

## The Manja Menace: 19 of 160 birds trapped in nylon manja die while 36 are permanently disabled

Sangareddy: Discarded Chinese manja continued to take a toll on birds with even migrant birds that arrive in Telangana during winter falling prey to the deadly threads. Volunteers of the Animal Warriors Conservation Society (AWCS), known for rescuing animals and birds across the State, found 17 different migrant birds trapped in Chinese manja at various places since January 1 when the season of Sankranti kite-flying started here. During the last 29 days, AWCS volunteers rescued 160 bird species across Hyderabad and neighbouring districts. Out of the 160, 17 were migrant birds from various parts of the globe.

Of the 160 they rescued, 19 birds died while undergoing treatment at AWCS's rehabilitation centre located at Bommanikunta near Patancheru while 36 of them were per-

manently disabled. Native birds like pigeons, black kites, barn owls, egrets and crows were getting trapped quite frequently in discarded manja. Speaking to Telangana Today, AWCS founder Pradeep Nair said they continued to get multiple calls for rescuing birds trapped in the manja. However, many birds they rescued would die since they were located long after they got injured.

Despite several educative programmes during the season, people continued to use the glass-coated manja causing a great loss to the avifaunal diversity of the State, he said, adding that more than 120 birds were being treated at the AWCS rehabilitation centre now. These birds would be released into their habitat while the permanently disabled birds would be kept in the rehabilitation centre.



## Five liver transplant surgeries at Osmania General Hospital in one month

Hyderabad: Five liver transplant surgeries, including three cadaver and two live, were performed on patients suffering from rare genetic liver diseases by the transplant surgeons at Osmania General Hospital (OGH) in the month of January. Dr Ch Madhusudhan, OGH Head, Surgical Gastroenterology, who led the team of care givers from multiple departments, said "generally these surgeries cost around Rs 30 to Rs 40 lakh in private hospitals and because of their poor financial status, they were unable to afford it. Doing five liver transplants in 30 days at a Government hospital is big achievement." Ajith Kumar (2), whose parents are daily wagers in Khammam, was

suffering from chronic liver disease with liver cancer due to Tyrosinemia Type 1 disease. His grandmother Swathi donated a portion of her liver. Sathwik Goud (7) from Suryapet, was diagnosed with Wilson's disease, a genetic disorder that causes excessive copper accumulation in liver and brain, leading to cirrhosis.

He also underwent live donor liver transplant when his mother, Naga Jyothi, donated left lobe of liver. G. Venkatesh (20) from Jogulamba Gadwal, M. Harsha Priya (20) from Hanamakonda and M. Venkatesh (40) of Yadadri suffering liver cirrhosis due to Neuro Wilson's disease underwent cadaver liver transplants in the hospital.



## Telangana Inter Education department plans to boost government junior colleges enrollment



Hyderabad: In a strategic move, which is similar to corporate and private junior colleges approach, the Intermediate Education department unveiled a comprehensive plan aimed at enhancing enrollments in the government junior colleges (GJCs) by at least 60 per cent in the forthcoming next academic year. The department has rolled out a new initiative, constituting the district-wise academic monitoring cell with three academic monitoring officers, to enhance admissions in the GJCs.

The academic monitoring officers – junior lecturers and librarians of the GJCs – have been entrusted with the job of enrolling students, particularly from the government feeder schools located in the area, into re-

spective colleges. During a recent meeting convened by Intermediate Education department Director Krishna Aditya, the officers have been asked to visit feeder government schools, interact with students, headmasters and parents and enlighten them about the facilities and quality free education being provided in the GJCs.

The department's new strategy is to rival the aggressive tactics of corporate and private junior colleges, which so far have been capitalising on the admissions process even before Class X exams are conducted. The corporate colleges have been long deploying their PROs, teaching and non-teaching staff to enroll Class X students.





# The Schrodinger's cat of Andhra's volunteer system

The boisterous Sankranti festivities in the street seemed to mock the silence that filled Telugu Ganimini Meena Kumari's dimly lit single-room house in Chakali Veedhi (Washermen's Street) at the One Town area of Kurnool town in Andhra Pradesh.

"I feel feeble because I am anaemic," the 37-year-old woman says, sitting on the edge of a wooden cot. Her voice was barely above a whisper. "And this (spinal) disc problem..." she pauses, clutching her lower back as a wince escapes her lips. "I may not have long," she says as her voice cracks, even as her two children, Gayathri (8) and Lokesh (7), sit close by, unable to grasp the gravity of her words. She eats only one meal a day. "Not because I want to, but how else can I feed them?" she asks, turning her face away lest her children might see the tears welling up her eyes.

Meena Kumari is among the more than 2.6 lakh youth who were appointed as village and ward volunteers by the previous Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) government led by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy as the Chief Minister in 2019. Each volunteer was entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that the 40 to 50 households allocated to them benefit from the schemes and services offered by the government. The volunteers were paid a monthly honorarium of ₹5,000.

After the death of her husband, Pothuraju Shiva, in January 2019, Meena Kumari supported her family with the ₹3,000 widow pension and the honorarium she received for her volunteer work, in addition to the small financial help from her brother.

However, a new government was formed in June 2024 with the National Democratic Alliance, led by Telugu Desam Party national president N. Chandrababu Naidu as the Chief Minister, and the payment of the honoraria for the volunteers was stopped.

"I don't know how to manage anymore," says Meena Kumari, who holds B.Sc. Microbiology and B.Ed. degrees. "Even though the honorarium was small, it kept us afloat. Now it's gone, and I'm struggling to feed my family," she adds.

Caught in political crossfire

During his tenure as the Chief Minister, Jagan Mohan Reddy showcased the volunteer system as a successful model of decentralisation of administration, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. He claimed that the system provided employment to rural youth and helped deliver government schemes directly to the beneficiaries.

At a meeting with the village and ward volunteers before the 2024 elections, the YSRCP president hailed them as his government's brand ambassadors and asked them to become his party's star campaigners and bring it back to power. He also directed them to "educate" the masses that a vote for the opposition parties would mean the end of his government's welfare schemes.

On the other hand, TDP's senior leaders have expressed their opposition to the volunteer system on several occasions, alleging that the move was politically motivated and aligned with the interests of the YSRCP. They argued

that the volunteer system consolidates the YSRCP's political influence, particularly at the grassroots, by giving posts to YSRCP workers and supporters.

Village and ward volunteers staging a 'kneel down protest' to draw the government's attention to their issues in Andhra Pradesh.

