

BAAHUBALI Vs THE REST

Inflated Box Office Numbers and the Rise of Corporate Bookings

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The legendary success of Baahubali 2: The Conclusion has become a benchmark many in the Indian film industry are desperate to surpass—often at any cost. Recent Income Tax raids in Hyderabad have exposed a murky underbelly of inflated box office collections involving Pushpa 2, Devara, and Jawan, tarnishing their claims of overtaking Baahubali 2.

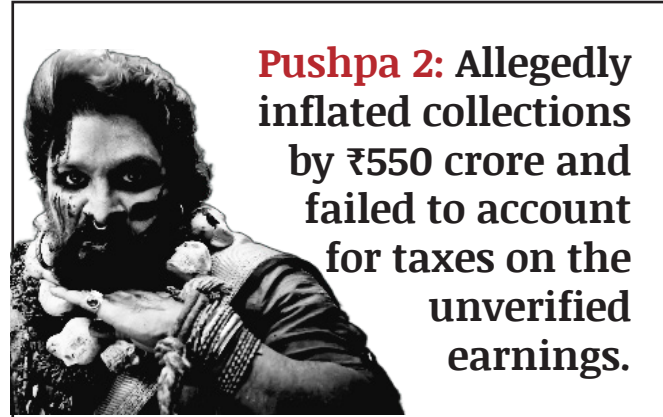
Baahubali 2 grossed ₹1,416.90 crore and achieved 10 crore footfalls without manipulation.

Income Tax raids targeted Dil Raju, Mythri Movies, and Mango Media for financial irregularities.

Big stars opting for profit-sharing models are driving the trend of corporate bookings.

Films like Pushpa 2, Devara, and Jawan face allegations of inflated box office numbers.

PR campaigns and fake reviews are hurting genuine competition.



Pushpa 2: Allegedly inflated collections by ₹550 crore and failed to account for taxes on the unverified earnings.



Devara: Involved in community-driven corporate bookings, with organizations like TANA allegedly contributing to inflated figures.



Jawan: Kickstarted this trend with multiplex chains being questioned for facilitating corporate bookings to amplify its success narrative.

The Income Tax Department recently conducted raids on prominent Tollywood players, including producer and Telangana Film Development Corporation Chairman Dil Raju, Mythri Movie Makers, and Mango Media. These raids uncovered financial irregularities, including the strategic use of corporate bookings to inflate earnings. Corporate bookings involve bulk purchasing of tickets by production houses or affiliates for shows that often remain empty. This tactic creates an illusion of box office success, misleading audiences, distributors, and stakeholders alike.

Why Are Corporate Bookings Increasing?

A significant shift in the remuneration model of big stars is fueling this trend. Many top actors have moved away from fixed fees, opting instead for a share of the profits. In most cases, the distribution ratio between producers and distributors stands at around 60:40, though it may vary slightly. If a film underperforms at the box office, stars risk losing face in the industry and damaging their market value. To avoid this, they actively participate in corporate bookings, using their share of the profits to inflate numbers

artificially. This practice not only boosts the perception of a film's success but also secures their brand image. Additionally, heavy investments in public relations (PR) and paid reviews are killing competition in the industry. For instance, Ram Charan's latest release Game Changer has reportedly faced negative campaigns, allegedly orchestrated by rival PR teams aiming to discredit the film before its release.

A Call for Transparency

The exposure of these practices through IT raids underscores the urgent need for reforms in box office reporting. As the race to surpass Baahubali 2 intensifies, the industry must prioritize transparency and fairness over artificial hype and inflated numbers.

The Real Legacy

While Baahubali 2 continues to be celebrated for its authentic achievements, the exposure of these inflated claims has left audiences questioning the legitimacy of modern blockbusters. As the investigation widens, the industry faces a stark choice: uphold transparency or continue chasing fake glory. The battle to beat Baahubali might have just revealed more losers than winners.

PM Modi Calls for Unity in Pursuit of 'Viksit Bharat'

- Honoring Netaji's Legacy on His Birth Anniversary
- Highlighting Netaji's choice of hardship.
- Warning against forces of disunity.



TPN Correspondent |

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged the nation to remain united in the pursuit of 'viksit Bharat' (developed India) while cautioning against forces that aim to undermine the country's unity and strength.

Speaking at a 'Parakram Diwas' event in Cuttack, organized to honor the birth anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose, fondly known as Netaji, PM Modi emphasized the enduring inspirational legacy of the freedom fighter. Delivered virtually, his address highlighted how Bose chose the path of struggle over comfort in his quest for India's independence. "Netaji never got trapped in a comfort zone," Modi stated, drawing parallels to the current national efforts. "Similarly, we all have to step out of our comfort zones to build a viksit Bharat. We must strive for global excellence, focusing on efficiency and excellence." Modi underscored that Netaji's singular focus on India's freedom drew diverse groups together for a common cause. "Now, we must stay united for a developed India," he asserted, noting that this unity would serve as the truest homage to Bose's legacy.

He warned of the dangers posed by entities intent on fracturing the nation's unity, emphasizing vigilance. "We have to stay alert to those who want to weaken the country and break its unity," Modi cautioned. The Prime Minister also recounted several initiatives taken by his government to honor Netaji, including naming islands in the Andaman and Nicobar after him, installing his statue at India Gate, and commemorating his birthday as 'Parakram Diwas' to keep his memory and contributions alive.

Modi's call to action was not just a remembrance of Bose's contributions but also a rallying cry for national unity and progress, aligning with the vision of a developed India.

Yogi Adityanath's Dare to Kejriwal: Take a Dip in Yamuna

AAP turning Delhi into a "garbage dump," illegal infiltrators were given Aadhaar cards in Delhi. Noida-Ghaziabad roads are better than Delhi's.

TPN Correspondent |

New Delhi: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched a sharp attack on former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, accusing him of turning the Yamuna into a "dirty drain." Speaking at a poll rally in Kirari, Delhi, Yogi questioned Kejriwal's moral courage, challenging him to take a holy dip in the Yamuna along with his ministers.

The UP CM highlighted his recent participation in the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj, where he and his ministers took a holy dip at the Sangam. Drawing a contrast,

Yogi accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government of neglecting the Yamuna and converting it into a polluted river. Yogi alleged that the AAP has failed in providing basic facilities, including clean drinking water, sanitation, and proper roads, to Delhi residents. He also accused the party of aiding illegal activities, such as issuing Aadhaar cards to Bangladeshi infiltrators. "These Bangladeshi infiltrators are being given Aadhaar cards through Aadhaar-making machines in the houses of Aam Aadmi Party leaders," he claimed. Yogi further said that Delhi



has been reduced to a "garbage dump" under Kejriwal's leadership and added that the roads in Delhi were no match for those in Noida and Ghaziabad. The UP CM emphasized that Uttar Pradesh is now seen as a model for development while accusing Kejriwal of failing to address Delhi's basic issues. The Delhi Assembly elections are scheduled to be held in a single phase on February 5, with the vote counting on February 8.

Kejriwal Claims Attack on His Car, Blames Amit Shah

Delhi Police has become the personal army of BJP," says Kejriwal.

TPN Correspondent |

New Delhi: Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has alleged that his car was attacked during a public meeting in Hari Nagar on Thursday. He accused Union Home Minister Amit Shah of orchestrating the attack and claimed that the Delhi Police facilitated the incident by allowing opposition supporters to enter the meeting venue.

In a post on X, Kejriwal stated, "Today in Hari Nagar, the police allowed the opposition candidate's men to enter my public meeting and then attacked my car. All this is happening on the orders of Amit Shah. Amit Shah has made the Delhi Police the



personal army of the BJP." Kejriwal also targeted the Election Commission of India, questioning its inability to take effective action. He highlighted the repeated attacks on AAP leaders

during the campaign, raising concerns about electoral fairness.

Last week, AAP had alleged that Kejriwal's vehicle was attacked with bricks and stones by BJP supporters during a campaign in the New Delhi constituency. However, BJP leader Parvesh Verma denied the claims and alleged that Kejriwal's car hit two youngsters, who were later hospitalized.

Delhi is set to vote for its 70-member Assembly on February 5, with AAP aiming for a third consecutive term, BJP striving to regain power after 26 years, and Congress attempting to stay relevant in the capital's politics.



Rahul & Priyanka Deliberately Missing to Help AAP?



TPN Correspondent

New Delhi: Speculation is rife that Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra might be holding back from campaigning to not split the Muslim vote, thereby indirectly aiding the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. This theory gained traction after Rahul Gandhi cancelled his mega rally in Mustafabad citing ill health, as announced by Delhi Congress Chief Devender Yadav. Yadav dismissed these speculations, asserting, "These are rumours. We are fighting the election independently." He confirmed that Rahul Gandhi's rally scheduled for Madipur

on Friday would proceed as planned, following the cancellation of two out of three planned rallies starting January 22. However, the timing and pattern of these cancellations have fueled discussions about a possible strategic move. Yadav accused a collusion between AAP and BJP, stating, "When the Congress does not hold a rally then the 'elder brother' says we are helping the 'younger brother' while the 'young brother' alleges that we are not supporting their fight against the 'big brother'." The Congress had planned for Rahul Gandhi to ramp up the campaign post-Republic Day, with both him and Priyanka

Gandhi expected to intensify their efforts. Yet, the absence of these key figures from the campaign trail has led to questions about their motives, especially in light of Congress's political drought in Delhi, failing to win any seats in the last two Assembly elections. Former Delhi Minister Narendra Nath had earlier highlighted that Rahul Gandhi's campaign would focus on exposing the shortcomings of both the AAP government and BJP, alongside advocating for Dalit rights. With the election results due on February 8, the Congress's strategy or perceived lack thereof could significantly impact the political landscape in Delhi.

Delhi HC Seeks NIA's Response on Rashid Engineer's Bail Plea

TPN Correspondent

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Thursday issued a notice to the National Investigating Agency (NIA) on Jammu and Kashmir MP Rashid Engineer's plea to expedite proceedings on his bail application in a terror funding case. A bench of Justice Vikas Mahajan directed the NIA to file a status report and scheduled the next hearing for January 30. Engineer, an independent MP from Baramulla, approached the High Court after a designated NIA court refused to decide on his bail application on December 23, citing jurisdictional issues. The MP argued that the special judge, who had reserved the bail order in August 2024, later declined to rule on it, claiming a lack of

authority following Engineer's election to Parliament.

- **Delhi HC issues notice to NIA on MP Rashid Engineer's bail plea.**

- **Engineer's bail order was reserved in August 2024 but later declined by the NIA court.**

- **He was arrested in 2019 under UAPA in a terror funding case.**

In his plea, Engineer sought either a decision on his bail application by the High Court or directions for the trial court to adjudicate. Represented by senior advocate N. Hariharan, Engineer argued that the city court's inaction left him without legal recourse and impacted his constituency's representation in Parliament. The NIA, represented by Spe-

cial Public Prosecutor Akshai Malik, stated that a request had been made to designate the NIA court as the MP/MLA court to address jurisdictional concerns.

Arrested in 2019 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Engineer was charged by the NIA for allegedly using illicit funds to incite unrest in Jammu and Kashmir. The chargesheet also named Hafiz Saeed, Yasin Malik, Syed Salahuddin, and others, accusing them of collaborating with Pakistan's ISI to orchestrate attacks in the region.

The case also prompted a money laundering investigation by the Enforcement Directorate, linked to the alleged terror funding.

