purpose of his visit was to “reaffirm” the relationship and build upon existing cooperation between the two countries. Rubio further indicated that additional announcements

related to bilateral engagement could be expected in the coming months.

Praising Ambassador Gor, Rubio described him as a “friend” and commended his enthusiasm and leadership in strengthening diplomatic engagement between the two nations. Rubio also acknowledged the contributions of locally employed staff at the U.S. mission, describing them as an integral part of the diplomatic team.

Ambassador Sergio Gor said the newly inaugurated facility, while physically built of “stone and steel,” was ultimately designed to support “people, entrepreneurs, students, and families” in advancing shared ambitions between the United States and India.

“We are here because we believe that a strong America and a strong India are essential to the world,” Gor said, noting that Indian companies have committed approximately \$20.5 billion to the U.S. economy.

Gor said the facility, which will house consular operations along with other embassy offices, reflects American confidence in India and will support innovators, businesses, and professionals contributing to bilateral trade and economic growth.

He also referenced a meeting the Secretary and him had earlier in the day with Prime Minister Modi, saying the U.S.-India relationship remains “on solid footing” with “limitless potential” ahead.

Woman Peacekeeper Brings Global Honor to India

SAH Staff Reporter

Major Abhilasha Barak has been awarded the 2025 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award, marking another milestone for India's growing profile in global peacekeeping operations and gender-inclusive security initiatives.

Serving with the Indian Battalion under the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, Major Barak currently leads the Female Engagement Team (FET), a specialized unit tasked with strengthening ties between UN peacekeepers and local communities in southern Lebanon.

The United Nations said the Indian officer was recognized for her work in promoting community engagement and gender-sensitive peacekeeping practices in a conflict-prone region. Her initiatives included outreach programs for local women and adolescent girls aimed at building trust networks and improving communication



(Photo courtesy: X@IndiaUNNewYork)

between civilians and peacekeeping forces.

She was also credited with conducting gender sensitization programs for fellow peacekeepers, reinforcing the UN's broader Women, Peace and Security agenda under Security Council Resolution 1325.

The award adds to Major Barak's trailblazing career in the Indian Armed Forces. She previously became the Indian Army's first woman combat helicopter pilot, breaking barriers in a traditionally male-dominated branch of service.

With the latest honor, India continues its strong record in UN peacekeeping gender advocacy. Major Barak is the third Indian peacekeeper to receive the distinction after Major Suman Gawani in 2019 and Major Radhika Sen in 2024.

In its citation, the United Nations praised Major Barak's ability to bridge gaps between local communities and peacekeeping personnel, describing her work as an example of the "vital role women play in peacekeeping operations."

India remains one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions worldwide, with Indian women officers increasingly taking leadership roles in humanitarian and conflict-resolution efforts across global hotspots.

Moonshot Success

SAH Staff Reporter

The Indian Space Research Organization and the team behind the landmark Chandrayaan-3 mission have been awarded the prestigious 2026 Goddard Astronautics Award by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, marking a major international recognition of India's growing stature in global space exploration.

The award honors the successful Chandrayaan-3 mission, which made history with a precise lunar landing and established India as the first country to land near the Moon's south polar region.

Accepting the award on behalf of ISRO, officials highlighted the broader significance of India's space achievements and the country's expanding ambitions in advanced space research and exploration.

DURING THE CEREMONY, ISRO REPRESENTATIVES ALSO REFERRED TO PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI'S "SPACE VISION 2047," A LONG-TERM ROADMAP AIMED AT POSITIONING INDIA AMONG THE WORLD'S LEADING SPACE POWERS OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES.

During the ceremony, ISRO representatives also referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Space Vision 2047," a long-term roadmap aimed at positioning India among the world's leading space powers over the next two decades.

The recognition comes as ISRO prepares for a new phase of missions beyond lunar exploration. Officials outlined priorities including deep-space scientific missions, expansion of the human spaceflight program under Gaganyaan, and the development of India's commercial space ecosystem through increased private sector participation and international partnerships.

Named after rocket pioneer Robert H. Goddard, the Goddard Astronautics Award is regarded as one of the highest honors presented by AIAA for outstanding contributions and achievements in astronautics.



(Photo courtesy: X@AmbVMKwatra)

Mysorekar Joins PennState



(Photo courtesy: Indira Mysorekar / Penn State College of Medicine)

SAH Staff Reporter

Penn State College of Medicine has appointed Indian-origin scientist Indira U. Mysorekar as vice dean for research, basic science and graduate studies, effective July 1, 2026.

Dr. Mysorekar will also serve as the Dorothy Foehr Huck and J. Lloyd Huck Chair in Medicine and professor of medicine and cell and biological systems. She succeeds Leslie Parent in the role.

Currently at Baylor College of Medicine, Dr. Mysorekar is widely recognised for her research

on infectious diseases, women's health and host-pathogen interactions. Her work has received support from the National Institutes of Health, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund and March of Dimes.

Penn State officials said she will oversee the college's basic science research portfolio, strengthen interdisciplinary collaborations and advance graduate and postdoctoral training programs.

Dr. Mysorekar is also president of American Society for Reproductive Immunology and a fellow of American Academy of Microbiology.

India-U.S. Trade Math Changes



(Photo courtesy: X@DrSjaishankar)

SAH Special Correspondent

India's proposed commitment to purchase \$500 billion worth of American goods over the next five years has come under scrutiny after the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) argued that the economic basis of the proposed India-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) has effectively collapsed following a landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling earlier this year.

The debate intensified after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, currently on a four-day visit to India, said in a post on X that New Delhi had committed to buying "\$500 billion in U.S. goods over the next five years, focusing on energy, technology, and agriculture."

Rubio credited American diplomats for securing the understanding,

presenting it as a breakthrough in bilateral economic engagement. The proposed purchases were originally linked to the India-U.S. Joint Statement issued on February 6, 2026, during negotiations over a broader trade pact between the two countries.

However, GTRI said the circumstances underpinning that understanding have changed dramatically since then.

According to the trade think tank, India's willingness to expand imports from the United States was tied to Washington's promise to reduce proposed "reciprocal tariffs" on Indian exports from 25% to around 18% under the BTA framework. That arrangement, GTRI noted, unraveled on February 20 when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the legal basis for the Trump administration's reciprocal tariff regime.

The ruling effectively dismantled the tariff architecture that had formed the core of several ongoing U.S. trade negotiations. Within days of the judgment, the Trump administration invoked Section 122 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 to impose a flat 10% tariff on imports from all trading partners until late July 2026. The move meant that countries negotiating preferential arrangements with Washington no longer enjoyed any meaningful tariff advantage over others.

GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said New Delhi should reconsider the negotiations and clarify whether the reported \$500 billion import commitment remains valid after the collapse of the reciprocal tariff framework.

The Indian government has not yet officially responded to Rubio's remarks or clarified the status of the proposed purchase plan.

South Asia Notes

Elizabeth Roche

Associate Professor,
O.P. Jindal Global University, Haryana



New Lease of Life for the Quad?

May is one of the hottest months of the year in northern India.

Keeping pace with the scorching temperatures are diplomatic activities in New Delhi.

As we speak, India has played host to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. He was in India for four days – no less, the punishing heat notwithstanding. Another visitor expected is also from the Western Hemisphere – Delcy Rodriguez, the acting President of Venezuela.

But back to the Rubio visit, which took place a year and four months into US President Donald Trump's second term in office.

From the Indian perspective, there is a world of difference between Trump's first and second terms – in all spheres.

The 50% tariffs that included a 25% punitive levy for buying Russian oil, characterizing China as an economic rather than strategic competitor, Trump's sudden embrace of Pakistan, getting called a "dead economy" by Trump and "hellhole" by a supporter, and near abandonment of the Quad are all part of the shocking changes India has had to live through. The relationship is seen as being at its most stressed in the past 25 years.