Village and ward volunteers staging a 'kneel down protest' to draw the government's attention to their issues in Andhra Pradesh. | Photo Credit: G.N. Rao

Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party president K. Pawan Kalyan, during his election campaign, made serious allegations against the volunteers, saying that they were connected to women trafficking networks and were behind the many missing women cases in the state. The NDA partner also raised doubts that the surveillance and data gathered by some of the volunteers were falling into the hands of anti-social elements.

Unkept promises

However, as elections approached, Chandrababu Naidu announced at a public meeting in April 2024 that he was not entirely opposed to the volunteer system. He said that it needed significant reforms. In addition to promising to continue the volunteer system, the TDP chief also promised to increase their pay to ₹10,000 from ₹5,000 per month.

The volunteers say that this assurance from the Chief Minister candidate during his poll campaign encouraged many of them to hold on to the posts despite the meagre ₹5,000 honorarium.

However, after the formation of the new government, the volunteers started complaining about their travails when payment of their honorarium stopped in June 2024. They have been staging protests, demanding their reinstatement and payment of the 'arrears' of the last six months.

"Most of the volunteers held on to their posts, hoping their services would be regularised. Youth in the state are languishing in unemployment, and the YSRCP government took advantage of this situation and absorbed the youth. It was a part of the party's own agenda," says S. Gangadha, a 32-year MBA graduate who discontinued as a village volunteer for Ulavapadu in Kandukuru constituency of Nellore district after one year.

Shaik Abubakar Siddiq, president of Andhra Pradesh Nirudyoga JAC (Unemployed Joint Action Committee), filed a petition in the High Court, accusing the previous YSRCP-rules government of "deceiving unemployed youth in the state by absorbing them as volunteers and using them as YSRCP workers." "Under the guise of government service, the volunteers were used for YSRCP activities," he says in the public interest litigation (PIL) filed before the election.

Siddiq opposes the reinstatement of volunteers and says the court should recover the ₹700 crore that the State spent over the last five years towards payment of their honoraria from Jagan Mohan Reddy. "Some volunteers even resigned at the behest of Jagan Mohan Reddy, proving their loyalty to him rather than the people of the state," he says.



# JSW MG Motor India unveils its fourth pilot project under 'Project Revive'

Hyderabad

JSW MG Motor India, in partnership with LICO Materials, a part of Epsilon Group, has unveiled the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) as part of its 'Project Revive'. The advanced BESS comprises repurposed MG ZS EV batteries and highlights the carmaker's commitment of promoting circular EV economy by embracing innovation. Compared to traditional solutions, this product has a 4X longer lifespan and can decrease running costs by upto 60%.

This is JSW MG Motor India's fourth pilot project under Project Revive for second-life battery applications. The company is forging meaningful partnerships with organizations with a common goal of harnessing the potential of EV batteries beyond their primary lifespan. With significant innovations made over the previous initiatives, this project signifies the most advanced deployment till date by JSW MG Motor India. This project focuses on

sustainability and highlights the potential of BESS technology to shape a clean energy future for India. BESS supports grid stability, reduces reliance on fossil fuels, and maximizes the use of renewable energy sources.

LICO Materials, a part of Epsilon Group, is a pioneer in end-of-life battery recycling and refurbishing of lithium-ion batteries, has played a key role in the development of this project. It has created three versatile models that combine advanced technology with environmental responsibility and are designed to meet diverse energy storage needs across residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.

The energy storage is diverse across the three products with 18kWh, 100kWh and 300kWh capacities, ensuring reliability. All models feature advanced safety mechanisms, including immersion oil cooling and heating, multi-layered safety designs, and smart thermal management systems. The entire portfolio operates effi-

ciently across a wide temperature range (-20°C to 60°C), and each system is backed by more than a 5-year warranty, ensuring long-term reliability.

Speaking on the occasion, Neha Jain, Head EV and Innovation Ecosystem, JSW MG Motor India, said, "Project Revive is an important initiative for us as it helps us make the EV ecosystem more sustainable by infusing a second life into our EV batteries. Through meaningful partnerships, we are committed to creating a gamut of sustainable energy storage solutions for diverse applications. Our partnership with LICO Materials is a testament to furthering this commitment by developing unique solutions that combines advanced technology with environmental responsibility. I am certain that successfully deploying unique initiatives under 'Project Revive' aids in bringing circularity in the EV ecosystem and paves the way for a greener and more sus-

tainable future."

Vikram Handa, Managing Director, Epsilon Carbon, commented, "At Epsilon Group, we see innovation as a tool to create a more sustainable future. Through this collaboration between JSW MG Motor India on 'Project Revive,' and with LICO's LiGRID system, we are redefining how energy is stored and used. It's not just about technology—it's about making a lasting impact on the way we power our world."

Adding to this, Gaurav Dolwani, Founder & CEO of LICO Materials, said, "At LICO, we are committed to a greener, circular economy in the energy sector. Our LiGRID series embodies this vision by giving end-of-life batteries a second life, reducing waste, and advancing sustainable energy solutions. By pioneering a new era in energy storage, we're not only developing innovative BESS technology but also addressing the critical needs of sustainability and grid resilience."



## Boosting Insurance Penetration: Industry Reforms Needed in Budget 2025

Hyderabad

Mr. Dhruv Sarin, Co-Founder, PBPartners (attached image) said, As we approach Budget 2025, the insurance sector is anticipating transformative reforms that align with the goal of ensuring universal insurance coverage by 2047. A key component to boosting insurance penetration over the years has been tax incentives, and innovative tax measures in this Budget have the potential to accelerate progress toward a financially secure and well-insured India.

Affordability continues to be a significant challenge for low-income groups when it comes to insurance products, and the current 18% GST rate on insurance premiums has often been a deterrent to purchasing insurance. Lowering this rate would directly benefit policyholders by making insurance more accessible and affordable.

The industry is also advocating for an increase in the health insurance deduction limit under Section 80D to ₹50,000 for individuals and ₹1,00,000 for senior citizens. Additionally, introducing tax exemptions for contributions to Health Savings Accounts could help individuals better manage rising healthcare expenses.

Finally, offering tax benefits for life and health insurance policies with terms exceeding 10 years would encourage long-term financial planning and greater commitment to securing one's future.