Pilfering for Pilgrimage

Man Burglarizes Three Homes for Kumbh Mela Journey



TPN Correspondent

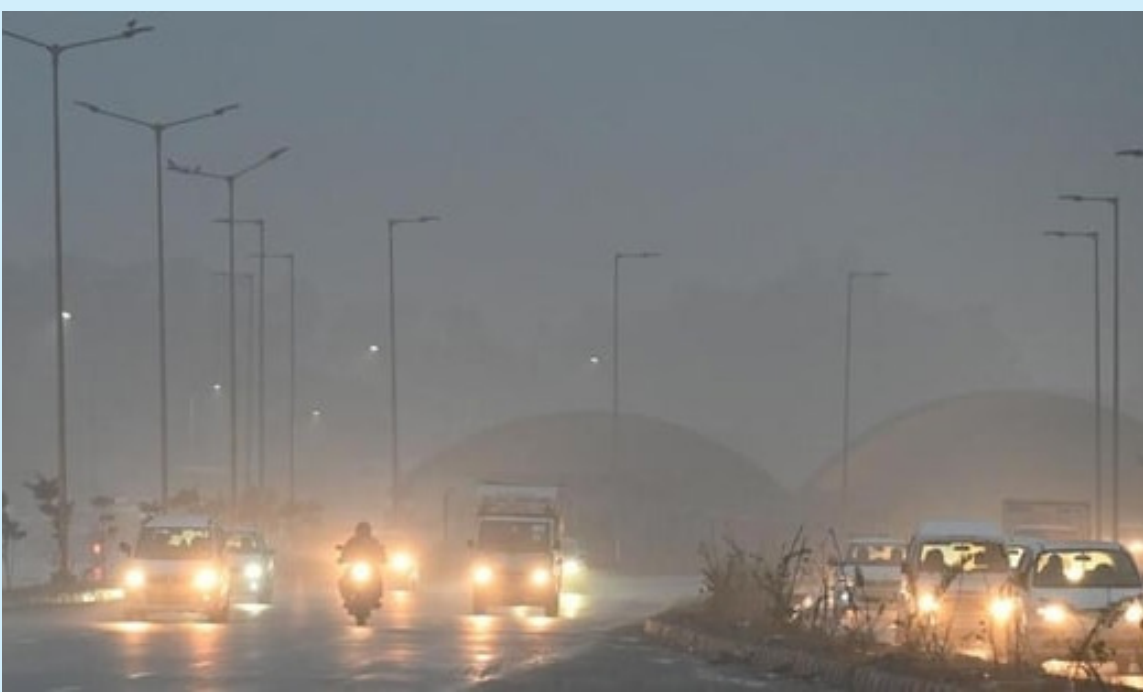
New Delhi: In a desperate bid to attend the sacred Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, a Delhi man named Arvind, alias Bhola, turned to burglary. On January 17, he raided three residences in Dabri's Rajpuri, making off with valuables and jewelry to bankroll his spiritual expedition.

Upon his capture, Arvind revealed to the Dwarka burglary cell of the Delhi Police that his aim was to scrape together enough funds for the pilgrimage with friends. He painted a picture of his family's hardships, with his father laboring and his mother cleaning houses, supporting a brood of seven siblings, which left little room

for such lavish plans without resorting to crime.

This wasn't Arvind's first dance with the law; he has a rap sheet of 16 theft and burglary charges, with his criminal escapades beginning in 2020. His choice of crime has been attributed to his battle with drug addiction, exacerbated by his family's dire financial straits.

Delhi Pollution Eases: GRAP-3 Restrictions Revoked in NCR



TPN Correspondent

New Delhi: The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) revoked Stage 3 restrictions of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-NCR on Thursday as the capital's air quality index (AQI) improved to the 'very poor' category.

Delhi recorded an AQI of 289 on January 17, marking a significant improvement of 61 points below the threshold for invoking Stage 3 restrictions as per Supreme Court guidelines. The CAQM

noted that favorable weather, including overnight showers and strong winds, contributed to the improvement and predicted the AQI would remain at the lower end of the 'very poor' category in the coming days.

- **Delhi's AQI recorded at 289, leading to the withdrawal of GRAP-3 restrictions.**

- **Weather forecasts suggest continued improvement in air quality.**

- **Minimum temperature at 11°C, 3.5°C above normal, with light rain likely.**

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported light rain and cloudy conditions in Delhi on Wednesday night, with more showers expected on Thursday. The minimum temperature was recorded at 11°C, above the seasonal average, while the maximum is forecasted to reach around 22°C.

Experts anticipate a gradual improvement in air quality if the favorable weather patterns persist, providing relief to residents grappling with pollution.

Passenger traffic sees 8.19% growth; IndiGo leads in on-time performance.



TPN Correspondent

New Delhi: Domestic airlines carried 16.13 million passengers in 2024, marking an 8.19% increase compared to 15.20 million in 2023, according to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The data highlights a steady recovery in air travel post-pandemic. IndiGo emerged as the leader in on-time performance (OTP)

across major airports—Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad—with 73.4%, followed by Air India at 67.6% and Akasa Air at 62.7%.

- **IndiGo tops on-time performance with 73.4%, followed by Air India (67.6%).**

- **SpiceJet recorded the highest cancellation rate among major airlines at 1.81%.**

- **44.4% of flight cancellations**

attributed to miscellaneous reasons.

Among larger airlines, SpiceJet registered the highest cancellation rate at 1.81%, with IndiGo following at 1.17%. Overall, the cancellation rate for domestic airlines stood at 1.07% in December 2024. Among regional carriers, Fly Big saw a staggering 19.23% cancellation rate, while Alliance Air and IndiaOne Air recorded 4.35% and 2.83%, respectively.

DGCA attributed flight cancellations to various factors, including miscellaneous reasons (44.4%), weather (27.2%), technical issues (20.8%), operational challenges (6.4%), and commercial reasons (1.3%). Passenger complaints during December totaled 817, translating to approximately 0.55 complaints per 10,000 passengers. Fly Big, SpiceJet, and Alliance Air faced the highest number of grievances, primarily related to baggage (25.8%), refunds (21.3%), and customer service (7.7%).



Delhi Election

Party Turncoats Hold Key to Government Formation

Defections create new dynamics in Delhi's triangular electoral battle

TPN Correspondent New Delhi: Party turncoats are expected to play a decisive role in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections as prominent leaders from AAP, BJP, and Congress have switched sides in a bid to reshape their political futures. Around 20 such defectors are contesting this election, potentially altering the balance of power in the 70-member Assembly.

The three major players – AAP, BJP, and Congress – have strategically fielded these newcomers, despite facing resistance from loyal workers within their respective parties. Among the significant defections, AAP has welcomed six former BJP leaders, including

Pravesh Ratan, who is contesting from Patel Nagar against BJP's Raaj Kumar Anand. Similarly, Congress defectors Veer Singh Dhangra, Sumesh Shokeen, and Zubair Ahmed have secured AAP tickets.

The BJP has also capitalized on defections by fielding ex-Congress leaders like Arvinder Singh Lovely from Gandhi Nagar and Kailash Gahlot from Bijwasan. Former Congress MLAs Raj Kumar Chauhan and Neeraj Basoya are also in the fray under the BJP banner.

Meanwhile, Congress has managed to pull in outgoing AAP MLAs like Dharam Pal Lakra, now contesting from Mundka, and Abdul Rehman from Seelampur. Both leaders

joined Congress recently and were promptly rewarded with tickets.

Defections have created intriguing matchups, including Patel Nagar's Pravesh Ratan (AAP) and Raaj Kumar Anand (BJP), who faced off in 2020 as members of opposing parties. Similar rivalries are evident in Kirari and Chhatarpur, where former allies and rivals clash once again.

As Delhi prepares for a triangular contest on February 5, the performance of these defectors will be pivotal. The counting of votes on February 8 will reveal whether these political gambles pay off, reshaping the city's governance.

AAP Broke All Records of Corruption in 10 Years, Says BJP Chief JP Nadda

TPN Correspondent

New Delhi: BJP President JP Nadda launched a scathing attack on AAP and its leader Arvind Kejriwal, accusing the party of setting unprecedented records of corruption during its decade-long rule in Delhi. Speaking at a public meeting in Uttam Nagar ahead of the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls, Nadda alleged that the AAP government failed to deliver on its promises and was mired in a series of scandals. "If a national-level competition for lying were held, Kejriwal would undoubtedly come first," Nadda said, accusing the Delhi Chief Minister of misleading the public with false claims.

Nadda referred to multiple controversies involving the

AAP, including the excise policy case and allegations of financial misconduct in the Waqf Board. He claimed that the party betrayed every section of society, including minorities, citing an alleged ₹100 crore scam in the Waqf Board. The BJP leader highlighted the alleged mismanagement in the Delhi Jal Board, which he claimed was involved in a ₹28,000 crore scam, leaving citizens dependent on tanker mafias. Nadda also criticized the AAP's promise of cleaning the Yamuna river, alleging a ₹7,000-8,000 crore scam related to the project.

He accused the AAP of exploiting funds meant for education, citing a ₹1,300 crore classroom construction scam, and alleged that Kejriwal obstructed

central government schemes that could have benefited Delhi residents.

Nadda further argued that Delhi's development over the last decade was driven by the BJP-led central government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, not by AAP's governance. With Delhi Assembly elections scheduled for February 5, the BJP is intensifying its campaign to wrest control from AAP, which is aiming for a third consecutive term after its landslide victories in 2015 and 2020.

The elections will determine the future of Delhi, Nadda emphasized, urging voters to hold AAP accountable for its alleged corruption and failed promises.

Parvesh Verma Serves ₹50-Crore Defamation Notices to Kejriwal, Mann

Demands apology for alleged false allegations within 48 hours



TPN Correspondent

New Delhi: BJP leader Parvesh Verma on Wednesday served defamation notices of ₹50 crore each to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo Arvind Kejriwal. Verma accused them of making "false and misleading" allegations against him through statements and social media posts.

The legal notice demands an unconditional written apology

from Kejriwal and Mann within 48 hours. Failure to comply, Verma warned, would lead to legal action in a competent court.

The notice claims that Verma was defamed through "baseless tweets and re-tweets" that distorted facts to harm his reputation. "By serving this legal notice, I hereby call upon you to pay damages of ₹100 crores (₹50 crores each) to my client and tender an unconditional apology within 48 hours," the

notice reads.

Earlier, Verma stated that, should he win the case, the awarded amount would be used for development projects in his New Delhi constituency. He is contesting the upcoming February 5 Assembly polls from the constituency, where Kejriwal is his primary opponent.

No immediate response was available from either Kejriwal or Mann regarding the notice.

AAP Workers Facing Harassment by BJP, Claims Atishi

Demands EC action against BJP candidate Ramesh Bidhuri for alleged intimidation

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate from Kalkaji, Atishi, lodged a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday, accusing BJP workers of "harassment and intimidation" against her party volunteers in the Kalkaji constituency.

In her letter to the poll body, Atishi highlighted seven instances of alleged intimidation by BJP workers since January 15. She specifically accused BJP's Kalkaji candidate, Ramesh Bidhuri, and his associates of leading these acts. "BJP workers, led by their candidate Ramesh Bidhuri, have been openly hurling abuses and physically intimidating AAP workers in the constituency," Atishi alleged. She urged the EC to initiate criminal pro-



ceedings against Bidhuri for his role in the alleged harassment.