The Rubio visit was aimed at steadying the bilateral relationship and resuscitating the Quad. The Quad was seen as an instrument to balance China's expanding regional footprint while promoting technological coordination, maritime security and supply-chain resilience.

On May 26, foreign ministers of Australia, Japan, India and the US met in New Delhi for the third Quad meeting since Trump took office in January 2025. India was to host a Quad summit of leaders in New Delhi last year. But disagreements with Trump on trade and the cooling of ties between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump as the former declined to nominate the latter for a Nobel Peace Prize for brokering peace with Pakistan during a military conflict in May 2025 put paid to that.

Trump's National Security Strategy, unveiled last year, spoke of "setting conditions for a balance of power in the Indo-Pacific that allows all of us - the United States, China, and others in the region - to enjoy a decent peace." No longer is China framed as the "pacing threat" or strategic competitor.

So, will the Quad meeting result in anything substantial? Or will Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's prediction that the Quad will dissipate like "sea foam" come true?

During Trump's May 14-15 Beijing visit, Chinese President Xi Jinping dug into Greek military history to showcase the importance of managing ties between a dominant power (read the US) and a rapidly rising one (ie China). The inference: -- a conflict could arise if the US attempts to stymie China's rise. Not subtly, Xi also drew the red line on Taiwan, stating that if it is "handled properly" by the US, the US-China ties "will enjoy overall stability."

Xi's reference to "constructive strategic stability" to guide US-China relations over the next three years (Trump's remaining term in office) and "beyond" was also noteworthy. Xi seems to be seeking stability with the US. In an increasingly transactional world, largely created by Trump, will the US do anything substantive with its partner countries in the Quad that will upset the delicate equilibrium set with China? Especially when Trump needs Xi's help with Iran and securing rare earths supplies? My guess – Quad will exist at the foreign minister level, occupying less mind space than before till the end of Trump's term. After that, who knows?

(Disclaimer: Views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of South Asian Herald.)

Australia Positions Itself as India's Biotech Gateway to the West

SAH Special Correspondent

India's biotechnology industry is no longer being viewed merely as a low-cost manufacturing hub. As the sector accelerates toward becoming a global innovation powerhouse, Australia is emerging as a strategic partner helping Indian biotech firms navigate the costly and highly regulated journey into Western markets.

The shift was unmistakable at this year's BioAsia 2026 conference in Hyderabad, where conversations moved beyond India's domestic growth story toward cross-border partnerships, clinical research alliances and regulatory cooperation. The inauguration of the Team Australia pavilion drew particular attention from Indian companies seeking faster and globally credible pathways for drug development.

India's biotech sector has expanded dramatically over the past decade, growing from roughly AUD 14 billion to more than AUD 230 billion, driven by investments in biologics, genomics,



(Photo courtesy: X@AusHIndia)

vaccines, precision medicine and digital health. Yet industry leaders acknowledge that the next phase of growth will depend less on manufacturing scale and more on the ability to generate internationally accepted clinical data and secure regulatory approvals in the United States and Europe.

That is where Australia is carving out a niche.

Under Australia's Clinical Trial

Notification system, companies can begin clinical trials immediately after ethics approval, significantly compressing timelines that often stretch for months in other jurisdictions. Industry executives say Australian Phase I studies can frequently commence within six to twelve weeks, an increasingly valuable advantage in a global biotech race where delays can determine investor confidence and market survival.

Editorial



A Season For Retribution

President Donald Trump has been making it clear to Republican lawmakers in the House of Representatives, the Senate and at the State levels that there will be a price to pay should they choose to cross that “red” line. It was not a threat but a promise that, come primaries time, there will be retribution. And in the last few weeks, the rank and file in the Grand Old Party saw lawmakers realising that President Trump means business; also, that his name continues to carry a lot of political weight. In focus is the upcoming Congressional Midterms at the national and state levels this November.

Three Republicans found out the hard way—Representative Thomas Massie of Kentucky, Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the first two put on notice quite some time ago. Rep. Massie was always seen as an outlier in the GOP and a thorn in the side of the White House and the Republican leadership in the House, refusing to go along with the majority just because he was asked or ordered to. In fact, President Trump had long ago called him the “worst” of the RINOs, or Republicans in Name Only. And Senator Cassidy ran afoul when he cast his vote to convict the President at the second impeachment.

But what has rattled the GOP leadership is President Trump’s decision not to endorse Senator Cornyn and instead to back the state’s Attorney General, Ken Paxton, who has baggage that could prove costly in November, at a time when Democrats are looking for every opportunity to flip the Senate as well. The last word on why the White House went against Senator Cornyn is yet to be known, but generally seen in terms of the Texan’s “slow” in jumping onto the bandwagon on issues dear to the man sitting in the Oval Office.

THE LARGER PROBLEM THE GOP FACES IS THAT THE SHAKEOUTS IN THE PRIMARIES ARE HAPPENING AT A TIME WHEN PRESIDENT TRUMP IS LOW IN APPROVAL RATINGS DUE TO SEVERAL FACTORS, INCLUDING THE WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE ECONOMY AND GENERAL DISCONTENT WITH THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY.

Generally, Presidents do not get too involved in the primaries and do not actively work to derail incumbents. But this is a different environment. There is a feeling that the GOP may not be able to hold on to its status in the House, and there is also now the talk of Democrats making a serious bid to take control of the Senate. This is precisely why a lot of Republicans are fearing that the party may have “given away” Texas if the State Attorney General comes away on top in the run-offs. The fear is not of the rejected running as Independents but of disaffected voters choosing to stay away from the polls.

The larger problem the GOP faces is that the shakeouts in the primaries are happening at a time when President Trump is low in approval ratings due to several factors, including the war in the Middle East, the economy and general discontent with the direction of the country. There are visible cracks in the Republican base, especially in the weakening of crucial support of non-college-educated white youth, Blacks, Hispanics and Independents.



Opinion

R. Suryamurthy
Senior Journalist and Columnist

When Energy Becomes Strategy

When Marco Rubio told reporters before his India visit that Washington wanted to sell India “as much energy as they’ll buy,” it was more than a commercial pitch. It was a geopolitical message wrapped in the language of energy security.

Rubio’s discussions with Narendra Modi in New Delhi came at a moment when the Iran conflict has once again exposed the dangerous fragility of the global energy system. Oil markets are nervous, shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz remain vulnerable, and Asian economies — especially South Asia — are confronting a hard truth: their economic futures are still tied to energy corridors they cannot control.

For India, the timing of Rubio’s offer is significant. New Delhi has spent the past few years diversifying away from excessive Gulf dependence by buying discounted Russian crude, expanding strategic reserves, and accelerating renewable energy. Yet India still imports the majority of its oil, much of it moving through one of the world’s most volatile maritime chokepoints.

Washington sees opportunity in that vulnerability.

American LNG and crude exports are increasingly being positioned not merely as trade, but as strategic alternatives to unstable Gulf supplies. Energy is becoming the new diplomatic currency between India and the United States. The message from Washington is clear: buy American energy, reduce geopolitical risk, and deepen strategic alignment with the US-led order.

But the larger crisis extends well beyond India.

Across South Asia, the energy shock is beginning to resemble an age of austerity. Governments are quietly asking citizens to consume less, travel less, cool less and expect less.

Pakistan has experimented with four-day work weeks and reduced fuel allocations. Bangladesh shortened office hours, restricted decorative lighting and imposed fuel-saving directives. Sri Lanka, still haunted by the fuel queues of its economic collapse, has revived rationing-style systems to prevent panic buying.

Elsewhere in the world, the measures sound equally dramatic. South Korea has advised citizens to limit the use of energy-intensive appliances. Thailand urged workers to avoid suits and ties to reduce air-conditioning demand. Japan dimmed neon districts and raised indoor temperature limits. Europe is once again debating

subsidies, conservation campaigns and industrial energy cuts.

