



US & CANADA

Newsletter

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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
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US POLITICS

Trump marches on with Policy Shifts and Political Showdowns

The month began with a bang, with President Trump making a joint [address](#) to Congress on the 6th of March. Declaring that "America is back," he emphasised his administration's swift and aggressive actions, claiming that the first six weeks of his presidency had been more productive than previous administrations' entire terms. He stated that the nation was experiencing unprecedented optimism, momentum, and economic confidence. Trump outlined his extensive use of executive actions, boasting nearly 100 executive orders and over 400 executive actions in a short time.

Economic policies featured prominently in Trump's speech. He announced large-scale tariff implementations, including a 25% tariff on foreign steel, aluminium, copper, and lumber, arguing that such measures were necessary for national security. He also introduced tax reforms, promising significant cuts across multiple sectors, including permanent income tax reductions and the elimination of taxes on tips, overtime, and Social Security benefits.

Replete with jibes against the Democrats and the previous Biden Administration, Trump ended his speech by calling on Congress to stand with him in his battle to reclaim American sovereignty, strength, and prosperity.

The partisan [divide](#) was underscored by Democrats sitting silently throughout the speech even as Republican cheer leaders frequently erupting into standing ovations. A Democratic Congressman was also

[evicted](#) from the proceedings for causing a disturbance.

Even as the Administration continued with a range of actions, from [invoking](#) the Defense Production Act to accelerate domestic production of critical minerals, such as lithium, cobalt, and nickel to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers, to dismissing several high-ranking officials, including Democratic [commissioners](#) at the Federal Trade Commission, raising concerns about its independence. While the downsizing or restructuring of Departments such as Education and Health and Human Services has made headlines, even smaller establishments like the [Institute for Museum and Library Services](#), government funded external [broadcasting](#) services like the Voice of America, and [the United States Institute of Peace](#) have also faced the DOGE axe. Many of these [actions](#) are being contested in the courts.

There have been public [protests](#) against many of these actions, with Republican representatives, bearing the brunt at townhalls around the country, so much so that the Republican leadership has been advising representatives to [avoid](#) the ritual which usually takes place during the Congressional recess. The narrow majority in the House also led to the withdrawal of the nomination of New York Republican Congresswoman [Elise Stefanik](#) to serve as US ambassador to the United Nations.

Opinion polls still show a high approval rating of 45% for Trump in the January-March period, indicating that his base still remains solidly behind him. Trump's approval ratings remain [strongest](#) among Republicans, conservatives, men, and non-

Hispanic white adults, while women, liberals, and lower-income adults continue to disapprove of his presidency. There is considerably less enthusiasm among voters when questioned on the effect of his actions on the economy, A [CBS News/YouGov](#) poll showed that 51 percent of American adults think the economy is worsening, compared to 26 percent who say it is improving. In a previous poll in February, 49 percent said the economy was getting worse, and 24 percent said it was getting better.

The month ended with a gigantic *faux pas* by the Trump National security team who were found to be [communicating](#) top secret war plans over the commercial messenger app, Signal. This only served to reinforce the Democrat [messaging](#) from the time that their nominations were put forward that the nominees were unsuitable and unqualified for these jobs. Despite best [efforts](#) from President Trump and the right-wing media ecosystem to put a lid on the issue, the controversy continues.

US NEWS

- President Donald Trump has used the wartime [Alien Enemies Act of 1798](#) to deport five [Venezuelan nationals](#) from the US. The American Civil Liberties Union and Democracy Forward filed a lawsuit, arguing the act has only been invoked three times in US history, and was being unlawfully used during peacetime to accelerate mass deportations and bypass immigration law.

- The [Trump administration](#) is planning to create a [militarized buffer zone](#) along the southern border in New Mexico, allowing [active-duty US troops](#) to detain

migrants who cross the US unlawfully. The plan aims to circumvent the [Posse Comitatus Act](#), which bars soldiers from participating in most [civilian law enforcement missions](#).

INDIA-US RELATIONS

- India and the United States advanced discussions on a proposed bilateral trade agreement. A U.S. delegation, led by Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch, visited India for a three-day series of negotiations. Indian Trade Minister Piyush Goyal reported that these talks were "[progressing well](#)" ahead of the implementation of President Donald Trump's proposed reciprocal tariffs.

- Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri [spoke](#) with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau on 28 March 2025, congratulating him on his Senate confirmation and emphasizing the strengthening India-U.S. strategic partnership. Their discussion covered key areas such as bilateral trade, defence, technology collaboration, and mobility and migration issues. Both sides agreed to continue engaging on matters of mutual concern, with Misri extending an invitation for Landau to visit India at his earliest convenience.

- The US Department of Energy has authorised Holtec International to transfer small modular reactor (SMR) technology to India, [strengthening](#) nuclear cooperation. The approval allows collaboration with Tata Consulting Engineers, and Larsen & Toubro, advancing the delayed 2007 India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement.