The BJP and Ramesh Bidhuri have not yet responded to Atishi's accusations. According to her, the "nuisance" created by BJP workers has escalated since the nominations were filed.

Calling for urgent action, Atishi stated, "As a civil society,

we must not tolerate such behavior. It is your responsibility to ensure that elections in Delhi are held in a free and fair manner."

She also demanded the arrest of identified BJP workers and the deployment of paramilitary forces in the area to prevent further disruptions and ensure a peaceful election process.

BJP's Tarun Chugh Calls Atishi a 'Rubber Stamp CM'



TPN Correspondent, Delhi: BJP leader Tarun Chugh on Thursday launched a sharp attack on Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, calling her a "rubber stamp CM." Reacting to her allegations against the Delhi Police, Chugh criticized the AAP government, accusing it of corruption and losing public trust.

"Rubber stamp CM Atishi has forgotten that her party is not even considering her tenure. She is a sitting CM, but her party is not asking for votes in her name. AAP has failed and is drenched in corruption.

They have lost their ground, and the people have decided that Kejriwal has to go," Chugh stated.

Earlier, Atishi wrote to the Election Officer of Delhi, alleging that Delhi Police officials were pressuring AAP volunteers to sign false statements regarding complaints of intimidation by BJP workers on January 21 and 22. The letter also claimed that investigating officers attempted to dictate statements to AAP volunteers, pressuring them to deny any violence or intimidation took place.

Atishi demanded the immediate transfer of the accused officials, including SHO Dharamveer, Inspector Sushil Sharma, and Constable Jai Bhagwan, alleging their collusion in closing the case. She expressed concerns about the Delhi Police's impartiality, accusing them of rushing to close the complaint instead of conducting a fair investigation.

As the Delhi Assembly elections approach, tensions between AAP and BJP continue to escalate, with both parties trading allegations amidst an intense campaign for votes.

Manoj Tiwari Highlights BJP's Focus on 51% Vote Share in Delhi Polls

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Manoj Tiwari, a prominent figure in Delhi's Purvanchali politics and member of the BJP's election management committee, has expressed confidence in the party crossing the majority mark in the upcoming Delhi assembly elections. Tiwari, who led the BJP campaign during the 2020

elections, emphasized a focused strategy this time, viewing the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress as a combined challenge.

Reflecting on the 2020 results, Tiwari pointed out that while BJP's vote share increased from 32% to 40%, the Congress's sharp decline from 17% to 4% was a factor that hampered their chances of forming a government.

Tiwari stressed that the BJP's strategy now includes treating Congress and AAP as a single unit due to their recent political alignment. "We're contesting this as a two-party poll and aiming for a 51% vote share to form the government," he said. He also noted the growing importance of Purvanchali votes in Delhi politics, a constituency he has been instrumental in mobilizing for the BJP.

PM Modi Pays Tribute to Bal Thackeray on 99th Birth Anniversary

Remembers Shiv Sena founder's contributions to Maharashtra and Indian pride.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray on his 99th birth anniversary, lauding his unwavering dedication to public welfare and the development of Maharashtra. In a post on X, Modi wrote, "He is widely respected and remembered for his commitment to public welfare and towards Maharashtra's development. He was uncompromising when it came to his core beliefs and always contributed towards enhancing the pride of Indian culture."

Bal Thackeray, a staunch proponent of Hindutva, was instrumental in intertwining the ideology with the notion of "Marathi pride," which became the cornerstone of the Shiv Sena's political agenda. Under his leadership, the party grew into a dominant force in Maharashtra, particularly in Mumbai, where it played a critical role in shaping the city's political and social fabric.

PM Modi highlights Thackeray's dedication to Hindutva and Maharashtra's progress.

Thackeray's legacy shaped by his fusion of nativist and nationalist ideologies.

Shiv Sena founder remembered for championing Marathi pride and Indian culture.

Thackeray's political journey began with his background as a cartoonist, which he



utilized to voice issues of regional identity and local employment. In 1966, he founded the Shiv Sena to address the grievances of Marathi-speaking communities, rallying them under the banner of cultural and linguistic pride. Over time, his leadership expanded the party's reach, making it a significant player in Maharashtra's political landscape.

Known for his fiery oratory and steadfast positions, Thackeray was revered by supporters for championing the rights of the common man and Marathi people while

staying committed to a broader nationalist vision. His legacy continues to influence Maharashtra's politics, with the Shiv Sena playing a pivotal role in state and national governance under various factions and alliances.

As the nation commemorates Thackeray's contributions, his vision for a culturally proud and economically robust Maharashtra remains a guiding light for many. The tributes on his 99th birth anniversary reflect the lasting impact of his leadership on Indian politics and society.



Wayanad rehabilitation: No assistance from Centre yet, says CM Vijayan

Rs 712.98 crore from CMDRF to aid survivors as state seeks additional funds

TPN Correspondent | Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan expressed concern over the lack of central assistance for the rehabilitation of Wayanad landslide survivors, despite the disaster being declared of "severe nature." Addressing the Legislative Assembly on Thursday, the CM announced that Rs 712.98 crore from the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund (CMDRF) will be utilized to aid the survivors.

The state initially demanded Rs 2,221 crore from the Centre for rehabilitation efforts. However, Vijayan noted that the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) report indicates that additional funds will be required. "I have written to MPs across the country to contribute up to Rs 1 crore from their MP funds," he added.

Kerala seeks Rs 2,221 crore from Centre for rehabilitation.

Rs 15 lakh to be provided to those opting out of proposed townships.

Opposition demands clarity on housing fund and treatment cost for survivors.

The CM assured that rehabilitation efforts would be expedited, including Rs 15 lakh allocations for individuals preferring to live outside the planned townships. Addressing opposition concerns, Vijayan promised immediate action to resolve delays in disbursing treatment costs to severely injured survivors and to finalize the Rs 30 lakh allocation for proposed housing.

Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan highlighted the uncertainty surrounding housing costs and emphasized the need for decisive steps to conclude the rehabilitation process.

As Kerala continues its rehabilitation efforts, the lack of central support has sparked debate, with the state government urging collective contributions from MPs nationwide to support Wayanad's recovery.



Tamil Nadu CM Stalin Lays Foundation for Open-Air Museum at Keeladi

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Chief Minister M K Stalin on Thursday laid the foundation stone for an open-air museum at Keeladi, the renowned Sangam-era archaeological site, currently in its tenth phase of excavation. The museum, with an estimated cost of ₹17 crore, will exhibit key finds such as brick structures, ring wells, and other archaeological discoveries, further cementing Keeladi's importance in understanding Tamil history.

In addition to the open-air museum, Stalin inaugurated a website dedicated to the Keeladi excavations and released a report titled 'Antiquity of Iron', which hypothesizes that Tamil Nadu's Iron Age began 5,300 years ago, dating back to the first quarter of the third millennium BCE.

₹17 crore open-air museum planned for Sangam-era site Keeladi. CM Stalin highlights Tamil Nadu's Iron Age as starting 5,300 years ago.

Gangaikondacholapuram to house a grand museum for Chola-era artefacts.

As part of the state's initiatives to preserve and celebrate Tamil heritage, Stalin also broke ground for a grand museum at Gangaikondacholapuram in Ariyalur district. The site, built by Rajendra-I in honor of his father Raja Raja Cholan, holds historical significance for the Chola Kingdom, which extended its influence as far as China centuries ago.

Speaking at the event, Stalin emphasized the government's commitment to showcasing the ancient history of Tamils through scientific methods. "The history of the Indian subcontinent should be rewritten from the Tamil landscape," he asserted, underlining the rich contributions of Tamil civilization to the region's heritage.

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah Rejects BJP's Allegations as Politically Motivated

Counters claims of fund misuse and defends governance priorities.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah dismissed accusations by BJP state president BY Vijayendra that his government misused welfare funds for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Siddaramaiah labeled the allegations as false and politically motivated, aimed at undermining his administration.

Vijayendra had alleged that Rs 87 crore from the Karnataka State Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation was illegally transferred ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. He further criticized the Congress government for delaying the appointment of a chairperson for the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, rendering it ineffective in addressing the grievances of oppressed communities.

BJP accuses Congress of misusing Rs 87



crore meant for SC/ST welfare. Siddaramaiah dismisses allegations as false and politically driven.

CM denies intra-party rifts over leadership change, citing high command's role. In a post on X, Vijayendra revealed that a public interest litigation (PIL) had been filed in the High Court regarding the delay in appointments. He claimed the court had issued notices to the government on

this matter.

Addressing intra-party disputes within the Congress over leadership, Siddaramaiah clarified that any decision on the Chief Minister's post would be made by the party's high command. This comes amidst speculation fueled by aspirations expressed by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi.

Siddaramaiah also explained his absence from the World Economic Forum in Davos, stating he prioritized preparations for the state budget over international engagements. His decision to skip the forum for two consecutive years underscores his focus on state governance.

As Karnataka's political landscape heats up, Siddaramaiah's rebuttals reflect a strategy to counter BJP's criticism while maintaining internal party unity ahead of critical governance milestones.

BJP's Annamalai Calls IUML MP's Actions 'Disrespectful' at Temple, Kani Disagrees

TPN Correspondent | Tamilnadu

Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai launched a sharp critique against Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) leader and Lok Sabha MP from Ramanathapuram, Navas Kani, accusing him of consuming non-vegetarian food at the sacred Thiruparankundram Subramanya Swamy hill in Madurai. The hill is home to the revered Murugan temple and the Sikandar Badusha Dargah, making it a site of religious significance.

Calling the alleged incident "deeply unfortunate," Annamalai demanded Kani's dismissal. "This MP went up the hill and ate non-vegetarian food. This is very unfortunate. Appeasement politics have taken hold. He created a law and order problem," Annamalai told India Today.

BJP's Annamalai accuses MP of disrespecting temple sanctity. IUML's Navas Kani denies allegations, claims mediation role. Sacred hill hosts both Murugan temple and Sikandar Badusha Dargah.

Annamalai further alleged that Kani's actions were an affront to the Murugan temple's sanctity and an attempt to foment division. "This is not only completely wrong but also a religious riot," he wrote on X.

Kani, however, denied consuming non-vegetarian food, stating, "I haven't consumed non-vegetarian food, someone else did." He explained that his visit to the hill was to mediate between clashing parties during a standoff over animal transportation for sacrifice. "Him saying I consumed non-vegetarian food is wrong," Kani clarified.

Indian Foreign Secretary to Visit China for Key Talks on Bilateral Relations

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri will visit China on January 26-27 to explore ways to strengthen ties between the two nations. Discussions with the Chinese Vice Minister will focus on political, economic, and people-to-people relations, alongside critical topics such as visa policies, direct flight routes, and economic cooperation.

The visit follows recent efforts to ease tensions between India and China, including National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi last month. Doval emphasized the need for a fair framework to resolve the boundary dispute while maintaining a broader political perspective on bilateral relations.

Misri's visit follows NSA Ajit Doval's talks with China's Wang Yi.

India and China agreed to resume patrolling along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

Both nations stress that normalcy hinges on peace in border areas.

This diplomatic engagement comes after a milestone agreement in October 2024, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met for the first time in five years during the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. The agreement enabled patrolling to resume along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, marking de-escalation in a region fraught with tensions since the 2020 Galwan Valley clash.