This is not temporary inconvenience. It is the beginning of a structural shift.

The old assumption that globalization guarantees uninterrupted energy flows is collapsing in real time. A conflict in West Asia now influences electricity prices in Dhaka, transport costs in Colombo, inflation in Karachi and fertilizer availability across the Indo-Gangetic plains.

South Asia is particularly exposed because it imports vulnerability while lacking the financial buffers of the West. Wealthier economies can absorb shocks through subsidies and strategic reserves. Developing economies resort to austerity because they have fewer choices.

And austerity carries political risks.

Fuel inflation quickly spreads into food prices, transportation costs and industrial slowdown. Public frustration rises quietly before turning political. Sri Lanka’s collapse in 2022 demonstrated how energy shortages can evolve into a crisis of governance itself.

India is better positioned than its neighbors, but not immune. The country’s scale, diversified sourcing strategy and growing renewable capacity provide resilience, yet prolonged disruptions in Hormuz would still hurt growth and inflation.

That reality explains why Rubio’s energy diplomacy matters.

The US is no longer simply offering oil and gas. It is offering strategic insurance against instability. India, meanwhile, is trying to balance competing realities — maintaining ties with Gulf suppliers, preserving Russian imports, strengthening American partnerships and accelerating clean energy at home.

The long-term lesson from this crisis is becoming unavoidable. Energy security can no longer depend entirely on imported fossil fuels shipped through conflict zones.

For South Asia, the future may depend less on the next tanker arriving from the Gulf and more on how quickly the region invests in renewables, battery storage, electric mobility and regional power integration.

Because the next global energy crisis may not just raise fuel prices. It may redefine political stability itself.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of South Asian Herald.

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Migration Blueprint Meets Governance Reality

R. Suryamurthy

India's attempt to turn labor migration into a structured economic strategy has reached a new stage. A working paper released NITI Aayog proposes an ambitious nine-point framework that would push state governments to actively train, certify, recruit and reintegrate workers for overseas employment.

The timing is deliberate. India is approaching the peak of its demographic advantage even as rich economies confront labor shortages across healthcare, construction, logistics, caregiving, artificial intelligence and green technologies. The paper argues that unless Indian states move quickly from ad hoc migration systems to institutionalized labor mobility pipelines, the country could squander what may be its final large-scale demographic opportunity.

The numbers underline the urgency. India received nearly USD 137.67 billion in remittances in 2024, equivalent to around 3.5% of GDP and larger than annual gross foreign direct investment inflows. India's overseas migrant population, estimated at 18.5 million, remains the largest in the world. Yet despite the scale, the migration ecosystem continues to function through informal channels, family networks and unregulated intermediaries.

The report reveals that relatives and friends abroad remain the dominant source of overseas job information for low- and semi-skilled workers. Nearly one-third of aspiring migrants rely on private recruitment agencies for visas, contracts and orientation. In many cases, that dependence has created conditions for fraud, overcharging and contract substitution.

The paper's central warning is demographic. India's working-age population is expected to peak around 2030 at just over 65% of the total population before beginning a long decline. Simultaneously, labor shortages are accelerating across advanced economies. Europe currently faces around 10.5 million vacancies, the United States about 7.2 million, while Gulf economies collectively face shortages approaching 2.7 million workers.

The challenge, however, is not merely exporting manpower. Global labor demand itself is changing rapidly. The report cites projections suggesting that nearly 40% of existing workplace skills will transform by 2030 as automation, AI and green technologies reshape employment markets. Low-skilled migration alone will no longer guarantee sustained remittance growth.

That reality forms the basis of the paper's proposed "circular mobility" model — workers travel abroad temporarily, acquire skills and savings, return home, and re-enter global labor markets through repeated cycles rather than permanent migration. The idea mirrors systems already institutionalized in countries such as the Philippines, which has

India's Remittance Economy: From Gulf Dependence to Global Diversification

India's leadership in global remittance inflows reflects the scale, skill, and strategic potential of its internationally mobile workforce.

US \$ 137.67 Billion

India's remittances in 2024
(more than double since 2010–11)¹

India ranks #1

Top in the global remittance receipt¹

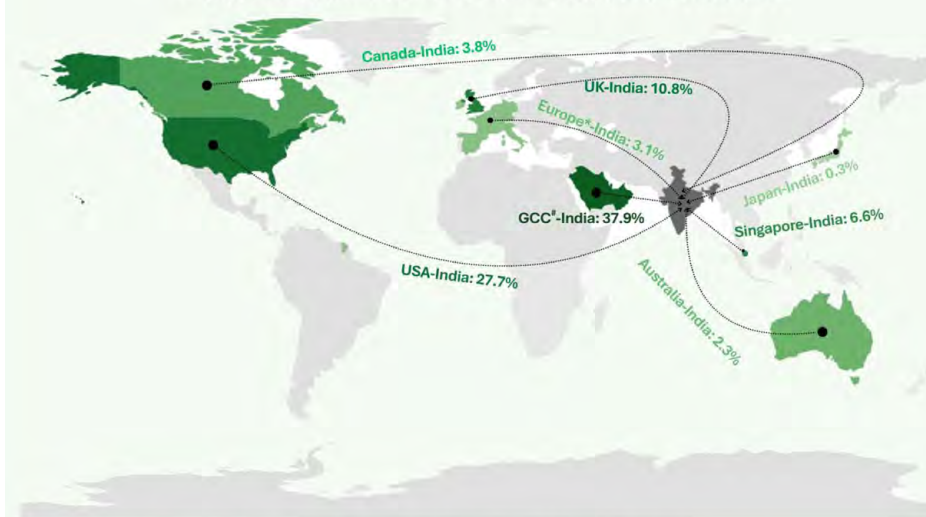
18.5 Million

Indians living & working overseas (2024)²

42%

Avg. share of remittances in covering trade deficit (2010–24)²

Major Remittance Corridors and their % shares²



*Europe comprising of Germany, Netherlands, Ireland, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain
*GCC comprising of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates

1. Personal remittances, received (current US\$) - India | Data. IMF balance of payments data, International Monetary Fund (IMF); Staff estimates, World Bank (WB).
2. RBI Bulletin, March 2025

spent decades building state-backed migration infrastructure.

India, by contrast, still lacks a coherent architecture.

The proposed framework asks states to establish dedicated migration systems covering skill-gap analysis, international employer partnerships, language training, assessment standards, pre-departure orientation, recruitment regulation, post-placement monitoring and returnee reintegration. In theory, the model could transform migration from a distress-driven activity into a planned economic sector.

Some states have already built fragments of such systems.

Odisha's World Skill Centre in Bhubaneswar operates with internationally aligned certification models and advanced training laboratories. Madhya Pradesh's Sant Shiromani Ravidas Global Skills Park has adopted employer-first recruitment, where overseas employers screen candidates before training begins. Karnataka's Government Tool Room and Training Centre, developed with Danish collaboration, has produced

internationally employable manufacturing talent through partnerships with companies including Toyota.

But these remain isolated examples rather than scalable national systems.

Language training emerges in the report as one of the biggest structural weaknesses. Many destination countries now require language certification for visas and licensing. Without proficiency, workers face lower wages, unsafe work conditions and limited legal awareness abroad.

Kerala's NORKA Roots program offers subsidized German and English certification courses, while Assam's CM-FLIGHT initiative prepares candidates for Japanese language requirements under Japan's Specified Skilled Worker program. Yet such initiatives remain expensive and heavily dependent on sustained public funding.

That is where the framework begins to confront India's governance reality.