# Arrest of Mutha moving marijuana “



Rs 6.50 lakh worth of dried marijuana. Putting “\_Re, 50 thousand cash available “- seize three cars, mobiles“- “Municipal police on Thursday seized two marijuana worth Rs 6 lakh and 50 thousand in three vehicles from Mumbai to Hyderabad at Kankal Toll Plaza. Sangareddy District Additional SP Sanjeeva Rao and Sangareddy DSP Sattayya Goud held a press conference with CIs, SCs and CCS police at Munipally

police station. Vikas Kumar Mali, Sunil Kumar Saho, Santan Johnny and Akshay Kumar Badango of Gajapati District “ Rajkumar Bardan, Maharashtra’s Dukkalle Vasant Baburao and Hanumant Ramadas Pawar were formed. However, Vikas Kumar Mali from the state of Odissa collected the Mali Dundai and set up special cabins in the cars and brought to Maharashtra and sold to Bidar and Gulbarga in Karnataka, Pune, Solapur, Malegaon, Vashi and

Goa Making money on the way. However, the police and CCI police under the aegis of Munipalli Essai Rajesh Nayak at Munipalli Essai Rajesh Nayak at Sangareddy district Munipalli Mandal Plaza in Sangareddy district have been informed of three vehicles from Mumbai to Hyderabad on Thursday Found as marijuana. The accused were taken into custody and interrogated, they said. The

seized vehicles, Rs 50,000 cash and 10 cell phones were seized and taken to Municipal Police Station. Police have confirmed that the value of dried marijuana is about 650,000. At this press meet, Kondapur CI Venkatesham, Municipal, Pulkal Essies Rajesh Nayak, Patil Krantikumar, CCS Inspectors Sivakumar, Ramu Naidu, Srikanth, ASI Manik Reddy, Staff Rayakya, Mathin, Shashi, Salim, Satish, Asif, Hanif, Pandu There are others.

## RBI files for insolvency proceedings against Aviom Housing

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday announced that it has filed an application for the initiation of a corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) against Aviom Housing Finance Pvt Ltd under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) at the New Delhi Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

In a separate statement, the RBI also announced the formation of a three-member advisory committee to assist the company’s administrator, Ram Kumar, ex-Chief General Manager of Punjab National Bank. The committee comprises Paritosh Tripathi, ex-Chief General Manager of State Bank of India, Rajneesh Sharma, ex-Chief General Manager of Bank of Baroda, and Sanjaya Gupta, ex-Managing Director and CEO of PNB Housing Finance.

The CIRP will be conducted under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Insolvency and Liquidation Proceedings of Financial

Service Providers and Application to Adjudication Authority) Rules, 2019, also known as the FSP Insolvency Rules, as per the RBI’s statement.

Under these rules, an interim moratorium takes effect from the date of filing the application until its admission or rejection. During this period, the adjudicating authority will declare a moratorium that prohibits the initiation or continuation of legal proceedings against the corporate debtor, the transfer, encumbrance, alienation, or disposal of the corporate debtor’s assets or legal rights, any action to foreclose, recover, or enforce security interests related to the corporate debtor’s property, and the recovery of property by an owner or lessor if it is occupied by the corporate debtor.

The RBI had previously superseded the board of directors of Aviom India Housing Finance on January 27, 2025, citing governance concerns and defaults in meeting various payment obligations.

In November 024, Aviom India Hous-

ing Finance disclosed that its statutory auditors, S.N. Dhawan & Co. LLP, had raised concerns about potential discrepancies in the company’s books. Furthermore, the company’s former auditors, SCV & Co.

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ing Finance disclosed that its statutory auditors, S.N. Dhawan & Co. LLP, had raised concerns about potential discrepancies in the company’s books. Furthermore, the company’s former auditors, SCV & Co.

LLP, requested that Aviom immediately cease using their audit report. Aviom also reported a fraudulent incident to the National Housing Bank and lodged a complaint with the Economic Offences Wing.



# Another city split into green and saffron

At the centre of Sambhal city lies the white-and-green, four-minaret Shahi Jama Masjid, a grand 16th century structure, built during Babar's reign. It is Tuesday morning (November 26, 2024), two days after violence broke out in the three lanes that converge on the green-domed structure. In the central lane, from where the people allegedly surged, all the houses are locked. The wires to CCTV cameras have been yanked out. The mosque bears witness to the violence — freshly marked gashes scar its paint, and cane rods and broken concrete dot its entry slope. A couple of homes down the lane running perpendicular to the mosque show some stirring of activity. A municipal truck comes around to clean the drains and collect garbage. A middle-aged man in a skull cap and a white kurta-pyjama peeps out of his house, leaves his dustbin out, and quickly goes back in, locking the door behind him.

There is some construction work in a couple of plots, but unlike in Delhi, just 160 kilometres away, where GRAP IV regulations have disallowed building work because of high pollution levels, in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal, most lanes are deserted. The fear is palpable. In contrast, on Kot Purvi, the lane running parallel to the mosque on its eastern side, the shops are open. People read newspapers; poojas are being conducted — it's business, almost as usual. Here, almost every house has a saffron flag and wall paintings of Hanuman, Shiva, or Ganesha. Kot Garbi, the main market that sees the maximum activity in the city, is shut. Most of the boards indicate they are Muslim-run. The police have put a ban until November 30, on the entry of any "outsider, social organisation, or public representative", thereby restricting political leaders from visiting. The city is a fortress now, with at least 10 police personnel every 100 metres or so. The government suspended the Internet for a week. In 2023 India had the dubious distinction of leading the world in mobile and broadband shutdowns, as per a study by Access Now, a non-profit that works on digital rights. In October, when communal violence broke out in Bahraich in eastern U.P., the Internet was disconnected.

A build-up What most people across India saw of Sambhal city on Sunday, November 24, were images of violence: tear gas, stone pelting, firing, arson. In the videos that went viral, the police were seen pulling children out of the crowd that had gathered after a second survey was conducted at the mosque, to determine whether under it was a temple of Harihar, considered the reincarnation of the Hindu gods Shiva and Vishnu. The wuzu khana in the mosque, the ablution tank used before prayer, had been drained, allegedly to check the depth, leading to rumours of the mosque being dug up. On Sunday (November 24, 2024), as the crowd built up during the survey that took a couple of hours in the morning, Zafar Ali, the President of the Shahi Jama Masjid committee, realised that everyone, including the people and the police, was on edge. "I went outside to try and convince people that the mosque was not being broken, and while many left after being reassured, there were still some who stayed on, enraged," he says. He realised that in case of even a slight skirmish, both the people and the police would react. In the violence that en-

sued, four, including a 17-year-old boy, were killed and many were injured. Of the 2,500 people who were booked in seven first information reports (FIRs), 300 have been identified, including the Samajwadi Party's (SP) MP Zia Ur Rehman Barq and MLA Iqbal Mahmood's son, Sohail Mahmood.