Maha Kumbh

Pilgrim Count Surpasses 100 million

Massive Turnout at World's Largest Religious Gathering. 30 lakh people bathed on Thursday alone.

TPN Correspondent

Prayagraj: The ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj has reached a significant milestone, with over 10 crore pilgrims having taken a dip at the Triveni Sangam as of Thursday at 12 PM, according to the Uttar Pradesh government. This massive religious gathering, which commenced on January 13th and will continue until February 26th, has seen a consistent influx of devotees seeking spiritual merit.

The Uttar Pradesh government, which is hosting the event, earlier estimated that over 45 crore people would visit the Maha Kumbh this year. The enthusiasm and fervor among the devotees remain high, with people from across the country and the world arriving in large numbers to participate in the sacred dip. On Thursday alone, 30 lakh people, including 10 lakh 'kalpvasis' and other devotees, had bathed at the Sangam by 12 PM.

The highest number of pilgrims, around 3.5 crore, bathed during the Makar Sankranti festival, while over 1.7 crore participated in the Paush Purnima festival. Despite the large influx of devotees, daily life in Prayagraj has largely continued as usual. The district administration has implemented restrictions only on major bathing festival days, allowing schools, offices, and businesses to operate normally.



Jalgaon Train Accident Death Toll Rises to 13, Eight Bodies Identified



TPN Correspondent Jalgaon: The tragedy at Jalgaon, where passengers of the Mumbai-bound Pushpak Express were fatally struck by the Karnataka Express, has now claimed 13 lives. On Thursday, police reported the recovery of a headless body along the railway tracks, escalating the death toll from the previous count.

The incident occurred when passengers, alarmed by what they thought was a fire, disembarked from the Pushpak Express after someone pulled the alarm chain. This led to

them being on the tracks when the Bengaluru-Delhi Karnataka Express passed through the area near Mahaji and Pardhade stations in Jalgaon district, Maharashtra, around 4:45 pm on Wednesday. Special Inspector General of Police Dattatraya Karale confirmed that eight of the 13 bodies have been identified, with two identifications made through Aadhaar cards. Among the identified, four were from Nepal, according to Jalgaon district information officer Yuvraj Patil. The accident left 15 passengers

injured, with 10 currently under treatment; nine at Pachora civil hospital and one in Jalgaon city. Those with minor injuries have been discharged. The Pushpak Express eventually reached its destination, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai, at approximately 1:20 am on Thursday. Senior railway officials, including the Central Railway's general manager, inspected the accident site and visited the hospitals treating the injured. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, from Davos, Switzerland, clarified that the confusion arose from a mistaken perception of smoke, leading to the unfortunate outcome. He has announced financial aid of Rs 5 lakh for the kin of each deceased. Additionally, the Railway Board has offered ex-gratia payments: Rs 1.5 lakh for each deceased, Rs 50,000 for those with grievous injuries, and Rs 5,000 for minor injuries.

Maharashtra Minister Doubts Saif Ali Khan's Stabbing Incident

TPN Correspondent Mumbai:

In a surprising twist to the recent stabbing of Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan, Maharashtra Ports Minister Nitesh Rane has questioned the authenticity of the attack. Khan, 54, was reportedly stabbed six times in his home last week, including one wound near his spine, but Rane believes otherwise.

"He accused Mr Khan - whom he seemed to refer to as 'garbage' - of 'dancing while walking' out of the hospital, and ranted, 'I doubted if he had been stabbed... or if he was acting,'" Rane stated.

The minister further commented on immigration issues, saying, "Look at what Bangladeshis are doing in Mumbai. They entered Saif Ali Khan's house. Earlier they used to stand at road crossings... now they have started entering houses. Maybe he came to take him (Mr Khan) away. It is good... garbage should be taken away."

Rane's criticism extended to political figures, alleging selective sympathy: "Rane also

hit out at NCP leaders Jitendra Awhad and Supriya Sule, accusing them of showing concern only 'whenever any Khan, like Shah Rukh Khan or Saif Ali Khan, gets hurt'." He pointed out, "... everyone starts talking about it then. When a Hindu actor like Sushant Singh Rajput is tortured, no one comes forward to say



anything... that Mumbra's Jeetuddin (a crude reference to Mr Awhad) and Baramati's Tai (Ms Sule) did not come forward to say anything... Have you ever seen them worrying about any Hindu artist?" Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar responded to Rane's remarks by suggesting, "I don't

know what he said... but if he has something on his mind, he can tell the Home Department." He also confirmed the arrest of the accused, Shariful Shehzad, a Bangladeshi national, explaining that Shehzad might have been attempting to steal money to return home.

Sanjay Nirupam, formerly of Congress and now with Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena faction, mirrored the skepticism: "... the way Saif came out... it seemed nothing happened six days ago."

The incident has stirred public and social media speculation, with many questioning the quick recovery from such severe wounds and discrepancies in the identity of the accused. Shehzad's lawyer has denied the allegations, asserting no evidence has been found against his client, who reportedly confessed to the crime. As the investigation continues, the case remains under intense scrutiny, with many awaiting further developments.

Ex-Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat's Name 'Missing' From Voters List

TPN Correspondent Dehradun: Congress leader and former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat encountered an unexpected obstacle when he arrived to cast his vote in Dehradun's municipal elections on Thursday morning. Rawat, a resident of Dehradun's Niranjapur area since 2009, discovered his name was missing from the voter list.

"I have been waiting since morning... but my name was not found at the polling station where I voted in the Lok Sabha election," Rawat told PTI, hinting at political manipulation by saying, "I should have been more alert... knowing they are involved in adding and removing names from the list."

Upon complaining to the State Election Commission, Rawat was informed that a malfunctioning computer server prevented any immediate resolution, effectively barring him from voting. This incident occurs amidst local body elections in Uttarakhand, where polls are being conducted for 11 municipal corporations, 43



municipal councils, and 46 Nagar Panchayats. Meanwhile, Uttarakhand's Chief Minister, Pushkar Singh Dhami, urged the state's electorate to support BJP candidates, emphasizing the party's track record. "I appeal to all the people of Uttarakhand; you have always stood by the BJP and (helped) form a double-engine government. You made Narendra Modi the Prime Minister, again. I appeal to all of you... please make all BJP candidates win and help form a triple-engine government," he stated, linking voter turnout to the state's political achievements.

Punjab Police Withdraws Additional Security for Arvind Kejriwal

TPN Correspondent Patiala: Punjab Police has withdrawn the additional security provided to former Delhi Chief Minister and Z-plus protectee Arvind Kejriwal. The decision follows objections raised by Delhi Police and a formal complaint to the Election Commission.

Director General of Punjab Police, Gaurav Yadav, stated, "We regularly receive threat reports concerning CM Bhagwant Mann and Arvind Kejriwal, which we share with concerned agencies. Based on directives from the Delhi Police and Election Commission, we have withdrawn Punjab Police's security component for Kejriwal."

political tensions ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, where Kejriwal is contesting from the New Delhi constituency. He will face BJP's Parvesh Verma and Congress' Sandeep Dikshit in a high-stakes battle.

On January 18, a stone was reportedly thrown at Kejriwal's car during campaigning, an incident AAP attributed to BJP workers. BJP, however, claimed the car hit two of its workers. Earlier, intelligence reports suggested a possible threat from a pro-Khalistan group, prompting Delhi Police to review Kejriwal's security arrangements.

• **Punjab Police withdraws its additional security detail for Kejriwal.**

• **Kejriwal retains a Z-plus security cover of 63 personnel, including CAPF officers.**

• **The move comes as Delhi prepares for assembly polls on February 5.**

Kejriwal's Z-plus security arrangement includes 63 personnel, comprising a pilot, escort teams, close protection staff, and search-and-frisk units, along with 15 armed personnel from the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).

The decision comes amidst heightened

Arrest Warrant for RGV in Cheque Bounce Case

TPN Correspondent Mumbai: Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma, known for films like 'Satya' and 'Rangeela', has been sentenced to three months in prison by the Andheri Magistrate Court in a cheque bounce case that has lingered for seven years. The court pronounced the verdict on Tuesday, but Varma was absent, prompting the issuance of a non-bailable warrant (NBW) for his arrest.

Varma released a statement addressing the court's decision, explaining, "With regard to the news about me and Andheri court, I want to clarify that it is to do with a 7-year-old case of Rs 2 lakh 38 thousand amount, relating to

an ex-employee. It is not about settling the meager amount but is about refusing to be exploited in the attempts to fabricate. Anyway, that's all I can say for now as it's in court."

The case stems from a cheque issued by Varma's firm that bounced, an offense under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, which deals with dishonored cheques due to insufficient funds or exceeding arranged limits. Alongside the jail term, Varma has been directed to compensate the complainant with Rs 3.72 lakh within three months, or face an additional three months of simple imprisonment.

Case Background

The legal action was initiated in 2018 by Shree, a company represented by Maheshchandra Mishra, against Varma's firm. The director, who has dealt with financial difficulties, particularly during the Covid-19 period when he sold his office, was granted bail in June 2022 upon posting a personal bond and cash security of Rs 5,000. However, Magistrate YP Pujari noted during sentencing that Varma was not eligible for any time set-off under Section 428 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, since he had not been in custody during the trial's duration.

31,000 People Ordered to Evacuate After Wildfire Erupts Near Los Angeles

Ferocious flames engulf Castaic hills, spreading rapidly across 8,000 acres

TPN Correspondent
Castaic, United States

A new wildfire erupted north of Los Angeles on Wednesday, forcing 31,000 residents to evacuate. The blaze, dubbed the Hughes Fire, spread rapidly near Castaic Lake, consuming over 8,000 acres in just a few hours and threatening nearby communities.

Fueled by strong, dry Santa Ana winds, the wildfire sent plumes of smoke and embers across the region, intensifying fears of further spread. The fire broke out just as Los Angeles County was still reeling from two previous deadly blazes that claimed over two dozen lives and destroyed thousands of structures.

Robert Jensen, from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, emphasized the importance of immediate evacuation. "We've seen the devastation caused by people failing to follow those orders in the Palisades and Eaton fires. If you've been issued an evacuation order, please get out," he said.

- **Over 31,000 residents around Castaic Lake evacuated as wildfire spread.**
- **Firefighters battled the blaze with helicopters, planes, and ground crews.**
- **Strong Santa Ana winds and**



dry conditions worsened the situation.

The fire's rapid growth disrupted traffic on the I5 freeway, a key route along the West Coast, with sections of the road closed. Evacuations also extended to the Pitchess Detention Center in Castaic, with 500 inmates moved to safer locations. Cal Fire officials described the conditions as highly volatile, with Brent Pascua noting,

"We're getting the winds, low humidities, and extremely dry brush. These factors are making the fire spread at an alarming rate." Helicopters and Super Scooper planes were deployed to douse the flames with water and retardant. However, meteorologist Daniel Swain warned of worsening conditions, predicting stronger winds that could hinder firefighting efforts and potentially drive the fire

into Ventura County. This wildfire highlights the increasing threat posed by climate change, with prolonged droughts and rising temperatures leaving landscapes dry and susceptible to fire even during the rainy season. Southern California, which typically receives rain in January, has seen no significant precipitation for eight months, further exacerbating the crisis.

"We Didn't Stop Trading," Says Jaishankar On Trade With Pakistan

TPN Correspondent | Washington

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar clarified India's position on trade with Pakistan, stating that New Delhi never ceased trading but that Islamabad unilaterally halted trade in 2019. Speaking at a press conference in Washington DC on Wednesday, he emphasized that Pakistan made the decision to stop trading, not India.

"We did not stop trading. Their administration made the decision in 2019 to not continue trading with us," Jaishankar said. He also reiterated India's concern regarding the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status, which India extended to Pakistan but was never reciprocated.

- **Jaishankar clarified that India did not halt trade; the decision came from Pakistan in 2019.**
- **India had extended MFN status to Pakistan, but Pakistan failed to reciprocate.**
- **Stressed strong trust and convergence in India-US relations, calling for bolder cooperation.**

The EAM added that there have been no recent discussions or initiatives on trade between the two nations. "Neither such talks have taken place with Pakistan regarding trade from our side, nor did they take any initiative from their side," he noted. Shifting focus to India-US relations, Jaishankar highlighted the growing trust and shared global vision between the two countries. "We have a very strong degree of trust today between India and the United States, a very high level of convergence of our interests," he stated.

He further remarked on the potential for the India-US partnership to serve national and global interests alike. "While we serve our national interest and build our bilateral partnership, there's a lot of good we can do on regional and global issues," he said. Jaishankar hinted at a more ambitious trajectory for India-US ties, calling for bolder and larger initiatives in the bilateral relationship.

Trump Redesignates Iran-Backed Houthi Rebels as Foreign Terrorist Organization

Reverses Biden's earlier move to ease restrictions on the Yemen-based group



TPN Correspondent | Washington

US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order reinstating the designation of Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels as a "foreign terrorist organization," the White House announced on Wednesday.

This decision reverses the earlier move by former President Joe Biden, who had lifted the designation in 2021 after assuming office. Biden had instead classified the group as a "specially designated global terrorist" en-

tire—a less severe designation that ensured humanitarian aid could continue flowing into Yemen, a country devastated by war. The reinstatement of the "foreign terrorist organization" label is expected to have significant implications for Yemen's conflict and international efforts to provide relief to its population. Trump's decision underscores his administration's hardline stance on Iran's influence in the region, as the Houthi rebels are widely recognized as Tehran's allies in the Yemeni conflict.

Trump Speaks on Pardons, Office Return, and Key Policies in First Interview Back

Ex-president addresses past decisions, challenges, and plans for America's future.

TPN Correspondent | Washington

US President Donald Trump sat for his first interview since returning to the White House, offering insights on a range of topics, including his predecessor Joe Biden's pardons, his return to office, and his stance on key issues such as immigration and TikTok. Speaking to Fox News' Sean Hannity, Trump defended his past decisions and outlined his vision for the nation.

Trump claimed he had been advised to pre-emptively pardon himself and others during his first term but chose not to. "I said I'm not going to pardon anybody, we didn't do anything wrong," he asserted, calling his supporters "incredible patriots."

Trump claims he rejected a self-pardon option during his first term. Plans to cut federal funds to sanctuary cities if necessary. Defends pardons of Capitol rioters, calling many "absolutely innocent." On returning to office, Trump reiterated unsubstantiated claims



about the 2020 election, stating, "We wouldn't have inflation, the Afghanistan disaster, October 7 in Israel, or the Ukraine war. But I believe this moment is bigger than if it were traditional." Despite challenges, he expressed optimism, saying America's problems are "all solvable."

Addressing illegal immigration, Trump suggested cutting off federal funding to sanctuary cities, emphasizing, "Sometimes that's the only thing you can do." On TikTok, he downplayed security concerns, questioning whether the app posed a significant threat, given its focus on

young users and entertainment content.

Trump also defended his pardons of nearly 1,600 January 6 Capitol rioters, stating, "Most of the people were absolutely innocent." The former president framed his actions as part of a broader effort to safeguard the nation's values and restore unity.

The interview marked Trump's renewed focus on his administration's priorities, signaling bold plans to address the country's pressing issues while defending his contentious decisions.

World Leaders Call for AI Regulation and Global Reforms at Davos

TPN Correspondent | Davos

Leaders from across the globe convened at the five-day World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting, urging action on artificial intelligence (AI) governance, climate change, and socio-economic reforms. The event concluded Friday, showcasing diverse initiatives aimed at addressing pressing global challenges. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez emphasized the need to curb misinformation and cyber harassment by reforming social media governance within the European Union. He called for stronger enforcement of the Digital Services Act and enhanced authority for the European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency, stating, "The values of the European Union are not for sale."

- **UN Secretary-General warns of unchecked AI and climate crisis risks.**
- **Spain pushes for stricter social media regulations across the EU.**
- **Congo announces the world's largest tropical forest reserve.**

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted AI and climate change as two critical global threats. While acknowledging AI's transformative potential, he warned of the risks posed by unregulated advancements and urged international collaboration under frameworks like the Global Digital Compact.

In a groundbreaking announcement, Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo revealed the creation of the Kivu to Kinshasa Green Corridor Reserve. Spanning 550,000 sq km, the reserve aims to protect tropical forests while supporting economic development and livelihoods for millions of citizens. As Malaysia prepares to lead the ASEAN union, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim expressed confidence in the region's future, promising collaborative efforts to drive growth and stability. The Davos summit underscored the importance of global unity in tackling shared challenges, with leaders emphasizing sustainable development, technological innovation, and proactive governance.

Imran Khan Ends Talks with Government After 14-Year Jail Term

TPN Correspondent | Islamabad

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan has ended reconciliatory talks with the government, just a week after being sentenced to 14 years in prison on graft charges. The talks, initiated last year to address political instability, have collapsed following the judgment in a high-profile land corruption case involving the former cricket star-turned-politician.

Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), confirmed the decision, citing unmet demands. "Khan has called off negotiations," PTI Chairman Gohar Khan told reporters after visiting the ex-PM in jail. Imran Khan had issued a seven-day ultimatum to the government, which expired without a response.

Talks aimed at stabilizing Pakistan collapse post-sentencing.

Imran Khan seeks judicial commissions to probe key incidents. PTI alleges unfair treatment in land corruption verdict.

The corruption case, Khan's most significant legal challenge, centers on allegations of financial impropriety. A real estate tycoon reportedly transferred land to a welfare institution run by Khan and his wife in exchange for illegal favors.

PTI's demands include forming judicial commissions to investigate events leading to Khan's August 2023 arrest and the violent protests that followed, particularly the May 9, 2023 rallies that saw his supporters vandalize public property. As political tensions deepen, Khan's decision to halt negotiations casts a shadow over efforts to restore stability in Pakistan, leaving the government and opposition at loggerheads amidst ongoing unrest.



India, US Aim to Schedule Modi-Trump Meeting in February

Strategic ties, trade, and migration on the agenda



TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

Indian and U.S. officials are working to arrange a February meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington. The discussions aim to strengthen strategic and economic ties, two Indian sources familiar with the talks told Reuters.

The potential meeting comes as both nations seek to address key bilateral issues. India, a vital partner in the U.S.'s strategy to counter China's influence, is keen to expand trade and secure smoother access to skilled worker visas for its citizens.

• **Diplomats from both nations are coordinating for a February meeting between Modi and Trump.**

• **Key topics include trade,**

skilled worker visas, and strategic collaboration.

• **The U.S. is India's largest trading partner, with two-way trade exceeding \$118 billion in 2023-24.**

President Trump's return to the White House has raised concerns in New Delhi over possible tariffs on Indian goods. Trump has previously criticized India's high tariffs on U.S. products and hinted at imposing reciprocal measures. However, sources indicate that India is prepared to offer trade concessions and incentives to attract U.S. investment.

The meeting could also address defense and technology collaboration, as well as migration issues. Trump, while promising stricter measures on illegal immigration, has signaled support for legal migration, particularly skilled

professionals. India remains the largest beneficiary of H-1B visas, critical for its vast pool of IT professionals.

The groundwork for this meeting is also tied to Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's recent visit to Washington, where he met U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The two discussed trade, migration, and ways to enhance bilateral ties.

President Trump's past interactions with PM Modi have been marked by grand public receptions, such as the "Howdy Modi" event in Houston in 2019 and his 2020 visit to Ahmedabad, which drew over 100,000 attendees. Officials hope the upcoming meeting will continue the positive momentum in India-U.S. relations.

Mr. Akula Chandra Sekhar Represents India at WEF 2025 in Davos

SARC Associates' partner meets Maharashtra CM Fadnavis, exploring global collaborations.



TPN Correspondent | Davos

India continues to lead global discussions on innovation and economic transformation at the 55th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, held from January 20 to 24. The event, themed "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age," highlights key areas such as reimagining growth, investing in people, and safeguarding the planet.

Mr. Akula Chandra Sekhar, a Chartered Accountant from Vizag and founding partner of SARC Associates, was among the prominent Indian representatives at the event. He was

joined by distinguished personalities like Mr. Sunil Kumar Gupta, Founder of the Indo European Business Forum, Mr. Rajendra Shankar Bagade, Director at the India Global Chamber of Businesses, and Mr. Sandeep Chatterjee, a global policy expert. Their presence underscored India's growing influence in global innovation and sustainability conversations.

The Indian delegation, led by Union Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw,

included key leaders such as Shri K. Rammohan Naidu, Shri Chirag Paswan, and Shri Jayant Chaudhary. Their mission focused on showcasing India's advancements in technology, industrial growth, and economic opportunities.

A significant highlight of Mr. Sekhar's visit was his meeting with Maharashtra Chief Minister Shri Devendra Fadnavis. They engaged in productive discussions on strengthening business ties and exploring collaborative opportunities between India and global investors. This meeting emphasized India's commitment to fostering international partnerships and promoting sustainable economic growth.

Mr. Sekhar's participation at WEF 2025 reflects his contributions to India's business landscape, particularly through SARC Associates, a leading financial consulting firm. His engagement in high-level discussions with global leaders reinforces his reputation as a thought leader in the financial sector, contributing to India's growing global stature.



India Open to "Legitimate Return" of Citizens Living Illegally



TPN Correspondent | Washington

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has reiterated India's willingness to accept the "legitimate return" of Indian nationals living illegally abroad, including in the United States. Speaking at a press conference in Washington DC on Wednesday, Jaishankar emphasized that India's position on the matter has been "consistent" and "principled."

"We have always maintained that if any of our citizens are residing illegally abroad, and we are certain of their citizenship, we are open to their legitimate return. This is not unique to the US but applies to all nations,"

Jaishankar said.

• **India supports the legal return of citizens living illegally.**

• **Jaishankar conveyed these views during talks with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.**

• **He raised concerns over long waiting periods for US visas.**

Jaishankar also underscored India's commitment to promoting legal mobility, stating that the government is focused on providing global opportunities for Indian talent. However, he expressed strong opposition to illegal migration, citing its association with other unlawful activities and its negative impact on India's reputation.

"Illegal mobility is not desirable. It often leads to other illegal activities, which is neither reputationally good for India nor beneficial for the host country," he remarked.

In his discussions with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Jaishankar also raised the issue of long waiting times for US visas. He noted that such delays are detrimental to bilateral ties and mutual interests.

"If it takes over 400 days to get a visa, it's not serving the relationship well. Facilitating legal and mutually beneficial mobility should be a priority," he added.

Uber, Ola Issued Notices Over Alleged iPhone-Android Fare Disparity

TPN Correspondent

New Delhi: The Department of Consumer Affairs has sent notices to popular cab aggregators Ola and Uber, seeking clarification on allegations of differential pricing based on the mobile device used for bookings—iPhone or Android. The move comes in response to widespread online speculation and complaints that fares are higher for iPhone users compared to Android users for the same ride.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi confirmed the development, stating that the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has been tasked with investigating the matter. "If these allegations are true, it is a blatant disregard for consumers' rights and constitutes an unfair trade practice," he said.

• **Allegations claim cab fares differ based on mobile phones—higher for iPhone users.**

• **The Department of Consumer Affairs seeks explanations from Ola and Uber.**

• **Investigation extends to other sectors like food delivery and online ticketing apps.**

The controversy began last month when an X user, @seriousfunnyguy, shared screenshots showing varying Uber fares for the same route booked on an iPhone and an Android phone. The post sparked heated discussions online, with several users sharing similar experiences.

Minister Joshi emphasized that such practices, if verified, would not be tolerated. "There will be zero tolerance for consumer exploitation," he said, warning companies of strin-

gent action if found guilty.

The notices to Ola and Uber require detailed responses, and the ministry has also directed checks into other digital platforms, including food delivery and online ticketing services, to investigate whether similar discrepancies exist.

While Ola and Uber have yet to officially respond, experts suggest that pricing algorithms may factor in data such as user demographics, device type, and spending habits. Critics argue that this practice, while potentially legal under certain conditions, raises ethical questions about consumer fairness and transparency.

The issue has further fueled concerns about the lack of regulations governing dynamic pricing models, prompting calls for stricter consumer protection laws.

Defence Ministry Rejects L&T Proposal for ₹70,000-Crore Submarine Deal

L&T's bid with Spanish partner Navantia found non-compliant with Indian Navy's requirements.

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

The Defence Ministry has rejected the ₹70,000 crore proposal from Indian infrastructure giant Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and its Spanish partner Navantia, citing non-compliance with Indian Navy specifications in the acquisition of six advanced submarines under Project 75 India.

L&T's proposal, which showcased the capabilities of its air-independent propulsion system in Spain, failed to meet the key requirement of a sea-proven system as outlined in the tender document. While L&T demonstrated their system's functionality abroad, the Indian Navy insisted on a proven system operating in re-

al-world conditions, prompting the rejection.

As a result, the Defence Ministry has left state-owned Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and its German partner ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems as the only contenders remaining for the lucrative deal. Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd, which has been a longstanding supplier to the Indian Navy, confirmed that its field trials for the submarine project were successful, and the Defence Ministry has invited the company for commercial negotiations scheduled for next week. Mazagon Dock's involvement in the submarine project has been pivotal, with the company recently delivering the last of the six Project 75 Scor-

pene-class submarines, INS Vagsheer. Under the next phase, Mazagon Dock is set to build three more submarines with the support of French Naval Group, contributing to India's growing naval capabilities.

In the face of rapid modernisation by China's navy, India's government has cleared several submarine projects, including both conventional and nuclear-powered options, to bolster its maritime strength. The project is part of India's ongoing efforts to maintain naval superiority in the region, especially in the Indian Ocean, where tensions with both China and Pakistan are rising.



The Economic Response to the Trauma of Partition: Lessons from Early Indian Budgets



The partition of India in 1947 was one of the most traumatic events in the country's history, displacing nearly 1.8 crore people and claiming approximately 10 lakh lives. It altered the social, political, and economic landscape of the affected regions in profound ways. In the years following this catastrophic upheaval, the government had to deal with the immediate challenges of rehabilitation and relief. The tragedy was so immense that its impact is still felt today, and the early Indian budgets provide crucial insights into how the young nation sought to address the aftermath of such devastation.

The first budget of independent India, presented in 1947-48, acknowledged the partition as the "most poignant human tragedy" outside of war. In response to the massive displacement, the government allocated Rs 27 crore—26% of the total non-defence expenditure—toward relief and rehabilitation. This

was more than double the amount set aside for health and education combined. The government's focus on rehabilitation reflected the immediate and urgent need to resettle millions of displaced people and provide them with basic necessities.

The 1948-49 budget continued this focus, noting that while only the "fringe" of the problem had been addressed, there was a strong commitment to placing refugees into productive occupations. The government allocated Rs 25 crore for rehabilitation, including Rs 10 crore for establishing the Rehabilitation Finance Administration, which played a significant role in addressing the crisis. The expenditure on refugees and food subsidies in 1949-50 amounted to Rs 52.82 crore, nearly a third of the total expenditure.

These early budgetary provisions highlight the Indian government's recognition of the deep scars left by partition

and its effort to tackle them head-on. In today's terms, the amount spent on rehabilitation would be a significant sum, ensuring that many resettlement colonies became key drivers of post-Independence growth.

However, some critics argue that by diverting such substantial resources toward rehabilitation, the government neglected other vital areas such as health, education, and infrastructure during the early years. The lack of investment in these sectors may have limited the country's economic potential in the long run, hindering its growth in the subsequent decades.

While one can debate the effectiveness of the government's choices, what is clear is that the trauma of Partition shaped India's early economic policies. The question remains—have we learned the right lessons from this period of history to avoid such grave mistakes in the future?



India's Immigration Dilemma: The Need for a National Perspective

Immigration has once again become a pressing topic of discussion, both globally and within India. Recently, Mumbai police reported that the man who attacked Saif Ali Khan was an illegal migrant from Bangladesh, underscoring the growing concerns about unauthorized immigration. In the United States, President Donald Trump's rhetoric has largely focused on immigration, especially illegal immigration, framing it as one of the nation's most significant challenges.

Until recently, many Indians didn't think much about immigration in an anti-immigrant context. After all, Indians have been among the biggest beneficiaries of immigration policies, particularly those of Western countries. My own family, for instance, thrives in the United States thanks to the opportunities provided by the U.S. immigration system, which has welcomed highly qualified individuals from around the world. This sentiment holds true for many prominent Indian immigrants, such as Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, and Rishi Sunak, who have risen to notable positions globally.

However, the rise of anti-immigration sentiments—seen in both the U.S. and India—may soon turn the spotlight on issues that we, as a nation, might not have fully confronted. Trump's policies, though aimed at curbing illegal immigration, have led to growing apprehensions about how they might affect legal Indian immigrants, especially with reports suggesting thousands of Indians attempting to enter the U.S. illegally, primarily via the southern border. India is likely to face the ramifications of this, as deportations may soon increase, with 1,800 deportees expected soon.

On the domestic front, India is increasingly concerned about illegal immigration, particularly from Bangladesh. Many politicians and citizens now echo the sentiments expressed by leaders like Trump regarding illegal immigration. While it is important to address this issue, the larger question remains: how should India respond to the broader issue of immigration in the West?

In the past, India has prioritized the rights of its emigrants, advocating for policies like H-1B visas for skilled professionals. Yet, it's time to question whether such efforts truly serve India's national interest. Should India's foreign policy be shaped by the rights of individuals seeking to emigrate, or should it prioritize the welfare of those choosing to stay?



Union Budget : Align aspirations with emerging opportunities, prepare for challenges ahead

As January unfolds and the excitement of the New Year wanes, the focus inevitably shifts back to the more pressing matters at hand, particularly financial ones. With the Union Budget just around the corner, there's a surge of hope and expectation about the relief it might bring to different sectors of society. However, understanding the various forces that shape the Budget can help temper these hopes with a dose of realism, ensuring we remain grounded in our expectations.

In today's world, the conversation often intertwines economic growth with sustainability and social responsibility. These two concepts are increasingly viewed as inseparable, but it's important to remember that growth and equity do not always go hand in hand. For growth to be inclusive, it needs to reach all segments of society, particularly the rural, economically disadvantaged, and vulnerable populations. This requires targeted investments in reskilling and upskilling programs, soft loan schemes, housing, and infrastructure projects that aim to create a nurturing environment for all to thrive.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the middle class, which often faces the dilemma of being economically comfortable on the surface, but at risk of financial instability due to unforeseen circumstances, such as health emergencies. Ensuring that the middle class doesn't fall into this precarious situation is a key focus that demands attention in the upcoming Budget.

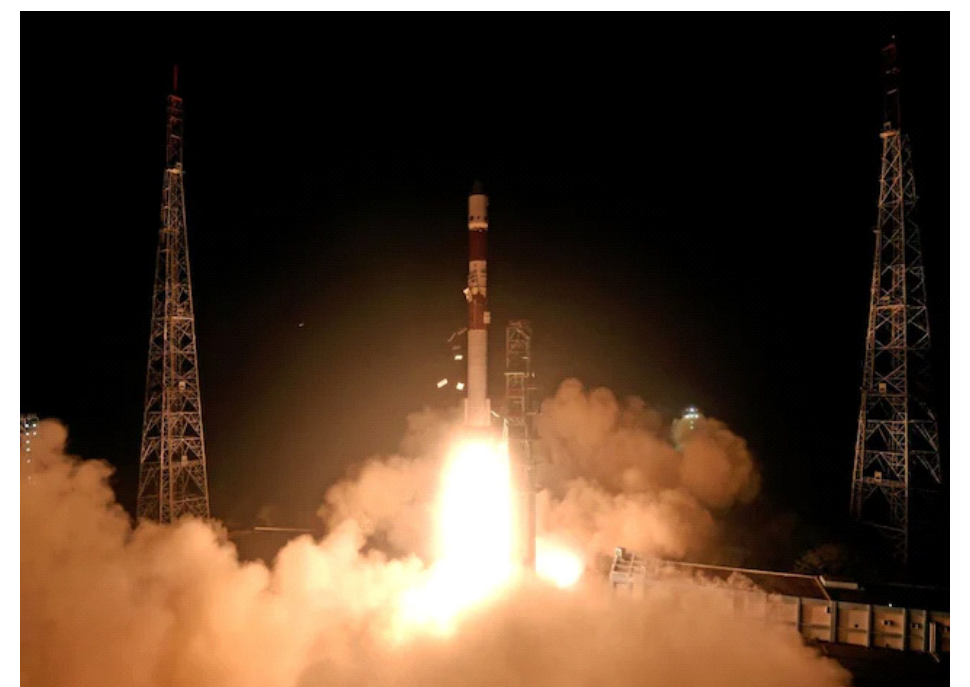
Achieving robust economic growth, particularly the 7% target set by the government, is no small feat, especially in the face of geopolitical challenges. This requires a sharp focus on capital formation and investment in key sectors that can drive sustained growth. The Budget will need to support initiatives that foster capital investments while simultaneously driving employment and production. However, the balancing act between public spending and inflation remains one of the most crucial aspects of Budget planning.

India's Space Triumph: A Major Step Towards Global Leadership

India has achieved a significant milestone in space exploration with the successful docking of two unmanned spacecraft, placing the country alongside the United States, Russia, and China as only the fourth nation to master this complex technology. This breakthrough, executed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), signals a new chapter in the country's ambitious space program, showcasing its growing capabilities in the global space community.

The Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) involved two small spacecraft, named Target and Chaser, each weighing approximately 220 kilograms. Launched aboard India's PSLV rocket on December 30, the spacecraft rendezvoused and successfully docked on January 11, 2025, after overcoming minor technical hurdles. This docking not only highlights India's technological achievements but also sets the stage for future missions involving satellite servicing, in-space construction, and even human space exploration, such as missions to the Moon.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the accomplishment, calling it a significant stepping stone for India's space ambitions. The success of SpaDeX underscores India's technical sophistication, enhancing its reputation as a rising space power. Spacecraft docking is crucial for a variety of advanced missions, including refueling spacecraft, transferring materials, and building



in-space infrastructure. These capabilities are essential for satellite servicing, human spaceflight, and the potential establishment of a space station in the future.

This achievement comes on the heels of India's successful Chandrayaan-3 mission, which made history by landing a spacecraft on the Moon's South Pole. The country has also set its sights on launching its first crewed mission in the coming years, with a goal to land an astronaut on the Moon by 2040. Additionally, India plans to establish its own space station, the Bharatiya Antariksha Station, by 2035, further cementing its position as a leader in space exploration.

India is also making strides in space commercialization. By opening up its space sector to private companies and encouraging foreign investment, the country has created a dynamic environment for innovation. The successful collaboration between public and private entities, like Ananth Technologies' role in SpaDeX, highlights the country's ability to leverage both sectors for more cost-effective and efficient space exploration.

As India continues to advance its space program, it strengthens its geopolitical influence and positions itself as a formidable player in global space exploration, challenging traditional space powers like the United States, Russia, and China.

Markets Edge Higher as IT and Pharma Lead the Recovery Amid Volatility



Stock market indices gained on Thursday on the back of gains in IT and pharma sectors and buying in heavyweights. Despite the weekly derivatives closing, investors invested in selected stocks, which led to a moderate rise. The markets were initially volatile due to mixed signals from international markets. They remained range-bound for a while. The benchmark indices performed well as some companies reported good results and sectoral indices also rebounded. The Nifty ended above 23,200. It is not possible to say that the markets have turned around unless there is a gap from consecutive selling. Consolidation is expected for some time.



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ly closed at 76,520 with a gain of 115 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,128, reached a low of 23,090 and a high of 23,270. It fell by 50 points in total and closed at 23,205. The Nifty Bank fell by 135 points and settled at 48,589.

In the Nifty50, 30 companies gained while 20 lost. UltraTech Sem, Grasim, Wipro, Shriram Finance, Sun Pharma were the top gainers. BPCL, Kotak Bank, HCL Tech, SBI, Reliance were the biggest losers. Auto, IT, Media, Pharma, Realty, Healthcare, Consumer Durables indices rose the most today. Bank, finance, oil and gas indices rose.

Market breadth on NSE today turned slightly more in favour of buyers than sellers. Out of a total of 2888 stocks traded, 1575 gained and 1236 lost. Shares of 18 companies touched 52-week highs. Shares of 81 compa-

nies touched 52-week lows.

Rupee weakened by 13 paise to settle at 86.46 against the dollar. Citi has given a buy rating to Polycab with a target price of Rs 8600. Zee Entertainment's third quarter net profit rose 180% to Rs 164 crore. Citi has maintained a sell rating on Persistent Systems with a target price of Rs 5000. Maruti Suzuki is increasing the prices of cars by Rs 1,500 to Rs 32,500 from February 1. Sinjin's net profit rose 18% to Rs 131 crore from Rs 111 crore. Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilders gave clarity on a submarine project worth Rs 70,000 crore. Adani Green Energy's net profit rose 73% to Rs 561 crore from Rs 325 crore. 25 lakh shares changed hands in Fortis Healthcare and 24 lakh shares in Federal Bank. 10 lakh shares each in Hindalco and Paytm changed hands.

1. Berger Paints

One of the largest players in the Indian decorative and industrial paints segment. Strong demand in urban and rural housing, new product launches, and focus on premium paints. Around 15-17%, supported by premium product portfolio.

Consistently growing, aided by operational efficiencies. Brand recognition, wide distribution network, innovative products. Fluctuating raw material costs (crude oil derivatives), competition from Asian Paints and other key players. Positive due to in-



BERGER PAINTS INDIA LIMITED

creasing housing demand and urbanization.

2. IRCTC (Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation)

Monopoly in catering, ticketing, and tourism services for Indian Railways. Significant contributor due to convenience fees. Revenues tied to passenger volume. Growing steadily post-pandemic. High due to minimal competition in its segments. Attractive for income-focused investors. Monopoly, asset-light model, and strong cash flows. Government regulation and reliance on Indian Railways. Long-term positive with India's growing rail network and digital adoption.



3. LTIMindtree (LTIM)

Top-tier IT services company post-merger of L&T Infotech and Mindtree. Digital transformation, cloud services, data analytics, and enterprise IT solutions. Double-digit growth driven by demand for digital services globally. Robust with long-term contracts from Fortune 500 clients. Strong parentage (L&T), diversified client base, and focus on high-growth digital segments. Intense competition from Infosys, TCS, and Accenture; currency fluctuations. Promising due to global digital trans-



formation trends and enterprise IT spending.

4. Havells India

Leading player in electrical goods and appliances with premium branding. Product Portfolio: Cables, switches, fans, lighting, and home appliances. Consistently in the range of 13-15%. Low, reflecting a strong balance sheet. Brand trust, wide distribution, and innovation. Rising input costs (copper and aluminum) and competition from V-Guard, Bajaj, and others. Positive, driven by infrastructure growth and increasing penetration in rural areas.



HAVELLS (Havells India Limited)

5. Ambuja Cements

Among the top cement producers in India, part of the Adani Group. Construction and infrastructure projects. Moderate, aligned with the cyclical nature of the industry. Around 16-20%, supported by efficient operations and cost management. Low, ensuring financial stability. Strong brand presence, cost leadership, and environmentally sustainable practices. Cyclical demand, rising energy and transportation costs. Positive, supported by government infrastructure push and urban housing demand.



Ambuja Cement

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 76,404 in the previous session, opened at 76,414 on Wednesday. It touched an intraday low of 76,202. It reached an intraday high of 76,743. It final-

Rupee's fall is due to dollar's rise, any RBI intervention can harm Indian exports: Rajan



Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan has cautioned against any RBI intervention aimed at reversing the weakening of the Indian rupee, which he attributes primarily to the strengthening of the US dollar. Speaking on the global economic situation, Rajan emphasized that the US dollar's rise is largely due to the potential impact of tariffs imposed by the US and a strong economic performance in the country.

According to Rajan, while the dollar has appreciated against several global currencies, including the rupee, any attempt by the RBI to prop up the rupee could negatively affect Indian exports. "If the RBI strengthens the rupee against the dollar, it would inadvertently make the rupee more expensive against other currencies, which could hurt our exporters," he said. He also noted that the RBI's traditional approach has been to intervene only when depreciation causes significant volatility, not to try and preserve the rupee at a specific level.

Rajan explained that the US economy is growing robustly, attracting more capital inflows, and leading to a stronger dollar. This is further compounded by a reshoring of production back to the US due to tariff policies, which also enhances the appeal of the US as an investment destination.

On India's economy, Rajan highlighted concerns over slowing growth and a lack of private investment. He emphasized that the recent growth had been recovery-based, and now the focus should shift to sustainable growth driven by investments and consumption. Rajan stressed that a key challenge for the Indian economy is the softening of demand across income groups, including the upper middle class.

Looking ahead to India's Union Budget, Rajan urged policymakers to prioritize job creation, better employment opportunities, and boosting household consumption. "A strong focus on creating more jobs and confident households will create a virtuous cycle of increased consumption and investments," he concluded.

Used car sales in India likely to touch 10.8 million in 2030

The used car market in India is on a fast-paced growth trajectory, with projections indicating that sales will rise from 4.6 million units in 2023 to 10.8 million by 2030, marking a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13%. According to a report released on Thursday, 2024 has emerged as a pivotal year, with used car sales surpassing new car sales at a notable ratio of 1.3:1.

One of the key trends in the market is the increasing number of eco-conscious buyers, as the demand for electric vehicles (EVs) grew fivefold in 2024. Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Delhi led the EV charge, further influencing the used car market. The report also highlights that SUVs continued to dominate, capturing 16.7% of the market share in 2024.

"The used car market, once considered a niche segment, has now redefined car ownership in India. With shifting custom-



er preferences towards more affordable and reliable options, the used-car market has seen significant growth compared to the new car market," said Gajendra Jangid, Co-founder of CARS24.

The report also points out that while the average selling price (ASP) of new cars has increased by 32%, used cars have seen a

24% rise. Despite these price hikes, used cars remain a more budget-friendly alternative, offering great value without compromising on quality.

In terms of financing, the report notes a significant rise in loans for both new and used cars. Financing for new cars has surged from 60% in 2010 to 84.2% in 2024, while the used-car financing market has grown from 15% to 23%. The post-COVID era has also seen a shift in consumer priorities, with 12% of buyers opting for personal mobility for convenience and safety rather than relying on shared transportation.

As India's used car market continues to expand, it is reshaping the automotive landscape and providing consumers with a more accessible option for vehicle ownership.

"Adani Energy Solutions Sees 80% Profit Surge in Q3 FY25

Adani Energy Solutions (AESL) has announced a remarkable 80% surge in its consolidated profit after tax (PAT), reaching Rs 625 crore for the third quarter (Q3) of the financial year 2025 (FY25). Excluding one-time tax items, the adjusted PAT grew by 26% to Rs 440 crore.

The company also saw a robust 24.4% year-on-year growth in total income, reaching Rs 6,000 crore for Q3 FY25. Operating revenue stood at Rs 4,173 crore, a 15.4% increase compared to Rs 3,615 crore in Q3 FY24. For the nine months ended FY25, total income surged by 44.4% to Rs 17,850 crore.

CEO Kandarp Patel highlighted the company's focus on timely project commissioning and operational efficiency, emphasizing that AESL continues to outperform both operationally and financially. He credited the strong quarterly performance to newly commissioned transmission projects, including MP Package-II, Kharghar-Vikhroli, and Warora-Kurnool lines,

as well as higher energy sales in Mumbai and Mundra utilities.

"The key highlight of this quarter is the new project wins in AESL, which have strengthened our position as the largest private transmission player in India," said Patel. With a total order book of Rs 54,761 crore in transmission and Rs 13,600 crore in smart metering, AESL remains confident in its ability to maintain growth, thanks to strong project execution and capital management.

The company's EBITDA for the quarter grew by 6%, reaching Rs 1,831 crore, driven by strong revenue growth across segments, including EPC income in transmission, treasury income, and steady regulated EBITDA from Adani Electricity Mumbai Limited (AEML). Operational EBITDA increased by 9% to Rs 1,579 crore.

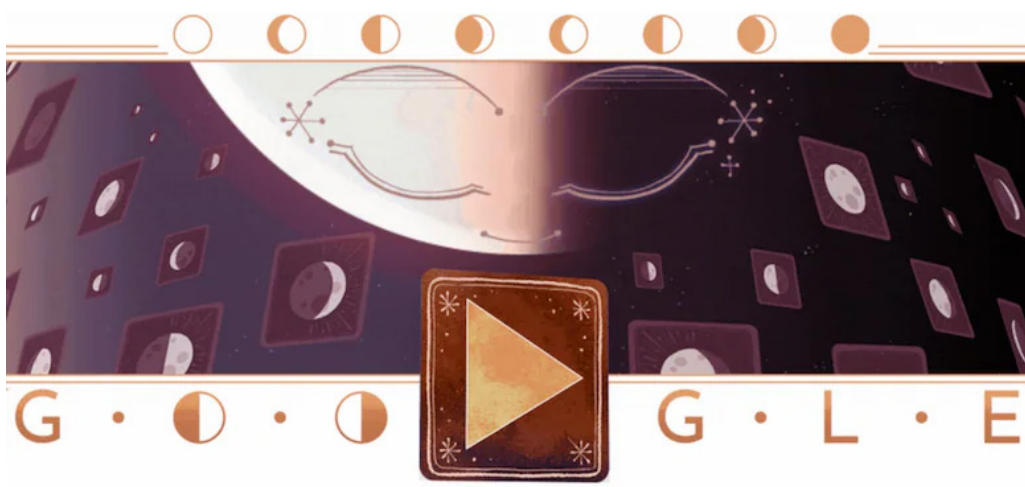
AESL also secured two new transmission projects—Khavda Phase IV Part-D and



Rajasthan Phase III Part I—adding 3,044 circuit kilometers (ckm) to its under-construction network. With this, the company's under-construction transmission pipeline now totals Rs 54,761 crore.