Most Indian states do not have dedicated migration departments. Training budgets remain inconsistent. Employer networks are weak. Migration support centers exist

THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK ASKS STATES TO ESTABLISH DEDICATED MIGRATION SYSTEMS COVERING SKILL-GAP ANALYSIS, INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS, LANGUAGE TRAINING, ASSESSMENT STANDARDS, PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION, RECRUITMENT REGULATION, POST-PLACEMENT MONITORING AND RETURNEE REINTEGRATION.

in only a handful of cities including Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Gurgaon and Lucknow. The paper proposes expanding these into one-stop mobility centers offering counseling, grievance redressal, financial literacy and documentation support.

Perhaps its most consequential recommendation is that every state create a government-run recruitment agency linked to the Ministry of External Affairs eMigrate system. The proposal reflects growing concern over unregulated intermediaries who continue to dominate overseas recruitment despite the existence of roughly 2,000 registered agents.

The remittance geography itself is changing. Gulf countries, once the overwhelming source of Indian remittances, now account for a shrinking share. Their contribution has fallen from more than half of total remittances in 2016-17 to about 38% in 2023-24. The United States alone now contributes nearly 28%, largely because Indian migrants there occupy higher-income professional roles.

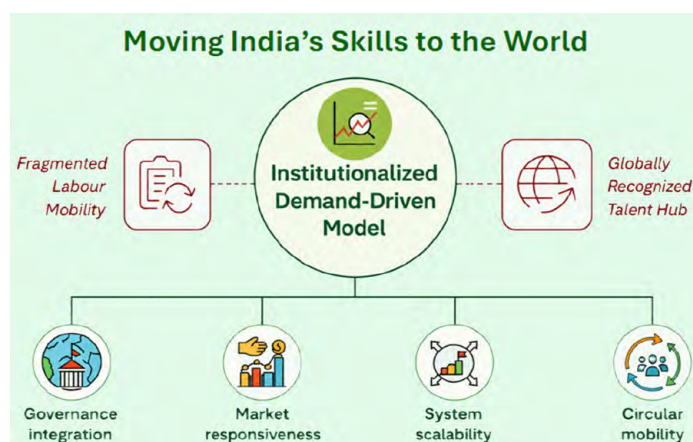
The imbalance is stark within India as well. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar generate some of the country's largest migration outflows but receive relatively modest remittance shares because most workers remain trapped in low-wage Gulf employment. Maharashtra and Kerala, by contrast, benefit disproportionately from higher-skilled migration streams.

That disparity reveals the paper's larger ambition: to move Indian workers beyond low-end labor exports into globally competitive skilled occupations.

Yet the report stops short of answering its hardest question — whether Indian states possess the administrative capacity to execute such an elaborate migration architecture. Building language infrastructure, employer pipelines, certification systems, grievance mechanisms and reintegration programs requires long-term fiscal commitment and bureaucratic coordination that many states have historically struggled to sustain.

The blueprint is economically persuasive. It recognizes migration not as a social spillover, but as a strategic industry linked to remittances, diplomacy, labor markets and human capital formation.

But India's migration story has long suffered from a familiar pattern: strong policy design, uneven implementation and fragmented governance. The NITI Aayog paper may have finally mapped the route. Whether states can build the road remains uncertain.



Brewing Hope Again at Café Coffee Day

SAH Special Correspondent

The day V. G. Siddhartha died in July 2019; the shock travelled far beyond India's corporate circles. For millions of young Indians, Café Coffee Day was not just a coffee chain. It was where friendships began, startups were imagined, heartbreaks were discussed and college dreams took shape over endless cups of cappuccino.

But behind the familiar slogan — “A lot can happen over coffee” — the business was collapsing.

Siddhartha's death exposed a financial crisis that had been building silently for years. Coffee Day Enterprises was buried under debt of more than ₹7,200 crore — close to \$1 billion then. Banks were circling. Investors were nervous. Suppliers feared unpaid bills. Thousands of employees wondered if the company would survive another year.

Many believed the CCD story had ended.

Then stepped forward Malavika Hegde — Siddhartha's widow, a woman who had never projected herself as a high-profile corporate leader. Grieving personally while confronting a near-bankrupt empire publicly, she inherited not only a shattered business, but also the emotional weight of protecting her husband's legacy.

Friends say she rarely raised her voice during those months. But inside boardrooms and lender meetings, she displayed remarkable steel.

When she formally took charge of Coffee Day Enterprises in December 2020, the company was fighting on multiple fronts: crippling debt, collapsing consumer sentiment, the Covid-19 pandemic, and growing competition from global chains like Starbucks.



(Logo courtesy: X@CafeCoffeeDay)

Instead of chasing flashy revival plans, Hegde focused on survival.

She began cutting debt aggressively. Non-core assets were sold, including a landmark technology park deal worth nearly ₹2,700 crore — around \$360 million — with much of the money going directly to lenders. Loss-making operations were shut down. More than 900 underperforming cafés were closed, painful decisions that reduced the chain from over 1,700 outlets at its peak to about 450 stronger, profitable locations.

But what distinguished her leadership was not merely financial discipline — it was empathy.

At the height of the crisis, nearly 25,000 employees depended on CCD for survival. Former staff members recall how management communication became more transparent under Hegde. Salaries were prioritized where possible, panic was controlled internally, and employees were repeatedly assured

the company would fight its way back. She also leaned on the company's forgotten strength — coffee itself.

CCD's sprawling plantations across nearly 20,000 acres in Karnataka became a lifeline. Exporting premium Arabica beans generated critical foreign exchange revenues, helping stabilize cash flows while reconnecting the brand to its roots as a coffee grower, not merely a café operator.

Slowly, the numbers began changing.

From debt exceeding ₹7,200 crore (\$950 million), the company reportedly brought liabilities down to roughly ₹465 crore to ₹1,100 crore — about \$55 million to \$130 million. Losses narrowed sharply, operational efficiencies improved, and surviving cafés generated healthier revenues per store.

Yet the real turnaround cannot be measured only in balance sheets.

Malavika Hegde was rebuilding a company while carrying personal grief in full public view. Every revived café, every retained employee and every paid lender became part of a larger effort to restore faith in a brand that once symbolized aspirational India.

In a corporate world often driven by aggression and spectacle, her approach was quieter — grounded in resilience, restraint and responsibility.

And perhaps that is why the Café Coffee Day comeback resonates so deeply. It was not simply a business recovery. It was a story about loss, endurance and a woman who refused to let an entire legacy disappear with her husband.

She is widely regarded as one of India's most inspiring turnaround stories in business leadership. Her inspiring journey has caught the attention of Netflix, which is producing a web series about her life.

Global Tax Ledger

Rajat Mohan

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India Removes a Barrier to Global Electronics Manufacturing

Long-standing tax ambiguity around foreign-owned equipment has now been addressed. This change could significantly influence how companies structure their operations in India, making the country a more predictable and attractive manufacturing destination.

Due to growing demand and its ever-evolving supply chains, India has been considered a potential manufacturing base by foreign companies.

Yet one critical piece remained missing — the machines.

Not because machines were unavailable with foreign companies, but because bringing them into India carried a hidden risk. If a foreign company supplied or retained ownership of its production equipment, it may be treated as having a taxable presence in India, and thus exposing a portion of its income to taxation in India.

That may now change.

With effect from April 1, 2026, the Government of India introduces a tax exemption for foreign companies.

The position is now clear. A foreign company providing capital equipment to a manufacturer, being a company resident in India operating within a customs bonded area, and such manufacturer company is engaged in the production of electronic goods on behalf of the foreign company. Any income arising from providing such capital equipment will be exempt from tax in India up to Tax Year 2030–31.

This relief, however, is subject to specific conditions. The ownership of such capital equipment remains with the foreign company, while the equipment should be under the control and direction of the Indian manufacturer to whom it is provided.

Before this exemption came into picture, supplying capital equipment in India resulted in uncertainty as to whether such an arrangement would become taxable in India on account of “business connection” or not, which also discouraged foreign companies from bringing their equipment into the country.

Now, by explicitly exempting such income, India is effectively separating equipment ownership from taxable presence, at least within the new framework.

At first glance, the change may seem small and technical. But its impact could be wider.

By providing tax exemption, India will be a more viable option for global manufacturers, including U.S. and UAE firms looking to expand or diversify their supply chain. But what if a foreign company expands its presence in India beyond this, then the answer is simple, its income is chargeable to tax at the normal rate.

But does it resolve the long-standing question:

Can companies bring their full manufacturing setup to India, including equipment, without unexpected tax consequences?

For the first time, the answer is clear, and that clarity could make a real difference.

This change may finally bring not just factories, but the machines behind them, to India.



(AI-generated representative image)

Jalandhar's Singing Sensation

Neeraj Bali

The life of 50-year-old Jalandhar-based singer Ashok Maskeen has changed dramatically after a year-old social media reel caught the attention of music producers in Mumbai, eventually leading him to perform the popular Coke Studio track “Bulleya Ve Te Lagda Ni Dil Marjana,” which has now garnered over 18 million views online.

Maskeen, who once worked at a factory, operating lathe machines and manufacturing taps to support his family, is now receiving offers for Hindi film playback singing and live performances



(Photo courtesy: Instagram @ashokmasken)

across cities, including Delhi and Mumbai.

Speaking about his journey, Maskeen said his path to recognition was filled with hardship and years of struggle. Born into a financially weak family in Jalandhar's Maksudan area, he said he developed a passion for music since childhood, as his father used to sing devotional songs at religious gatherings.

Maskeen said poverty forced him to discontinue studies after Class 6 and begin working in factories at a young age.

Despite his financial condition, he remained deeply interested in music and often sang songs in

school and local programmes.

Recalling his training days, he said he was inspired after watching noted Punjabi singer Sabar Koti perform on television and decided to learn from him. With no money even to buy a bicycle, Maskeen said he walked nearly 15 kilometres from Maksudan to Jalandhar Cantonment for almost a year to attend music lessons.

“I kept visiting my ustad for four days continuously, even after he initially refused to teach me. Later, he agreed and asked me to come on weekly holidays as I was also working in a factory,” Maskeen said, adding that whatever success he has achieved today is because of his late mentor.

He said Sabar Koti had helped him record two devotional tracks

during the 1990s, but he failed to gain recognition at the time due to financial limitations. However, the recordings helped him secure performances at local jagratas and small events.

Maskeen married Monica, a resident of Gurdaspur, around 13 years ago and continued factory work to manage household responsibilities while pursuing music as a passion. He said he never stopped practising despite difficult circumstances.

The turning point came about a year ago when his brother persuaded him to record a reel featuring a song originally sung by Sabar Koti. The clip was uploaded online and unexpectedly reached music professionals in Mumbai. (UNI)

Iconic Show Back With A Bang!

Rajiv Vijayakar

When first released on SAB TV in 2001, *Office Office* was a rage. The iconic weekly was seen for over 250 shows and ran for over five years. The series had a new season, *Naya Office Office*, in 2007, this time on Star One.

The show was such a hit that it was the first to have a comic book series based on it, and was also the first ever Indian sitcom to have a film version, *Chala Mudassi Office Office* in 2011.

The story was basic and universal: in a satirical format, it talked of the problems faced by a common man due to corrupt officers.

Recalls executive producer Umesh Mehra, “The show featured Pankaj Kapur as Mussaddilal, Sanjay Mishra, Deven Bhojani, Manoj Pahwa and Hemant Pandey, among

others. They were fairly new then, and each one is so big today! If I made the show with them again, it would cost a bomb!”

The idea to revive the show, says Mehra, emerged incredibly from Doordarshan officials, who met him in Russia where he had been invited. Mehra's Russian connection stems from his Indo-Russian co-productions, *Ali Baba Aur Chalis Chor* (1980) and *Sohni Mahiwal* (1984), besides *Shikari The Hunter* (1991).

They urged him to do a new show for India's official TV channel again after doing successful ones like *Ek Do Teen Char*, *Zabaan Sambhaal Ke*, *LOC—Life Out of Control* and more. On the spot, Mehra opted for a revival instead of *Office Office* with the same theme and a young, contemporary format with *Mudassilal's* daughter as the protagonist! The new show,

Office Office Chali Mussaddi Ki Beti, now premieres on May 25 as a daily sitcom from Monday to Friday and will also be seen on Waves, the OTT channel of Doordarshan.

“I never directed any series or shows but only big-screen films,” says Mehra. “So, I decided to executive produce this show and approached my brother Rajiv (Mehra), who had directed the original. He was unwilling to do so as he was so accustomed to the original show, and the choice fell on veteran Marathi and Hindi director Rajan Waghdhare (*Shriman Shrimati*, *Hum Paanch*, *Yam Hain Hum*, *Bhabi Ji Ghar Par Hain*), who has worked with us before.”

The show, whose title song has been composed by Anu Malik with Mehra's lyrics, features Shruti Sharma, who has done TV and also played a key role in *Heera Mandi*, in the lead as Anokhi Lal Mussadi, the smart, tech-savvy and



Shruti Sharma as Anokhi Lal Mussadi, the protagonist in *Office Office Chali Mussaddi Ki Beti*. (Photo courtesy: Prashant Golecha)

confident daughter of Mussaddi. She is dealing with corruption in the age of Apps, social media, online forms and digital “*chai-paani*” (bribes) and refuses to lose against the system.

Sumit Arora as Patel, Krishna Bhatt as Pandey Ji, Sucheta Khanna as Pyaari Lal Bua, Anusha Mishra as Bhatia, Garima Jain as

Charul and Kislay Dutt as Shukla are in the cast.

Aman Mehra produces for Eagle Films, the famous banner founded by Mehra's father, producer F.C. Mehra. As the veteran director puts it, “We wanted to bring back family entertainment that audiences of all ages could sit together and enjoy once again.”

Entertainment Round Up

Swayambhu Buzz Builds



(Photo courtesy: X@actor_Nikhil)

Actor Nikhil Siddhartha's upcoming film *Swayambhu* continues to generate significant buzz, largely due to its ambitious scale, historical backdrop and extensive use of visual effects.

With over 750 CG artists and 2,700 VFX shots, the film promises to deliver a grand cinematic experience to audiences. Be it the teaser or the first track, “Ra Ra Dhevara,”

every glimpse of “*Swayambhu*” has touched the hearts of audiences. Inspired by true events and centered around the Sengolese, the film recreates India's rich heritage of valor and glory and is continuously building excitement for its grand release. Ever since the teaser of “*Swayambhu*” was released, it has emerged as one of the most-awaited films in Siddhartha's lineup after the success of “*Karthikeya 2*.” (UNI)

Rukmini Vasanth on 'Toxic' and 'Dragon'

With two big-ticket films in her kitty, actress Rukmini Vasanth is clearly stepping into a dynamic new phase of her career, as she spoke about her upcoming releases, *Toxic* and *Dragon*, on the sidelines of a city fashion and lifestyle event.

The Kantara-famed actress said her next release, *Toxic*, starring Yash, has been an “exciting” project backed by a strong



(Photo courtesy: X@RukminiVasanthFP)

ensemble cast, adding that she is looking forward to its release.

She also opened up about her association with *Dragon*, directed by Prashanth Neel and featuring N. T. Rama Rao Jr, describing it as a project she is finally able to speak about after the recent trailer launch. (UNI)

'System' Gains Audience Praise

Recently released legal drama “*System*” is steadily winning audience appreciation, with viewers praising its compelling narrative,

powerful performances and emotionally layered storytelling.

Directed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, this women-centric film features strong characters from Sonakshi Sinha and Jyothika.