DIASPORA NEWS

- Indian-American scientist Jay Bhattacharya, Professor of Health Policy at Stanford University, has been [confirmed](#) as the Director of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) by the Senate with a 53-47 vote. In his confirmation hearing, he acknowledged the increasing politicization of science and public health and the growing mistrust towards health officials.

- Ranjini Srinivasan, a Columbia University PhD student, was forced to leave the U.S. after her visa was [revoked](#) over accusations of supporting Hamas. Srinivasan denies active involvement, stating her advocacy was limited to social media engagement and signing open letters on human rights violations in Gaza. Homeland Security labeled her a "terrorist sympathizer," leading her to hastily depart for Canada. Columbia withdrew her enrollment, citing legal obligations. Srinivasan now seeks to complete her PhD remotely.

- A US judge has ordered Badar Khan Suri, an Indian researcher at Georgetown University, not to be [removed from the country](#) following his arrest and threat of expulsion for alleged Hamas ties. Suri's lawyer demanded his release and denounced the arrest as a "targeted, [retaliatory detention](#)" intended to silence his speech and support for Palestinian rights.

- The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills, California, was [vandalized](#) with anti-Hindu and anti-India graffiti. Phrases like "Hindustan Murdabad" and derogatory remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi were

discovered on the temple walls. The San Bernardino Sheriff's office is investigating the incident as a hate crime. This act has raised concerns among the South Asian community and drew condemnation from India's External Affairs Ministry.

CANADA POLITICS

Carney announces snap elections amidst escalating trade conflict with US

Mark Carney, former Governor of the Bank of Canada, and the Bank of England, was sworn in as Canada's 24th Prime Minister. [Carney](#) won the Liberal Party leadership with 86% of the vote, defeating former Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland. His leadership comes at a tumultuous time, with Canada facing escalating trade tensions with the United States.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced plans to impose a 25% tariff on imported vehicles, adding to existing [tariffs](#) on steel and aluminium. These measures have intensified trade tensions and are expected to have significant economic implications for Canada.

In reaction to U.S. threats, hundreds of Canadians rallied on Parliament Hill on March 9, 2025, under the banner "[Elbows up, Canada](#)," protesting against the proposed tariffs and assertions about making Canada the 51st U.S. state. Former Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy and Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe were among the speakers emphasizing Canada's sovereignty and resilience.

Prime Minister Mark Carney announced a snap federal election scheduled for April 28, 2025. The [election](#) aims to secure a

mandate to address the escalating trade conflict with the U.S. and solidify leadership during this critical period. Carney's Liberal Party is positioning itself against the opposition Conservatives, led by Pierre Poilievre, with trade and economic policies at the forefront of the campaign.

INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

- Mark Carney, who succeeded Justin Trudeau as Canada's Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party indicated intentions to "[rebuild relationships with India](#)," emphasizing the need for shared values in the commercial relationship. Even though the time is right for a reset, some analysts [believe](#) that might take time, with the focus of the new government expected to be on focused on economic challenges triggered by Donald Trump's tariffs and trade demands.

- According to a [report](#), in 2024, India-Canada bilateral trade amounted to US\$8.36 billion, reflecting steady economic engagement, diplomatic challenges notwithstanding. India's exports to Canada totalled US\$3.84 billion, with key items including pharmaceuticals (US\$434.45 million), machinery (US\$309.77 million), and electronic equipment (US\$219.65 million). Meanwhile, Canada's exports to India stood at US\$4.52 billion, with primary categories such as edible vegetables (US\$930.32 million), mineral fuels (US\$921.56 million), and fertilizers (US\$443.66 million) driving trade.

- The [Shastri Bilateral Education Forum](#) (SBEF) 2025, organized by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI), was

held in New Delhi to promote sustainable academic collaborations between Canada and India. This prestigious initiative aimed to foster joint research projects, academic exchanges, and institutional partnerships that strengthen Indo-Canadian education ties. It featured over 110 faculty members representing various universities, with 35 from Canada and 75 from India.

DIASPORA NEWS

- Liberal MP Chandra Arya's bid to [replace](#) Justin Trudeau as leader was cut short when the party revoked his candidacy for the Ottawa riding of Nepean. Arya, who has represented the riding since 2015, was informed of the decision by the national campaign director, citing new information but providing no details. This follows the party's earlier rejection of Arya's bid to contest for leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada in January following Trudeau's resignation. In a statement, Chanda said he believed he had been [removed](#) because of his "outspoken advocacy on issues important to Hindu Canadians and firm stance against Khalistani extremism." Prime Minister Carney [announced](#) he will be [running](#) from the Nepean seat.

- Kamal Khera, an Indian-origin Member of Parliament for Brampton West, was appointed as [Canada's Minister of Health](#) under Prime Minister Mark Carney, becoming the only Indian-born member of Prime Minister Mark Carney's newly sworn-in cabinet. Khera, a registered nurse by profession, previously served as Minister of Seniors and Minister of Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities.