



US & CANADA

Newsletter

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US POLITICS

Trump's January Surge: Executive Orders, Pardons, and Policy Shifts

With an aggressive inaugural [speech](#), President Trump heralded the commencement of what he termed America's "[Golden Age](#)," emphasizing a future of prosperity and international respect. Positioning himself as a saviour and a nationalist leader, Trump underscored his commitment to putting "America First," a vision aiming to restore America's lost national identity and sovereignty. He [criticized](#) past administrations for placing foreign interests over American welfare, focusing heavily on economic revitalization, migration reform, border security, social issues, and government restructuring. While presenting himself as a [unifier](#), his speech echoed the polarising rhetoric that has been a hallmark of his political stance. While former Presidents Obama, Clinton and Bush were present for the swearing in, they did not [attend](#) the Inauguration lunch.

Following the inauguration, President Trump rapidly enacted several Executive [Orders](#) that reflected his speech's themes and priorities. Key actions included These included Declaring that only two sexes (male and female) are recognized by the U.S. [government](#), Removal of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) [policies](#) in the federal government, Leaving the Paris Climate [Accord](#), Leaving the World Health [Organization](#), and Establishing the Department of Government [Efficiency](#). Trump also sneaked in political [pardons](#) for the 1,500 odd people convicted of offenses related to the January 6 United States Capitol attack.

In a departure from inauguration norms, tech magnates such as Jeff Bezos, Sundar Pichai, and Elon Musk shared the stage during the ceremony. This unique assembly highlighted the evolving relationship between the tech industry and the Trump administration, foreshadowing future collaborations or policy shifts. Elon Musk has already played a significant role in shaping the Trump administration's initiatives since January 2025, exerting considerable influence over various sectors of the federal government. Leveraging support from President Donald Trump, Musk rapidly acquired [control](#) over multiple government agencies through the newly established Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which has led to an unprecedented level of influence and authority primarily aimed at cutting costs and downsizing the government. Musk's team has taken over several key agencies, including the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), General Services Administration (GSA), and the U.S. Treasury Department's payment system, gaining unprecedented control over sensitive data and government financial operations. Musk's extensive power and authority have drawn significant criticism and sparked legal challenges. [Lawmakers](#) and government unions have raised alarms about Musk's potential conflicts of interest, his access to sensitive information, and the legality of DOGE's actions.

The most striking performative political theatre following the Inauguration was that of deportation flights starting on 23 January 2025. High-profile raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were carried out across the country with Department Of Homeland Security

Secretary Kristi Noem also participating in one such [raid](#) on 28 January, 2025. Deportation flights took off from various cities across the country, including Boston, Denver, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Seattle, Miami, Washington D.C., and New York City. The [first](#) of these flights headed to Guatemala. On January 26, 2025, a diplomatic issue arose with Colombia when President Gustavo Petro refused to allow deportation flights from the U.S., demanding that protocols treating deportees with dignity be established. However, this ban was later [lifted](#) following U.S. threats of trade sanctions, and Colombia resumed accepting deportees, primarily using its own military flights for transportation. Most of the initial flights were to countries across South America. On 29 January, President Trump signed into law the Laken Riley Act that mandates detentions of migrants accused, but not necessarily convicted, of minor crimes. At the signing event, Trump said he will instruct the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security to use the U.S. naval base in [Guantánamo](#) Bay, Cuba, as a site to detain “the worst criminal illegal aliens threatening the American people.”

In his farewell address from the Oval Office, President [Joe Biden](#) reflected on his presidency while raising concerns about America's future. Speaking alongside Vice President Harris and family members, Biden highlighted his administration's achievements, including healthcare reforms, veterans' benefits, semiconductor manufacturing investments, and the recent Israel-Hamas ceasefire agreement. However, the core of his message focused on mounting challenges facing American democracy. He warned about the

concentration of power among wealthy individuals, describing an emerging [oligarchy](#) that threatens democratic institutions and basic freedoms. Biden expressed particular concern about the intersection of wealth and technology, drawing parallels between Eisenhower's warning about the military-industrial complex and what he termed the "tech-industrial complex." He also highlighted concerns about the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the spread of misinformation amid a declining free press.

US NEWS UPDATE

- Donald Trump has ordered the release of thousands of [classified](#) government documents related to the assassinations of former President [John F Kennedy](#), Senator Robert F Kennedy, and Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. The release is expected to create political ripples and revisit the assassinations of prominent American leaders. Only a few thousand of the millions of governmental records related to the 1963 [assassination](#) of Kennedy are yet to be fully declassified.

- The U.S. government has expanded its restrictions on Chinese imports by adding 37 new companies to its Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) entity list, marking the largest single expansion to date. This brings the total number of restricted companies to nearly 150. The Department of Homeland Security's action specifically targets companies operating in the mining, textile, and solar industries that are allegedly connected to forced labour practices in China.

- California's largest insurance company stopped providing home

[insurance](#) to over a thousand homeowners in the Pacific Palisades neighbourhood of Los Angeles in July, leaving residents increasingly reliant on the state-backed Fair Access to Insurance Requirements (FAIR) plan. The FAIR plan covers nearly \$5.9 billion in assets at risk of going up in flames. Experts warn that the losses could overwhelm California's fragile insurance market, potentially worsening an exodus of carriers and destabilizing the state-backed system.

INDIA-US RELATIONS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated U.S. President Donald Trump on his historic second term over a phone call on 27 January 2025. According to [readouts](#) of the call, the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a mutually beneficial and trusted partnership. They discussed various aspects of the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, focusing on technology, trade, investment, energy, and defence. The leaders also exchanged views on global issues, including West Asia and Ukraine. They emphasised their [commitment](#) to advancing the U.S.-India strategic partnership and the Indo-Pacific Quad partnership, with India set to host the Quad Leaders meeting later this year and the Prime Minister also making a visit to the US in February.

- India and the United States have announced a landmark [agreement](#) to jointly manufacture sonobuoys, sophisticated underwater surveillance devices used to detect submarines. A key feature of this collaboration is the interoperability of the jointly produced sonobuoys. This compatibility extends to equipment used by allied nations, particularly within the Quad

alliance comprising the US, India, Australia, and Japan.

- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar attended the inauguration of President Trump and Vice President Vance in Washington D.C. He met with several key officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, and six Cabinet members. These [meetings](#) focused on enhancing the strong bilateral relationship between India and the United States, with discussions covering defence, security, technology, and education. Dr. Jaishankar emphasised the importance of legal mobility, raising concerns about visa delays, and highlighted India's stance on legal and illegal migration.

- The U.S. Supreme Court has cleared the way for the [extradition](#) of Tahawwur Rana, a convict in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, to India. Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, had his final legal challenge dismissed by the court, which denied his petition for a review. Previously, Rana had lost legal battles in several federal courts, including the U.S. Court of Appeals. Rana is known to have ties with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, a key conspirator in the Mumbai attacks, which resulted in 166 deaths, including six Americans. Rana is currently detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles.

DIASPORA NEWS

- In what amounted to his farewell [speech](#), outgoing U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti praised the Indian diaspora in the U.S., referring to them as the "greatest secret weapon" in the U.S.-India

relationship. He highlighted the significant contributions of Indian students and professionals to the U.S., emphasizing the importance of cultural exchanges through education, films, music, and sports. Garcetti underscored the necessity of strengthening educational and economic ties between the two countries and expressed optimism about the future of the U.S.-India partnership.

- Vivek Ramaswamy left his position as co-head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) after [criticizing](#) American culture for prioritizing mediocrity over excellence. His comments apparently upset both President Donald Trump and Elon Musk. Ramaswamy [denied](#) that he had been removed in an interview to Fox News and indicated he left in order to run for governorship of his home state of Ohio. There have also been rumours that he is considering running for J.D. Vance Ohio senate [seat](#) which is now vacant after he was elected Vice President.

- In a [statement](#) on “Restoring Immigration Enforcement in America” placed before the US House Committee on the Judiciary, Jessica M. Vaughan of the Center for Immigration Studies noted that India had the highest number of student/exchange visitor visa overstays in 2023, with approximately 7,000 Indian citizens overstaying their visas. She argued for adjustments to visa issuance policies and increased “interior enforcement” for student visa categories, which was described as having the highest overstay rates among broad categories of temporary admission. She also called for several reforms in immigration policies, including limiting H-1B visas to two years with a possible extension to four years, and

awarding visas to the highest paying employers.

- According to an analyst, Indian students in the U.S. are [shifting](#) away from traditional engineering programs, with enrolment in engineering dropping to 24.5% while computer science and mathematics have surged to 42.9%. This shift is driven by the rising demand for skills in cutting-edge technologies like AI, blockchain, and machine learning, which offer diverse career opportunities.

- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has begun [visiting](#) gurdwaras in New York and New Jersey to find “criminal aliens,” following the revocation of a Biden-era policy that restricted law enforcement actions in sensitive areas like places of worship. This move has sparked concerns among Sikh organizations, such as the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) and the Sikh Coalition, who see it as a threat to the sanctity of their faith and a potential deterrent for Sikh congregants. They stressed that gurdwaras serve as vital community centers and such enforcement actions could hinder religious practices and create fear within immigrant communities.

- President Donald Trump has [appointed](#) former Indian-American journalist Kush Desai as the White House Deputy Press Secretary. Desai previously served in various communications roles for the Republican Party, including Deputy Communications Director for the 2024 Republican National Convention and Communications Director for the Republican Party of Iowa. Desai's role will involve key responsibilities in messaging and narrative building, especially in crucial battleground states.

CANADA POLITICS

Trudeau Resigns Amidst Economic Struggles and Scandals

After many months of holding out, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau saw the writing on the wall and resigned on 6 January due to poor approval ratings and weakened party support. In his resignation [speech](#), Trudeau announced he will step down after nine years in office. Speaking outside his Rideau Cottage residence, he highlighted his efforts since 2015 to support the middle class, advance reconciliation, defend free trade, and combat climate change. His achievements notwithstanding, economic issues, unemployment, and housing affordability had led to deep discontent amongst the populace. Trudeau's government faced significant economic [challenges](#), including high inflation rates and the rising cost of living, often blamed on his poor administration. The impending presidency of Donald Trump, who had proposed significant tariffs on Canadian goods, added to the pressure. Trudeau's personal unpopularity was also a major factor. His time in office has been marred by several major scandals, primarily centred around ethics violations and conflicts of interest. With Trudeau's decision to step down, the Liberal Party entered a [leadership](#) race, with key contenders including former Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland and ex-Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney. The election to Parliament is expected to be held by October 2025, with the Conservative Party, led by Pierre Poilievre, having a 29-point lead.

CANADA NEWS UPDATE

- The Canadian government has announced a 10% reduction in study [permits](#) for 2025, issuing a total of 437,000 permits compared to 485,000 in 2024. The permits will be distributed across Canadian provinces based on the Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) formula, with 316,276 permits requiring a PAL. Most permits will go to college, undergraduate, language, and graduate students. Ontario, the province with the most international students, will allocate 96% of its PALs to public postsecondary institutions. The reduction in study permits by 10% for 2025 will significantly impact Indian students, who constitute a substantial portion of international students in Canada. Additionally, the end of the Student Direct Stream (SDS) visa program, which allowed Indian students to fast-track their applications, may further complicate the process.

DIASPORA NEWS

- Chandra Arya, an Indian-origin MP for Nepean, has officially entered the Canadian [Prime Minister](#) race. Arya, who holds an MBA from Dharwad, believes the nation faces structural challenges that require bold political decisions to secure [prosperity](#) for future generations. He has announced his candidacy for the [Liberal](#) leadership, promising to rebuild the economy, restore hope, create equal opportunities, and secure prosperity for Canadians. Arya believes India is a significant market for Canada's exports and investments.