Prime Video has established itself as a leading entertainment platform that consistently delivers powerful, entertaining, and impactful web series and films across genres to its audiences. Since its release, the film has been receiving immense love from audiences. Its strong story, impressive performances by the lead actresses, and direction have



(Photo courtesy: X@jyothika_offl)

been particularly praised, making it a strong female-led success story. (UNI)

Goa Story Unveiled

Indian filmmaker Melvin Williams made a notable appearance at this year's Cannes Film Festival, where he announced his upcoming Indo-Portuguese feature film *Bebinca*, further highlighting the growing international reach of Indian independent cinema.

He arrived here with his feature film ‘*Yeh Hawayein Bhi Kuch Kahte Hai*’ and, during the same time, also announced his new Indo-Portuguese film ‘*Bebinca*.’ This film will be made in collaboration between India and Portugal.

“*Bebinca*” is inspired by the culture, history, and spirit of Goa. The film is named after a famous traditional Goan sweet. The story will explore the connection between identity, memories, and culture with a global audience. (UNI)



Weekly Horoscope

MAY 29 - JUNE 04

BY ASTROLOGER MANISHA KOUSHIK

(Astrologer | Tarot Reader | Numerologist | Vastu & Feng Shui Consultant)

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(Photo: tongstocker1987 / Freepik)

ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)



Love: Temperance
Mood: The Hermit
Career: Six of Swords

Professional transitions may guide you toward more stable opportunities, encouraging thoughtful decision-making. Financial prospects may improve as pending deals show signs of closure. Emotional support from loved ones may bring comfort, while your partner's understanding may help you manage personal concerns. Maintaining a balanced routine may be essential to sustain energy levels.

Lucky Number: 6 • Lucky Color: Brown

this week. Maintaining emotional balance may help you stay productive. Support from family may provide reassurance during demanding phases. Professional dedication may bring recognition or financial rewards. Romance may offer comforting moments, while seeking guidance may help clear confusion in academic or personal matters.

Lucky Number: 4 • Lucky Color: Sky Blue

VIRGO (Aug 24 – Sept 23)



Love: Six of Cups
Mood: The Magician
Career: Strength

Strategic planning may help you convert ideas into meaningful results. New collaborations may enhance professional growth. Financial caution may be advisable for major decisions. Romantic interactions may feel warm and supportive. Helping loved ones may bring emotional fulfillment. Students aiming for higher education may witness encouraging progress.

Lucky Number: 22 • Lucky Color: Red

LIBRA (Sept 24 – Oct 23)



Love: Eight of Cups
Mood: The Tower
Career: Two of Swords

Your focus on career goals may bring steady progress and recognition. Financial growth may follow successful ventures. Emotional gestures in relationships may uplift your personal life. Family matters may require patience and understanding. Reviewing documents carefully in property dealings may help avoid complications. Consistency may support academic improvement.

Lucky Number: 5 • Lucky Color: Green

SCORPIO (Oct 24 – Nov 22)



Love: The Hanged Man
Mood: The Fool
Career: The Emperor

A balanced approach may help you stay aligned with long-term goals while exploring new ideas. Financial prospects may improve through supportive partnerships. Family decisions may require sensitivity. Romantic connections may deepen through shared experiences. Property-related gains may be possible, while disciplined routines may support physical and mental wellbeing.

Lucky Number: 8 • Lucky Color: White

Sagittarius (Nov. 23 – Dec 21)



Love: The Hierophant
Mood: Ten of Wands
Career: Two of Cups

High energy levels may help you manage professional and social commitments effectively. New projects may gain approval, supporting career growth. Emotional understanding may strengthen romantic bonds. Family

life may feel harmonious. Adopting new fitness routines may enhance wellbeing, while students may achieve noticeable academic progress.

Lucky Number: 17 • Lucky Color: Pink

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)



Love: The Chariot
Mood: The Moon
Career: Six of Wands

Professional responsibilities may highlight your capabilities, bringing appreciation and progress. Financial inflow may improve gradually. Emotional connections may deepen as you reconnect with loved ones. Family guidance may help maintain harmony. Health may show improvement with care. Students may benefit from focused attention during this favorable phase.

Lucky Number: 22 • Lucky Color: Purple

AQUARIUS (Jan 20– Feb 18)



Love: The World
Mood: Three of Coins
Career: Three of Wands

Consistent efforts at work may earn admiration and strengthen

your professional standing. Financial decisions may become more practical and rewarding. Positive changes within the home may uplift everyone's mood. Romantic life may feel fulfilling. A healthier lifestyle may improve overall wellbeing, while students may explore promising opportunities.

Lucky Number: 4 • Lucky Color: Saffron

PISCES (Feb 19 – Mar 20)



Love: The Magician
Mood: Three of Cups
Career: King of Wands

New opportunities may encourage proactive action, leading to professional recognition. Teamwork may bring rewarding results. Financial growth may support long-term goals. Romantic relationships may strengthen with deeper commitment. Minor family disagreements may require patience. Health may improve with consistent effort, while students may benefit from focused engagement.

Lucky Number: 11 • Lucky Color: Peach

TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 20)



Love: Justice
Mood: Seven of Coins
Career: Ace of Wands

Work responsibilities may be handled with confidence, earning recognition from seniors. Financial gains through calculated risks may be possible, though caution remains important. Health may improve with mindful lifestyle changes. Minor misunderstandings in relationships may require calm communication. Engaging in new social activities may help break monotony and refresh your outlook.

Lucky Number: 2 • Lucky Color: Yellow

GEMINI (May 21 – Jun 21)



Love: Five of Coins
Mood: The Sun
Career: Judgement

A renewed focus on wellbeing may help you regain clarity and positivity. Professional efforts may begin to yield financial rewards, boosting motivation. Family cooperation may allow you to carve out meaningful personal time. Romantic matters may need clearer communication to avoid distance. Academic pursuits may benefit from structured guidance and consistent effort.

Lucky Number: 6 • Lucky Color: Blue

CANCER (Jun 22 – Jul 22)

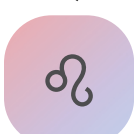


Love: The Star
Mood: Four of Wands
Career: The Hanged Man

Staying committed to your goals may help you navigate competitive environments successfully. Financial patience may be required as returns take time to materialize. Family interactions may bring emotional stability. Romantic connections may gradually gain momentum. Introducing mindful physical practices may support overall wellbeing and enhance daily productivity.

Lucky Number: 11 • Lucky Color: Orange

LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 23)



Love: Two of Swords
Mood: The Tower
Career: Devil

Increased responsibilities may demand a disciplined approach

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Tintin Tales, Belgian Flavors



Nayanika Samanta

As the world celebrates Hergé, the creator of Tintin, on his birth anniversary, the city of Kolkata too toasted the world-famous reporter from the comic books which brought him and characters like Captain Haddock to life, at its own Tintin-themed cafe, tucked away in a bylane of a tony neighborhood of the city.

Hergé, who created Tintin in 1929, successfully made it a part of generations of young adults' adventurous journeys across the world.

The cafe named Tintin & The Brussels Club, tries to celebrate this journey for now middle-aged fans by combining European cuisine with the whimsical universe of Tintin, offering diners a nostalgic experience.

Hergé created Tintin as depicted as an inquisitive, multitalented reporter who travels

the world with his dog Snowy. Through the years, the young reporter remained recognizably the same, with his signature blond quiff and his plus fours, namely Captain Haddock, Professor Calculus, detectives Thomson and Thompson.

Tintin's adventures have filled 24 comic books and sold more than 70 million copies in some 30 languages, including two comics where he made an appearance in India. Tintin was born in the pages of *Le Petit*

Vingtième, a weekly children's section published alongside the Belgian daily newspaper *Le Vingtième Siècle*, in the year 1929.

In India, Tintin's adventures held a special place for decades, beginning with the Bengali translations penned by noted writer Nirendranath Chakraborty which appeared in the magazine 'Anandamela' in the early 1970s. His dog, Snowy, even had a Bengali name 'Kuttus.'