While the SP has said that Barq was in Bengaluru at the time, the U.P. police have alleged in the FIR that he delivered a "provocative speech" on November 22 in the mosque, and incited people through WhatsApp. Sohail, according to the police, incited the crowd at the time of the survey. People have been booked on charges of rioting, assault on public servants, promoting enmity, and damaging public property. Two women were arrested for allegedly throwing stones from their rooftops. Similar to the protests in 2020 against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, the U.P. government has decided to make protesters pay for damage to public property. Posters of 'stone pelters' — who police claim to have identified through CCTV records — will be displayed at public places. Sambhal police say the mob attacked them with batons, hockey sticks, firearms, and tear gas shells. The police took Ali's phone and had called him in for questioning. A police officer says Ali had "leaked information" regarding the second survey to the people, leading to the violence. However, civil court orders are public documents. Naeem, 28, had a sweet shop in Fatehullah Sarai, about a kilometre away from the main mosque. "The oil to fry the samosas was over, so he left to buy oil from a wholesale market near the Shahi Jama Masjid, at around 8 a.m.," says Ishrat Jahan, 25, a neighbour, who now speaks on the family's behalf, after media harassment. Naeem was to then head to the sweet shop for a regular business day. "In the afternoon, we got a call saying his body had been found on the road," Jahan says. He had bullet injuries near his chest, with entry and exit wounds, indicating a shooting at close range, say the police.

The Commissioner, Aunjaneya Kumar Singh and Sambhal District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya, claim that at about 11 a.m. the mob began pelting stones from three directions. "Police used tear gas and rubber pellets to control the crowd. The mob set fire to three cars and a bike, and began firing with country-made pistols," says the Superintendent of Police Krishan Bishnoi. In the chaos, he says the police PRO was shot in the foot, a Deputy Collector had a fracture, and the circle officer was injured, along with 20 other officers. Singh notes that most in the crowd were "young, unaware of the consequences, and influenced by provocateurs". The Deputy Inspector General of police Muniraj G., says that children were used by the mob to throw stones.

In his two-bedroom house, with a seven-foot courtyard, Tehzeeb, 22, Naeem's wife, observes iddah, a period of mourning after a husband dies. North India's winter is not yet bone-chilling, though the atmosphere is heavy with gloom. She has four children, all below 12. "He had dreams to make them doctors or engineers," Jahan says. The rice and potatoes cooked for a meal rot in a basket. Naeem's mother wakes up, screaming for her dead son. The family claims the police is harass-



ing them. About 20 women gathered around Tehzeeb say the police knock on their doors at 11.30 at night, asking them to take the case back, or to abusively tell them he wasn't shot dead. Naeem's post-mortem report has not been released yet. Naeem's brother, Tasleem, claims the police, amid threats, took his thumb impression on a blank piece of paper. "I am illiterate. I don't know what the police will write on the paper," he says. SP leader Akhilesh Yadav reacted on X, saying in Hindi, "Threatening somebody and taking their thumb impression on a blank piece of paper is a crime. The Supreme Court should take immediate cognisance and punish those responsible."

Most of the people involved in the violence had come to the market to either open their shops or to buy goods. Bilal Ansari, 22, who ran a clothing shop next to the Shahi Jama Masjid, was about to start his day. He lived with his parents, four brothers, and two sisters in Bada Moharram, not more than 3 km from his shop. Bilal's brother, Salman, 26, who works as a tailor, got a call that November morning. "The caller told me Bilal was in hospital. When I rushed to the emergency ward, all I could do was hold his hand. The last sentence my brother spoke was that he was shot by the police," says Salman. Soon after, Bilal became unresponsive. "We rushed him to another hospital in Moradabad, [40 km away], but by then he had succumbed to his injuries. How will we ever go back to our lives? The police will never listen to us," Salman says. While Salman talks, sitting on a plastic chair at home, a group of 20 men of all ages gather around for support. Every time he explains the sequence of events, a neighbour says, "Musalmaano ko kaun nyaaya dilwaega? (Who will give justice to the Muslims?)"

Savita Rastogi, 63, got married and came to live in Sambhal in 1975. A year later, similar violence erupted in the neighbourhood, when the mosque's maulana was killed by a Hindu man. She recalls arson and a curfew-like period for a month. "Nothing good comes out of violence," Savita says, while on her way to a neighbourhood temple managed by her family. Based on what her in-laws told her, Savita says the mohalla (neighbourhood) is over 300 years old. Earlier, it had a few shops that dealt in timber, but slowly, people began to deal in peppermint oil and set up sugar refineries. When she first

moved here, she remembers going up to the terrace of her house in Kot Purvi and looking around. "Poora khandar tha (Everything was in ruins). Only the mosque stood out. I wondered why I had moved here, from Meerut," she says. After the violence and loot, people began moving to other cities. Moradabad and Delhi were developing in the 1980s and 1990s. The market's map changed as more and more smaller shops began opening up in Sambhal for daily needs. Savita also remembers stories around the Harihar temple, but says, "Hindus have enough temples to go to. This controversy has caused more problems for people living here. People have died. Today, there is so much media presence. Tomorrow the media will leave, but how will Hindus and Muslims ever go back to normalcy?" Now, most shops owned by Muslims are shut. Savita says, "I used to 'take udhaar (goods on credit)' from our Muslim brothers. I'm concerned about whether they are ok." With a red teeka (mark) on his forehead and an aum locket around his neck, Arpit Rastogi, 35, is finishing up a puja at his hardware store. "This market was the life of the city. Look how silent it has become. Now, people don't even talk to each other," Arpit says. He worries that the ongoing survey will deepen the divide between Hindus and Muslims. "Taking away land hurts, but what are we doing now?" he asks. The Hindu locality is predominantly populated by the Rastogis, a community involved in business and trade.

Digging up the old The survey of the mosque to determine whether a temple lay beneath, was based on a petition in the District and Sessions Court Sambhal at Chandausi, filed by advocate Hari Shankar Jain. His son, Vishnu Shankar Jain's name also features in the petition, as does Mahant Rishiraj Giri of Sambhal's Kaila Devi temple. The Jains are involved in similar petitions on the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya, the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, and the Krishna Janma Bhoomi-Shahi Idgah mosque in Mathura. The petition referenced the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, that stipulates that the "public shall have a right of access to any protected monument". The petition was filed on November 19 morning and the court had ordered the first survey of the mosque, which took place that evening, uncommon for all three events to take place on the same day. Now, the Supreme Court



# Transcript of Donald Trump's speech after returning to presidency

Vice President Vance, Speaker Johnson, Senator Thune, Chief Justice Roberts, justices of the United States Supreme Court, President Clinton, President Bush, President Obama, President Biden, Vice President Harris and my fellow citizens: The golden age of America begins right now. From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation. And we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer.

During every single day of the Trump administration, I will, very simply, put America first. Our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored. The scales of justice will be rebalanced. The vicious, violent and unfair weaponization of the Justice Department and our government will end. And our top priority will be to create a nation that is proud and prosperous and free. America will soon be greater, stronger, and far more exceptional than ever before. I return to the presidency confident and optimistic that we are at the start of a thrilling new era of national success. A tide of change is sweeping the country. Sunlight is pouring over the entire world, and America has the chance to seize this opportunity like never before.

But first, we must be honest about the challenges we face. While they are plentiful, they will be annihilated by this great momentum that the world is now witnessing and the United States of America. As we gather today, our government confronts a crisis of trust. For many years, the radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens. While the pillars of our society lay broken and seemingly in complete disrepair, we now have a government that cannot manage even a simple crisis at home while at the same time stumbling into a continuing catalog of catastrophic events abroad. It fails to protect our magnificent, law-abiding American citizens but provides sanctuary and protection for dangerous criminals, many from prisons and mental institutions that have illegally entered our country from all over the world. We have a government that has given unlimited funding to the defense of foreign borders but refuses to defend American borders, or more importantly, its own people. Our country can no longer deliver basic services in times of emergency, as recently shown by the wonderful people of North Carolina, who've been treated so badly. And other states who are still suffering from a hurricane that took place many months ago. Or more recently, Los Angeles, where we are watching fires still tragically burn from weeks ago without even a token of defense. They're raging through the houses and communities, even affecting some of the wealthiest and most powerful individuals in our country, some of whom are sitting here right now. They don't have a home any longer. That's interesting. But we can't let this happen. Everyone is unable to do anything about it. That's going to change. We have a public health system that does not deliver in times of disaster, yet more money is spent on it than any country anywhere in the world. And we have an education system that teaches our children to be ashamed of themselves, in many cases to hate our country despite the love that we try

so desperately to provide to them. All of this will change starting today and will change very quickly. Our recent election is a mandate to completely and totally reverse a horrible betrayal, and all of these many betrayals that have taken place, and to give the people back their faith, their wealth, their democracy and indeed their freedom. From this moment on, America's decline is over. Our liberties and our nation's glorious destiny will no longer be denied and we will immediately restore the integrity, competency and loyalty of America's government. Over the past eight years, I have been tested and challenged more than any president in our 250-year history, and I've learned a lot along the way. The journey to reclaim our Republic has not been an easy one, that I can tell you. Those who wish to stop our cause have tried to take my freedom and indeed to take my life. Just a few months ago, in a beautiful Pennsylvania field, an assassin's bullet ripped through my ear. But I felt then, and believe even more so now, that my life was saved for a reason. I was saved by God to make America great again.

That is why each day under our administration of American patriots, we will be working to meet every crisis with dignity and power and strength. We will move with purpose and speed to bring back hope, prosperity, safety and peace for citizens of every race, religion, color and creed. For American citizens, Jan. 20, 2025, is Liberation Day. It is my hope that our recent presidential election will be remembered as the greatest and most consequential election in the history of our country. As our victory showed, the entire nation is rapidly unifying behind our agenda with dramatic increases in support from virtually every element of our society. Young and old, men and women, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, urban, suburban and rural. And, very importantly, we had a powerful win in all seven swing states and the popular vote. We won by millions of people. To the Black and Hispanic communities, I want to thank you for the tremendous outpouring of love and trust that you have shown me with your vote. We set records, and I will not forget it. I've heard your voices in the campaign, and I look forward to working with you in the years to come. Today is Martin Luther King Day and his honour — this will be a great honour — but in his honour, we will strive together to make his dream a reality. We will make his dream come true.

National unity is now returning to America and confidence and pride is soaring like never before. In everything we do my administration will be inspired by a strong pursuit of excellence and unrelenting success. We will not forget our country. We will not forget our Constitution. And we will not forget our God. Today, I will sign a series of historic executive orders. With these actions, we will begin the complete restoration of America and the revolution of common sense. It's all about common sense. First, I will declare a national emergency at our southern border. All illegal entry will immediately be halted. And we will begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places from which they came. We will reinstate my remain in Mexico policy. I will end the practice of catch



and release. And I will send troops to the southern border to repel the disastrous invasion of our country. Under the orders I sign today we will also be designating the cartels as foreign terrorist organizations. And by invoking the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, I will direct our government to use the full and immense power of federal and state law enforcement to eliminate the presence of all foreign gangs and criminal networks bringing devastating crime to U.S. soil, including our cities and inner cities. As commander in chief, I have no higher responsibility than to defend our country from threats and invasions. And that is exactly what I am going to do. We will do it at a level that nobody has ever seen before. Next, I will direct all members of my cabinet to marshal the vast powers at their disposal to defeat what was record inflation and rapidly bring down costs and prices. The inflation crisis was caused by massive overspending and escalating energy prices. And that is why today I will also declare a national energy emergency. We will drill, baby, drill.

America will be a manufacturing nation once again, and we have something that no other manufacturing nation will ever have: the largest amount of oil and gas of any country on Earth. And we are going to use it. We will bring prices down, fill our strategic reserves up again, right to the top, and export American energy all over the world. We will be a rich nation again. And it is that liquid gold under our feet that will help to do it. With my actions today, we will end the Green New Deal and we will revoke the electric vehicle mandate, saving our auto industry and keeping my sacred pledge to our great American autoworkers. In other words, you'll be able to buy the car of your choice. We will build automobiles in America again at a rate that nobody could have dreamt possible just a few years ago. And thank you to the auto workers of our nation for your inspiring vote of confidence. We did tremendously with their vote. I will immediately begin the overhaul of our trade system to protect American workers and families. Instead of taxing our citizens to enrich other countries, we will tariff and tax foreign countries to enrich our citizens. For this purpose, we are establishing the External Revenue Service to collect all tariffs, duties and revenues. It will be massive amounts of money pouring into our treasury coming from foreign sources. The American Dream will soon be back and thriving like never before. To restore confidence

and effectiveness to our federal government, my administration will establish the brand new Department of Government Efficiency.

After years and years of illegal and unconstitutional federal efforts to restrict free expression, I will also sign an executive order to immediately stop all government censorship and bring back free speech to America. Never again will the immense power of the state be weaponized to persecute political opponents. Something I know something about. We will not allow that to happen. It will not happen again. Under my leadership, we will restore fair, equal and impartial justice under the Constitution and the rule of law. And we are going to bring law and order back to our cities. This week, I will also end the government policy of trying to socially engineer race and gender into every aspect of public and private life. We will forge a society that is colorblind and merit based. As of today, it will henceforth be the official policy of the United States government that there are only two genders, male and female. This week I will reinstate any service members who were unjustly expelled from the military for objecting to the Covid vaccine mandate with full back pay. And I will sign an order to stop our warriors from being subjected to radical political theories and social experiments while on duty. It's going to end immediately. Our armed forces will be free to focus on their sole mission—defeating America's enemies. Like in 2017, we will again build the strongest military the world has ever seen.

We will measure our success not only by the battles we win but also by the wars that we end. And, perhaps most importantly, the wars we never get into. My proudest legacy will be that of a peacemaker and unifier. That's what I want to be. A peacemaker and a unifier. I'm pleased to say that, as of yesterday, one day before I assumed office, the hostages in the Middle East are coming back home to their families. America will reclaim its rightful place as the greatest, most powerful, most respected nation on earth, inspiring the awe and admiration of the entire world. A short time from now, we are going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. And we will restore the name of the great President William McKinley to Mount McKinley, where it should be and where it belongs. President McKinley made our country very rich through tariffs and through talent.



# Trump pledges series of Day 1 executive actions to end 'four long years of American decline'

President-elect Donald Trump used a raucous rally Sunday (January 19, 2025) on the eve of his inauguration to promise swift Day 1 action remaking the federal government, shifting federal priorities at breakneck speed and ensuring that "the curtain closes on four long years of American decline." Supporters filled nearly all of the 20,000-plus-seat Capital One Arena in downtown Washington for a "Make America Great" victory celebration, and cheered as Trump said he'd take quick action on everything from cracking down on the U.S.-Mexico border to promoting oil drilling, reining in the federal workforce and eradicating diversity programs.

"We're going to give them the best first day, the biggest first week and the most extraordinary first 100 days of any presidency in American history," said Trump, who also promised to roll back executive actions by his predecessor, outgoing President Joe Biden, "within hours." In an unusual move, Trump entered at the arena's concourse level and deliberately made his way down the stairs before his speech, stopping frequently to pump his fist and pose for pictures with rallygoers. It was even more surreal after he finished speaking, when the Village People took the stage and the president-elect sang — and even briefly danced — along to "YMCA," an unofficial anthem of his campaign. Trump said he'd jump start his agenda with a series of unilateral actions from the White House, telling the crowd, "You're going to see executive orders that are going to make you extremely happy. Lots of them."

Sunday was Trump's first full day back in Washington since his Election Day victory and gave him a chance to energize core supporters before the official pomp of Inauguration Day. Unlike when Trump helped spark a mob of his supporters to attack the Capitol and tried to retain power in 2021 after his loss to Biden, officials did not expect massive protests, unrest or violence. Instead, jubilant crowds reveled in Trump's coming second term and MAGA's total control of the Republican Party. Yet even with a comfortable Electoral College victory and his party in full — albeit narrow — control of Congress, the incoming president is one of the most polarizing figures in U.S. history, with nearly as many fierce detractors as ardent supporters. That means it could be difficult for Trump to fulfill postelection pledges to promote bipartisanship while healing political differences. Trump has nonetheless insisted that unity will be a theme of his inauguration speech Monday, along with strength and fairness — despite spending months as a candidate saying that if elected he would seek retribution against political enemies. That was the theme of much of his rally speech Sunday, when Trump returned to the greatest hits of his campaign — as if the race against Vice President Kamala Harris weren't already long decided. Trump denounced "migrant crime" by evoking one of his favorite fictional characters, Hannibal Lecter, and promised to stamp out "woke" policies and oppose transgender rights.

"Tomorrow, at noon, the curtain closes on four long years of American decline, and we begin a brand new day of American strength and prosperity, dignity and pride," Trump said, adding, "Once and for all, we're

going to end the reign of a failed and corrupt political establishment in Washington." The event also featured a performance by Kid Rock, who performed "All Summer Long" despite a cold mix of rain and snow falling outside. Others taking the stage included singer Lee Greenwood, whose "God Bless the USA" is a Trump favorite. Billionaire Tesla owner Elon Musk — who Trump has tasked with helping run a special commission to make the federal government more efficient — took the stage and said "we're looking forward to making a lot of changes." Jon Voight, an actor named by Trump as a special ambassador to Hollywood, declared the president-elect "our hero. A man who never gave up on the American people, and we the people never gave up on him." Stephen Miller, Trump's pick to be deputy chief of staff and a key architect of the administration's promised hard-line immigration policies, vowed that "justice is coming." "We are about to get our country back and our democracy back," Miller said, adding "Donald J. Trump is about to save this country."

With frigid temperatures expected Monday, Trump directed most of Monday's outdoor events to be moved indoors, and officials held a rehearsal Sunday for his swearing-in in the U.S. Capitol's Rotunda, which holds only 600 people compared to the 250,000-plus guests who had tickets to view the inauguration from around the Capitol grounds. Also Sunday, Trump had breakfast privately with Republican senators at Blair House, the president's official guest residence, across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, and took to his social media site to comment on the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and the U.S. ban on TikTok. "Hostages starting to come out today!" Trump wrote. Overnight, millions of U.S. users of TikTok lost the ability to watch videos on the social media platform as a federal ban on the app took effect. Though the site later began working again for some users, the disruptions reflected a new law requiring its China-based parent company, ByteDance, to divest for national security reasons.

The company made a personal appeal to Trump to intervene, posting a message saying, "We are fortunate that President Trump has indicated that he will work with us on a solution to reinstate TikTok once he takes office." Trump subsequently posted, "I'm asking companies not to let TikTok stay dark!" He promised to issue an executive order Monday "to extend the period of time before the law's prohibitions take effect, so that we can make a deal to protect our national security." The president-elect also wrote that he was interested in the U.S. owning 50% of TikTok in a "joint venture" model, though he did not offer much detail on what that would look like. Another stop for Trump on Sunday were snow-covered graves at Arlington National Cemetery, where he and Vice President-elect JD Vance — each wearing dark overcoats and red ties — walked together to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for a wreath-laying ceremony that included the playing of taps. Trump mouthed "thank you" after placing the wreath. The pair later spent nearly half an hour in Section 60, the burial site for military personnel killed while fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, talking with families of soldiers who died in the 2021



Kabul airport bombing. The scene was far different than in August, when two Trump campaign staff members reportedly verbally

"abused and pushed" aside a cemetery official who tried to stop them from filming and photographing in Section 60.

## India's winding road to '#EndTB'

Last year, tuberculosis (TB) emerged, once again, as the leading infectious disease killer globally. The goals, i.e., End TB targets of 90% reduction in TB deaths, 80% reduction in new cases, and zero TB-affected families facing catastrophic costs by 2030, seem to be a distant dream. In 2018, India extended the highest level of political commitment for the cause by pledging to achieve End TB targets on an accelerated timeline by 2025. However, the COVID-19 pandemic was a huge pushback to the efforts. According to the World Health Organization's Global Tuberculosis Report 2024, India continues to lead in the global TB burden (26% of cases) and is also the hub for drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) and TB deaths. While ambitious policies and initiatives are rolled out from the national level, the ground reality in India needs to be better understood to translate them into effective interventions. Focus on vulnerable groups India's National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) clearly defines the high-risk or vulnerable groups that are at risk of contracting TB and developing adverse outcomes. Dr. Pavitra Mohan, paediatrician and founder of Basic Healthcare Services, a non-governmental organisation working in south Rajasthan, says, "We get around 1000 persons with TB in our clinics every year and many of them have severe lung damage owing to fine dust inhalation from mining and stone carving. They are at risk for TB due to contributory factors like silicosis, undernutrition, overcrowding, and uncontrolled comorbidities like diabetes." Migrant workers also have an added disadvantage of poor access to health-care facilities. Dr. Mohan says, "They prefer to go back to their native place if they fall ill and hence it is not easy for the healthcare delivery system also to keep track of their treatment." While a lot of attention is being paid to tackling undernutrition among persons with TB (pwTB), a host of other contributory factors in each geography needs to be addressed, requiring multisectoral action. TB is a curable disease with effective and free drugs from NTEP. A significant achievement for India is the treatment initiation in more than 95% of notified

cases. This was possible, over the years, by establishing an exclusive procurement and supply chain system for the NTEP. However, in 2023, there was a country-wide break in the supply chain — it still continues in many parts. Shortage of key drugs in the centres, many of which are unavailable in the open market, left the beneficiaries and their families in a struggle. Nandita Venkatesan, data journalist and two-time TB survivor, says, "It takes many a mile for pwTB to reach the finishing line of treatment combating a wide range of side effects. Shortage of such critical medicines disrupts the treatment, risking resistance to antibiotics and poor disease outcomes. Moreover, having to buy drugs from outside leads to catastrophic health expenses." On extrapulmonary TB (EP-TB) affects any organ of the body — lymph nodes, the kidneys, the brain, the spinal cord, bones, joints, and skin. However, the NTEP's main focus has been on pulmonary TB affecting the lung, as it is most common and transmissible. The share of EP-TB is about 24% of the notified cases, but with wide geographical variations. It is often missed/delayed from being diagnosed due to symptoms which are vague and mimic other diseases. Dr. Deepak Chandra Badhani, a surgeon working in rural Chhattisgarh, says, "Doctors in Indian settings should have a high index of suspicion for TB in the cases they see. Proper history taking, thorough clinical examination and simple tests such as pus staining from a non-healing ulcer can help diagnose TB. But sadly, we wait for expensive, advanced tests just to start treatment and depend heavily on specialists to diagnose, leading to substantial delays and advanced disease." He lays emphasis on the training of general practitioners to pick up EP-TB at the earliest and of the need to sensitise frontline workers and integrating EP-TB into their screening algorithms. A study by Daniels and colleagues in Mumbai shows that only 35% of private practitioners and 75% of government doctors could correctly diagnose a patient presenting with classical symptoms of TB. Dr. Vasundhara Rangaswamy, a microbiologist working in rural Chhattisgarh.



# Who is the real Lodha? Mumbai's new sibling rivalry

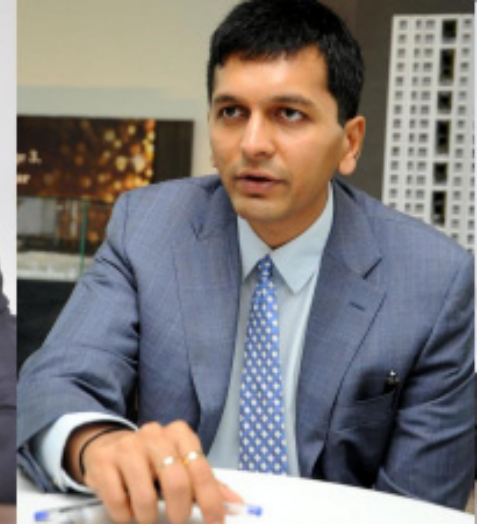
The family feud between the Lodha brothers is the new addition to the host of high profile legal battles between family members that India has seen. The crux of this one is simple: Who is the real Lodha? And the pursuit to answer the question uncovers the nature of the spat. Macrotech Developer which operates under the name "Lodha Group" was a property development company run by Abhishek Lodha, who is the elder son of Mangal Prabhat Lodha, who is the Minister of Tourism and Skill Development. Mr. Mangal Lodha founded the company in 1980 but it was being run by Mr. Abhishek and his younger brother Mr. Abhinandan Lodha as joint managing directors until 2015. Mr. Abhishek was overseeing projects and Mr. Abhinandan, finance. In 2015 the brothers decided to split. Mr. Abhinandan started a separate entity named House of Abhinandan Lodha (HoABL) and continued dealing in development and sale of plots in Mumbai, Goa and Ayodhya, among other locations.