Each year on May 22, readers in India quietly join a global audience in marking the birth anniversary of Hergé, the Belgian artist whose imagination reshaped the very idea of the comic book.

For Barnali Ghosh, who owns the theme restaurant, the idea of the café was born during a family trip to Belgium. "We followed the Tintin trail. We got to visit the Musée Hergé, a museum in Belgium dedicated to the life and works of the Belgian cartoonist Georges Remi.

My son Ashish, who is an engineer working for the Toyota, suggested to me one fine evening, why don't I start something around Tintin and Europe in Kolkata, as the city is restricted to waffles in the name of Belgian cuisine. My husband Arindam, my son (now based in Brussels) and I then constructed this place."

It evolved organically, carried forward by a common passion that everyone in the family shared for Tintin.

What began as a small experiment in 2018 has grown into a space where European food meets Bengali enthusiasm for Tintin. Starting out in Hindustan Park, it slowly grew into a proper themed restaurant and managed to stay afloat even during the COVID-19 pandemic shifting the eatery at Ghosh's house, largely supported by home deliveries and regular patrons. (UNI)



Beauty Basics with
Shahnaz Husain

Summer Make-up tricks to beat the heat

Summer makeup can be quite a challenge due to the high humidity and scorching heat. Summer makeup means spending hours applying makeup only to sweat it all off in the heat. It's the perfect weather for meltdown mishaps; running foundation, chapped lips, smudged eyeliner and streaky mascara.

Rising temperatures can cause a makeup meltdown, leaving you with oily skin, fading foundation and creased eyeshadow.

A full face of makeup can quickly start running, look cakey and unnatural, and be incredibly hot to be outside in. However, there are a few simple measures you can take to give your full makeup look a little

more staying power on the hottest of days.

The common question is What's the best way to make your look sweat and heat resistant and start enjoying sunshine. Summertime makeup has a completely different set of need and minor adjustments in beauty routines can prevent melted makeup and sun burn etc.

The golden rule for summer make-up is "soft, delicate and very sparing." Water-based and powder make-up items are better during summer. Use powder eye shadows and powder blush-on. Water-proof mascaras and eyeliners will prevent eye makeup from running during the hot and humid season. Waterproof or water-resistant lip colors and lip liners are also available. Or, go for matte lipstick and add just a dab of gloss in the center for a delicious pout.

Cleansing the skin before makeup is most important. Wash off with plenty of cool water. After cleansing, use chilled rose water to tone and cool the skin. This helps to close the pores. In hot and humid weather, wrap an ice cube in a clean cloth and wipe the face with it, just for a few seconds at a time. This helps to close the pores.

For oily skin, apply astringent lotion with cotton wool to close pores and reduce oiliness. Or apply a face serum. It is lighter than a moisturizer and provides an ideal cover. Applying primer also helps. Dab it on oily areas, like the T-zone. It is said that Milk of Magnesia works as a primer during the humid season.

It helps to reduce oiliness. Take some Milk of Magnesia on moist cotton wool or a sponge and dab it on the face. Allow it to dry.

After a few minutes, apply water-based foundation, blending with a damp sponge for a smooth finish. Use a foundation with beige tones, rather than pink. I feel beige suits Indian skin color better. Add a drop or two of water before applying to provide a lighter coverage. Then apply powder to "set" the foundation. When you apply powder, press the powder all over the face and neck with a slightly damp sponge. This helps it to set and last longer. Or, use only compact powder, which lasts longer and provides a smooth finish.

Primers and powders help to remove the oily look. Try tinted powders, like warm yellow tones of powder. Bronzing powders may also suit. If you want a really healthy glow without the shine, go for a bronzing powder. Avoid applying too much. It should be lightly applied, using a big powder puff. A powder puff is better than a brush in summer.

Blot your makeup with a tissue. When you apply makeup, remember not to smear too much or rub it. Whether it is foundation or blusher, it is best to do it with a light touch, using a fingertip or an applicator. It can also be applied lightly and evenly with a damp sponge.

A hint of blusher should be used on the cheeks. A powder blusher is best in summer. Use it after you have applied powder and at the end of your make-up. Apply on the cheekbones and blend it outwards and slightly upwards.

Applying foundation on the lips before applying lipstick helps the lipstick last longer. Go for matte lipstick and add just a dab of gloss in the center for a delicious pout. Use a spray mist to help set the makeup.

If you use kajal, after applying it on the lower lid, just below the eyelashes, apply a line of grey or brown eye shadow over it. This helps it last longer.

At night, you need more color. Applying lipstick with a lip brush helps it to last longer. The lip color should match the attire. However, bronze, coral, copper, burgundy and even red would look good for the night. Coral lipsticks are in fashion. A coral or dark pink lipstick may look very attractive, even with light colored clothes. Apply a hint of lip gloss after applying lipstick. This gives a fresh and cool look.

To make lipstick last longer, apply a foundation on the lips before applying lipstick

For your make-up when travelling, carry an eye pencil, mascara and lipsticks that are suitable for both day and night wear. Include lip gloss, compact powder and powder blush-on. Remember to take a few tissues. If you have oily skin or the weather is hot and humid, pre-moistened tissues are best. Take deodorant and talcum powder too.

Roots & Rights

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World Cup Dreams, Visa Realities

The FIFA 2026 World Cup is expected to draw unprecedented international travel across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and visa planning will become as important as securing match tickets. Fans should understand that purchasing a ticket does not automatically guarantee immigration benefits or special treatment at the border. Each country will continue to apply its own immigration laws, entry requirements, and security protocols, irrespective of tournament enthusiasm. While governments may introduce streamlined processes or special facilitation measures closer to the event, travelers should avoid assuming that a World Cup ticket alone creates any legal right to obtain a visa or unrestricted entry.

Q The US grants single-entry visas for visitors to enjoy the tournament. Given that I have purchased tickets to multiple FIFA World Cup 2026 matches across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and plan to travel between these countries several times during the tournament, would a single-entry visa be sufficient for my travel plans, or should I apply for a multiple-entry visa to accommodate my itinerary?

A On the question of multiple-entry visas, it is important to note that the United States, Canada, and Mexico operate independent immigration systems, and visa issuance ultimately remains a sovereign decision of each country's authorities. In practical terms, fans attending multiple matches across different host countries would ideally require visas permitting repeated entries.

The United States already issues multiple-entry visitor visas in many jurisdictions, whereas some countries may issue single-entry permissions depending on nationality, travel history, and risk assessment. Canada and Mexico also have their own separate criteria. It is possible that special travel coordination measures may be announced for FIFA 2026 to facilitate fan movement between host nations, but unless formal policy changes are introduced, travelers should proceed on the assumption that standard immigration rules will continue to apply. Fans should therefore plan early, apply well in advance, and ensure their travel documents allow flexibility for cross-border movement during the tournament.

Q If I buy a ticket to a match to use FIFA PASS to get a visa appointment, will my visa be revoked/canceled if I later sell my ticket?

A As regards purchasing a match ticket solely to obtain a visa appointment or demonstrate travel intent, visa authorities generally assess applications based on overall credibility, financial capacity, travel history, and intention to return to the home country, rather than the ticket alone. If a person later sells or transfers the ticket, that fact by itself may not automatically lead to visa cancellation. However, if immigration authorities conclude that false representations were made during the visa process, or that the applicant never genuinely intended to attend the event, it could potentially raise concerns regarding misrepresentation or misuse of the visa system. Much depends on the specific facts, the country involved, and whether the individual continues to satisfy the conditions under which the visa was granted. From a legal and practical standpoint, applicants should avoid treating tournament tickets merely as tools for immigration facilitation, because visa authorities retain broad discretion to review, revoke, or question visas where credibility issues arise.

A Child's Question, An Adult's Puzzle



(Photo courtesy: AI generated)

K.S. Palachandran

"Grandpa, are heaven and sky the same thing?"

Children have a way of asking questions that can dismantle centuries of philosophy in a single sentence. This one certainly did.

I tried, of course, to respond like a responsible grandfather. I launched into a grand explanation about the atmosphere, stratosphere, ionosphere and everything else floating above Earth. The child listened patiently for a few seconds before cutting me short.

"Gramps, none of that interests me. Tell me simply — what is the difference between heaven and sky?"

At that moment, explaining the Bhagavad Gita seemed easier.

Instinctively, I folded my hands and looked upwards, silently appealing for divine intervention. The child noticed immediately.

"Why did you look at the sky while praying?"

"I was asking God to help me answer you," I said.

"So, God lives in the sky?"

First round to the child.

That is the beauty — and danger — of a child's logic. It is clean, direct and brutally difficult to escape. We adults, complicate things; children simplify them to the point of discomfort.

After all, when someone dies, we say the person has "gone to heaven." While saying it, we almost always point upwards. We speak of God above us, heaven above us, blessings descending from above. Naturally, a child concludes that heaven must simply be somewhere in the sky.

To her, the equation was obvious:

Sky = Heaven.

I tried again.

"The sky," I explained carefully, "is the vast space above Earth. It appears blue during the day because light scatters through the atmosphere. At night, it darkens because sunlight disappears."

She waited.

"And heaven?" she asked.

Now came the difficult part.

"Heaven," I said slowly, "may simply be humanity's imagination — a beautiful idea created to encourage goodness. People say that those who do good deeds go to heaven, a place of peace and happiness.

Those who do wrong are threatened with hellfire below the earth."

In truth, perhaps heaven and hell were society's earliest moral classrooms.

Even science, in a curious way, may have helped shape these images. Deep beneath the earth lies unbearable heat and molten fire; above us stretches a calm, open, seemingly infinite sky. One inspires fear, the other serenity. Perhaps that is why humans placed hell below and heaven above. But did I truly answer the child's question?

Not really.

Because some questions are larger than facts. They wander into philosophy, faith and imagination. Adults often pretend to have answers simply because age demands authority. Children expose how uncertain we really are.

Long after the conversation ended, I found myself wondering: Is heaven merely a direction? A belief? A hope? Or simply humanity's longing for goodness projected onto the sky?

I am still searching for the answer.

Perhaps one of you has it.

New Heroes of Track



Gurindervir Singh celebrating after breaking the 100m national record. (Photo courtesy of X@indiannavy)

Anirudh Nair

Indian athletes have begun their road to the 2026 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games with a slew of national record-shattering performances across multiple events at the 29th National Senior Athletics Federation Competition in Ranchi.

On May 23, Gurindervir Singh broke the national record in the men's 100m sprint. The 25-year-old completed the race in a blistering 10.09 seconds, shattering Manikanta Hoblidhar's previous record of 10.23 set in 2023.

"Indian genes are very strong & we have only just started," said Singh to RevSportz after breaking the national record.

"People said Indian genetics are weak, that Indians can't run the 100m, and that there's no future in sprinting. I just want to prove everyone wrong."

Singh's spirited performance has now guaranteed him a place at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya.

That was not the only national record broken on the day, as Tamil Nadu's Vishal TK became the first Indian to complete a 400m

race in under 45 seconds, clocking 44.98s. The previous record was held by two-time Asian Games gold medalist Muhammad Anas Yahiya, whose time of 45.21 had stood since 2019. Crushingly, TK fell just 0.02 seconds short of the benchmark required to secure a spot at the Commonwealth Games.

The field events also featured entertaining record-breaking competition in the men's pole vault event. Kuldeep Kumar and Dev Meena traded the national record back and forth in a riveting duel. Meena first surpassed Kuldeep's record, which had been set earlier in the month, with a height of 5.42m. Kuldeep responded in style by clearing 5.45m, but Meena was not done yet and matched the mark. The two now jointly hold the national record and have qualified for the Commonwealth and Asian Games.

In the coveted decathlon event, Tejaswin Shankar dominated both track and field

SINGH'S SPIRITED PERFORMANCE HAS NOW GUARANTEED HIM A PLACE AT THE 2026 COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN GLASGOW AND THE ASIAN GAMES IN AICHI-NAGOYA.

disciplines. The silver medalist at the 2022 Asian Games scored 8,057 points, breaking his own national record of 7,826 points and guaranteeing himself a spot at the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

These athletes will certainly be ones to watch at the two mega-events later this year, particularly after smashing through national barriers time and again. With the Los Angeles Summer Olympics now just two years away, keep an eye out for these names on the big stage.



Kuldeep Kumar and Dev Meena after sharing the pole vault national record. (Photo Courtesy of X@TheKhelIndia)

Goa Hosts Asia Cup Bridge

SAH Staff Reporter

The (BFI) has announced that the 5th Bonus Asia Cup Bridge Championships 2026 will be held in Goa from June 21 to 27, bringing together some of Asia-Pacific's leading bridge players, international medalists and mind sport strategists.

The continental championship, hosted at the Taj Cidade de Goa Horizon, is expected to attract participants from more than 20 countries, including India, China, Japan, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Organised once every four years, the Asia Cup is regarded as one of the region's premier contract bridge tournaments and is conducted under the aegis of the Asian bridge fraternity. The event will feature Men's, Women's, Mixed and Seniors team categories, along with Open and Mixed Pairs competitions.



(Photo courtesy: Organizers)

BFI President Prasad Keni said hosting the tournament for the second time reflects India's growing stature as a destination for global mind sports events. He added that the championship would also strengthen Goa's position as a hub for international sporting tourism by combining leisure infrastructure with high-profile intellectual competitions.

The tournament will open with a formal ceremony and welcome dinner on June 21, followed by qualification rounds, semifinals and finals through the week. Participation will be capped at 16 teams per category, with teams representing Zones 4, 6 and 7 of the structure.

India enters the championship with a strong record, having won 20 medals, including eight golds, in previous editions. The home challenge is expected to feature leading Indian pairs Subhash Gupta-Sandeep Thakral and Rajeshwar Tewari-Sumit Mukherjee.

Sports Round Up

India's Wrestling Surge

India's stellar run continued at the U23 Asian Championships as Mansi Lather, Kajal, and Sumit clinched gold medals to headline a dominant showing on the second day of the competition at the Tien Son Sport Center in Da Nang, Vietnam.

Mansi put up a dominant display in the 68kg gold medal bout, registering a comprehensive 14-1 win over Uzbekistan's Furuza Esenbaeva. Kajal was equally impressive in the 76kg final, blanking Kyrgyzstan's Aizharkyn Zhanybekova 10-0, while Greco-Roman grappler Sumit secured the 63kg title with a 12-2 victory over Uzbekistan's Ozodbek Khalilboev. (UNI)

Road To Auckland

The Indian women's hockey team will be on a tour Down Under to play Australia in a four-match series scheduled to start May 26.

All four Australia vs India women's hockey matches will be played at the Perth Hockey Stadium.

The tour will serve as important preparation for India ahead of the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup, scheduled to take place in Auckland from June 15 to 21.

The upcoming Nations Cup will be India's opportunity to earn back promotion to the FIH Pro League for the 2026-27 season, which will also be a hockey qualifier for the LA 2028 Olympics. (UNI)

National Mark Shattered

India's long-distance star Gulveer Singh continued his remarkable rise on the global athletics stage by winning the silver medal in the men's 5000m at the prestigious Sound Running Track Fest in Los Angeles, while rewriting his own national record in the process.

The reigning Asian champion in both 5000m and 10,000m clocked an outstanding 13:03.93, bettering his previous national mark of 13:11.82 set in Japan two years ago by nearly eight seconds. (UNI)