Almost a decade after the split, Mr. Abhishek Lodha and Macrotech Developers have filed a suit alleging that HoABL and its head Mr. Abhinandan Lodha were using the Lodha brand name for their business Lodha Ventures among others, and are demanding an injunction of ₹5,000 crore. The usage of trademark was in contravention to the terms agreed upon in the family settlement agreement made in 2017, when the exclusive right over brand Lodha was given to Macrotech and prohibited HoABL, its use in any form. HoABL was also not permitted to pursue any real estate project in Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Greater London area for five years which concluded in 2022. According to the petition, he was also given 1000 crore as a pay off to start a new business with a bunch of apartments. Mr. Abhinandan however denied this in a statement saying that just 500 crore was given to him. The petition acknowledged that Mr. Abhinandan agreed to the terms but continued to use the name Lodha in his business, like using the word in bigger font and naming his company "Lodha Ventures." Mr. Abhinandan Lodha has claimed that the court case is motivated by jealousy. "We feel the simple reason seems driven the success of our new generation plotted land business under our company "The House of Abhinandan Lodha" which Macrotech Developers is unable to digest and for people to know the "House of Abhinandan Lodha" is a registered trade mark since 2021." Mr. Abhinandan Lodha told The Hindu.

"This (usage of brand name by HoABL) has resulted in a lot of confusion for existing buyers of HoABL who wrongly think that they have associated with the prestigious "Lodha Group" not knowing that HoABL has got nothing to do with Macrotech Developers and its brands "Lodha" or "Lodha Group" . The "indiscriminate use" continued even after family members of Mr. Abhishek Lodha tried to tell Mr. Abhinandan that he should do his own business in separate name and not try to pass off as 'Lodha'. They further charge the younger sibling of deliberately using this as a business strategy and continues to make all efforts to confuse customers that HoABL is part of related to Lodha. In order to

strengthen the case against HoABL, Macrotech and Mr. Abhishek have also given proof of the financial misconduct between 2008 and 2014 allegedly under the supervision of Mr. Abhinandan Lodha, who then took care of the finance department. This subsequently generated a debt of ₹20,000 crore in 2015, the petition found. Mr. Abhinandan Lodha however denied this claiming that the size of the company right now was due to his efforts in 2003. "As Joint Managing Director at Lodha Developers now known as Macrotech Developers, I lead the functions of Finance, Marketing and sales which are critical in creation of a brand and where I grew sales from less than ₹100 crore in 2003 to ₹8,000 crore p.a. in 2015. Secured a \$410 million FDI deal with Deutsche Bank the largest deal in real estate history of India until then, lead the ₹5,700 crore land purchase at New Cuffe Parade, Wadala, also led Lodha Group's acquisition of 17 acres in Worli from DLF for ₹2,727 crore which was then called Lodha Park and facilitated India's first billion-dollar single-day launch with 'The Park,' which received over 900 bookings worth ₹4,500 crore on its first day" said Mr. Abhinandan Lodha.

Moreover he claimed to have help solve the financial stress in the company. "By 2019, Macrotech Developers Ltd was under severe funds crunch and the premium on international bonds spiralled signalling an imminent default. My elder brother Mr. Abhishek and Macrotech Developers Ltd approached me and out of the above funds, I gave loans in aggregate amounting to over ₹900 Crores while the peak outstanding at any given point in time was ₹175 Crores from my two companies Lodha Finserve and



Lodha ventures to Macrotech Developers Ltd. I was constantly requested to help out and I worked tirelessly to refinance and help Macrotech Developers Ltd as recent as 2019 – 2020 as bankers had refused to lend further to Macrotech without my involvement with my Company's corporate guarantees of ₹250 Crores, continuing personal guarantees in excess of over ₹2000 crores. I further even mortgaged my own flat and raised funds to support Macrotech Developers Ltd. This is all a matter of record. All of this was done as a responsible member of the family and in the interest of the family"

Macrotech however said that the claims of having contributed to the success of the Lodha group were "wildly exaggerated," as Mr. Abhinandan was involved with Macrotech Developers for just 12 years in

in its 40 year history.

Mr. Abhinandan is not in favour of the suit. "I continue to believe that family matters should not be settled in public. This is the reason I chose to maintain a dignified silence for over 10 years. I do hope that my family honours all the commitments made to me as I have delivered not only on all my commitments but also beyond, whenever called upon to help with advice, time and money. My mother has had to be a bystander in this unfortunate episode" said Mr. Abhinandan in a statement. He maintained that he had decided to defend only because Macrotech had gone to the court. The case is listed to be heard on January 27 at the Bombay High Court. Mumbai business community will witness yet another high stakes, high profile sibling rivalry.

## U.S. agents raid New Jersey worksite as Trump escalates immigration crackdown

U.S. immigration agents rounded up undocumented migrants as well as U.S. citizens during a raid of a Newark, New Jersey, worksite on Thursday (January 23, 2025) that the city's mayor said involved detaining a military veteran and violations of the people's rights. The raid in New Jersey's most populous city, hailed in the past by mayor Ras Baraka for its "sanctuary" policies protecting migrants, follows President Donald Trump's pledge to deport millions of immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally.

Mr. Trump issued a raft of executive orders after taking office on Monday (January 20, 2025) that aim to clamp down on illegal immigration. He has taken steps to punish officials who resist enforcement of his sweeping crackdown. Raid on business establishment in Newark In a raid of a business establishment in Newark, outside New York City, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents failed to produce a warrant as they detained "undocumented residents as well as citizens," Mr. Baraka said in a statement. "One of the detainees is a U.S. military veteran who suffered the indignity of having the legitimacy of his military docu-

mentation questioned," Mr. Baraka said. In a statement, an ICE spokesperson said that agents "may encounter U.S. citizens while conducting field work and may request identification to establish an individual's identity as was the case during a targeted enforcement operation at a worksite today in Newark." Mayor calls raid unconstitutional The spokesperson said that ICE was investigating the incident. Mr. Baraka said the raid had violated the citizens' rights under the U.S. Constitution. "Newark will not stand by idly while people are being unlawfully terrorized," he said.

Neither Mr. Baraka nor ICE identified the business raided by name. Mr. Baraka is one of the first local officials in the U.S. to issue a statement on a specific raid following the start of Mr. Trump's immigration crackdown. In 2017, he signed an executive order cementing Newark's sanctuary status, and was a vocal opponent of Trump's immigration policies during the president's first term. Of the estimated 11 million immigrants in the U.S. illegally or with temporary status in 2022, about 44% lived in states with "sanctuary" laws that limit cooperation with fed-



The raid in New Jersey's most populous city, follows President Donald Trump's pledge to deport millions of immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally; Newark mayor calls raid unconstitutional

eral immigration authorities. That figure does not include those in sanctuary cities and counties in places without a statewide law, such as New Mexico. U.S. media outlets reported that federal law enforcement and ICE agents had arrested nearly 500 undocumented migrants wanted for outstanding crimes in sanctuary cities, including some from New York and New Jersey. The reports cited ICE officials who said the arrests took place on Tuesday and Wednesday.