Smart meter deployment is progressing rapidly, with an average installation rate of 15,000 meters per day, set to rise to 20,000 meters per day in the coming quarter.

Google's 'Rise of the Half Moon' Doodle Educates with Fun Lunar Game



Google's latest doodle, titled "Rise of the Half Moon," is an interactive and educational celebration of the lunar cycle, launched on Thursday, January 23, 2025. In honor of the final Half Moon of January, the doodle offers users a fun and engaging card game designed to teach them about the moon's phases while providing entertainment.

The objective of the game is to match different moon phases by strategically placing cards to score points. Players must compete against the half moon, with the game concluding once the board is filled. As users progress, they gain valuable insights into

the lunar cycle, making it both an enjoyable and educational experience.

Titled "Rise of the Half Moon," the doodle is described as a recurring card game series. According to the description page, players are invited to connect the phases of the lunar cycle to earn points and "beat the moon." Successful players might be rewarded with special surprises. The game also invites users to join the pack, a nod to January's full moon, traditionally known as the "Wolf Moon." This name is inspired by the howling of wolves during long winter nights, adding cultural depth to the doodle.

The doodle is accessible on both mobile and desktop devices, ensuring that a wide audience can participate in this lunar celebration. To further enhance the experience, Google offers users the option to download a "Half Moon Rises" wallpaper for their devices. The doodle's page also features a world map, showing where the doodle has appeared.

Google's doodles, since their debut in 1998, have become a unique way to celebrate significant events, cultural moments, and anniversaries. Over the years, these doodles have evolved in creativity and interactivity, sparking curiosity, educating users, and bringing joy to millions across the globe.

Japanese Aquarium Puts Cutouts Of People To Comfort Lonely Sunfish



A Japanese aquarium has come up with an innovative solution to cheer up its lonely ocean sunfish during renovations. The Kaikyokan Aquarium in Shimonoseki, which has been closed to the public since December 2024, noticed that its resident sunfish was struggling without the usual visitors. The aquarium staff observed the fish becoming unwell, refusing to eat its jellyfish, and even rubbing its body against the tank.

Initially, the staff thought the sunfish might have developed digestive problems or contracted a parasite. However, after further observation, one staff member suggested the possibility that the fish was simply lonely without the pub-

lic around. Although the idea seemed far-fetched, the team decided to give it a try.

In a creative effort to alleviate the sunfish's apparent loneliness, the aquarium staff placed cardboard cutouts of visitors, dressed in staff uniforms, around the tank. They set up the cutouts to mimic the presence of people observing the sunfish. The aquarium then shared an image of this unique setup on social media, showing the sunfish seemingly comforted by the fake visitors.

The results were surprising. The next day, the sunfish appeared to be feeling better. It began swimming in front of the tank and waving its fins, indicating that it had regained

its health and energy. The staff was amazed by the turnaround and credited the cutouts for helping the sunfish feel more at ease.

This isn't the first time an aquarium in Japan has used creative methods to support its animals. During the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, Tokyo's Sumida Aquarium engaged volunteers to FaceTime its spotted garden eels, encouraging them to come out of hiding and stay active.

Kaikyokan Aquarium's inventive solution highlights the emotional sensitivity of animals and the lengths to which caretakers will go to ensure their well-being, even in the face of unusual circumstances.

What Is Blue Monday? Understanding the 'Most Depressing Day of the Year'

Blue Monday, often referred to as the "most depressing day of the year," falls on the third Monday of January, and in 2025, it lands on January 20th. The concept of Blue Monday was coined in 2005 by the UK travel company Sky Travel, which claimed it to be the day when people experience the lowest mood. Factors such as the end of the holiday season, post-New Year's financial strain, cold weather, and unfulfilled New Year's resolutions contribute to this low point.

While the idea has become a part of popular culture, Blue Monday is more associated with controversy than scientific validation. The term originated from a Sky Travel press release that used a formula to calculate the most depressing day of the year. The formula included factors such as debt levels, weather conditions, the

number of days until the next holiday, time since the last payday, and the average number of daylight hours. This "depression factor" was meant to explain why people feel down and encourage them to take action to improve their mood, such as planning a holiday.



dip in mood around this time due to seasonal changes, the return to work after the festive period, or the pressure of unachieved resolutions.

How to Beat Blue Monday

Take a walk: Getting outside or even bringing nature inside with plants can help lift your mood. Research shows exposure to nature can benefit psychological well-being.

Dance it out: Music and dancing are great ways to improve your mood, offering a fun and effective way to boost happiness.

Connect with loved ones: Spending time with friends or family and checking in on each other's mental health can provide support.

Reframe failure: Rather than focusing on setbacks, see them as opportunities for growth and learning, which can motivate you to keep moving forward.

'Volcanoes Will Erupt': Scientists Sound The Alarm, How Life On Earth Will End

According to a study by scientists at Bristol University, Earth is heading toward a catastrophic future where all life, including humans and animals, will be wiped out due to extreme heat. The study, which used a computer simulation, predicts that Earth will face a total destruction event in the next 250 million years. The temperature on Earth will soar to a staggering 70 degrees Celsius, a level too hot for any living creature to survive.

The research also highlights the role of rising carbon levels, with the accelerated increase of carbon emissions contributing to an earlier extinction event. Scientists warn that this escalating carbon buildup could trigger an event similar to the mass extinction that wiped out the dinosaurs 66 million years ago. The last

supercontinent, Pangaea, existed from 330 to 170 million years ago, and researchers believe that Earth's continents will eventually merge again to form a new supercontinent known as Pangaea Ultima in 250 million years.

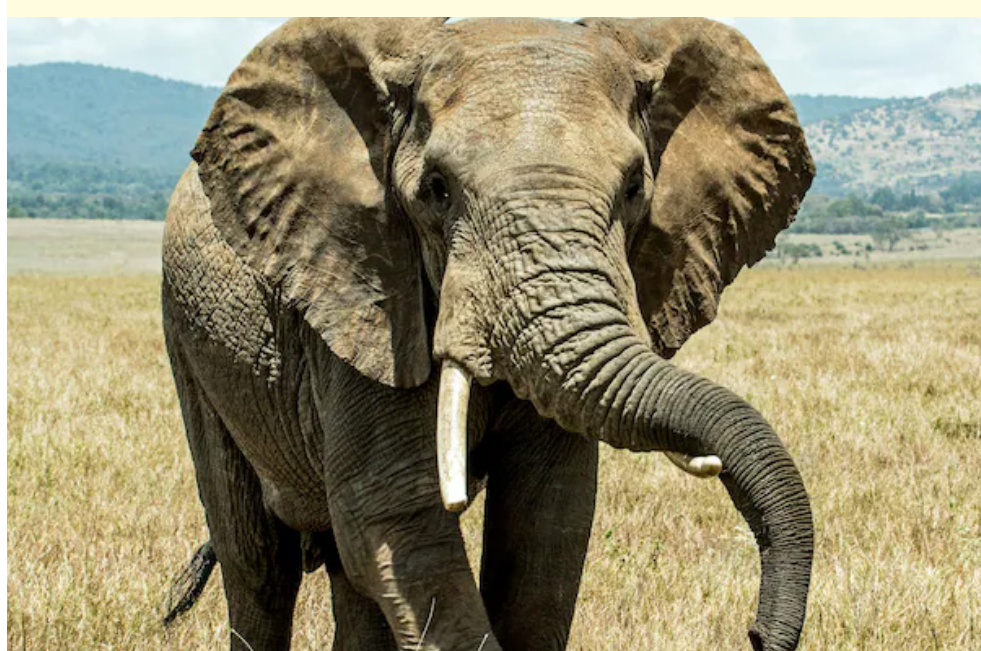
As the planet heats up, life will become unsustainable. Volcanoes, which cover much of the Earth's surface, will erupt due to the pressure of extreme temperatures. These eruptions will release vast amounts of carbon dioxide, exacerbating the already critical situation, leading to the collapse of ecosystems and the eventual death of all organisms. With the temperature rising and oxygen levels depleting, Earth will become inhospitable.

Alexander Farnsworth, the leader of the research team,



stated that with doubled levels of carbon dioxide, people would perish from heatstroke, and the overall quality of life would be unbearable. The Earth's atmosphere would be filled with carbon dioxide, making it almost impossible for humans and animals to breathe. As life forms die off in massive waves, only the edges of the supercontinent Pangaea Ultima might remain habitable, offering a bleak future for the planet.

US Court Rules Elephants Cannot Be Freed From Zoo, Declaring They're Not 'Human'



In a controversial ruling, a US court has decided that five elephants held at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado cannot be released based on their lack of legal rights, as they are not considered "human." The case was brought forward by the animal rights group Nonhuman Rights Project (NRP), which sought to have the elephants freed under a legal process called habeas corpus. The group argued that the elephants—Missy, Kimba, Lucky, Lou-Lou, and Jambo—who were born in Africa and have spent years in captivity, showed signs of brain

damage. NRP claimed the zoo conditions amounted to a "prison" for these highly intelligent and social animals.

NRP's goal was to relocate the elephants to a sanctuary where they could live more naturally, but the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that the animals did not meet the legal criteria to pursue such a claim. In its decision, the court explained that the legal question at hand was whether an elephant could be considered a "person." Since elephants are not legally recognized as persons, the court determined that

they did not have standing to seek their release.

This decision follows a similar one in 2022, when the New York courts ruled against freeing an elephant named Happy from the Bronx Zoo.

In response, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo criticized the NRP, accusing the group of abusing the court system to raise funds rather than genuinely advocating for the welfare of animals. The zoo stated that the NRP's ongoing legal battles were part of a strategy to manipulate the public into donating to their cause.



West Indies Crush Malaysia to Reach Super Six in Women's U19 T20 World Cup

West Indies clinched a spot in the Super Six stage of the 2025 Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup with a commanding 53-run victory over hosts Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday. Despite posting a modest total of 112/7 in their 20 overs, the West Indies bowlers delivered a clinical performance, bowling out Malaysia for a mere 59 runs. The win helped them finish third in Group A and advance to the next stage of the tournament.

For Malaysia, this loss marked their exit from the competition, as they ended the group stage with three consecutive defeats and were unable to progress further.

West Indies captain and all-rounder Samara Ramnath was the standout performer in this crucial encounter. Although her contribution with the bat was minimal, scoring just 5 runs, she was exceptional with the ball, claiming 4 wickets for only 6 runs. Her outstanding bowling performance ranks as the third-best in the tournament, following Vaishnavi Sharma (India) and Maisie Maceira (Scotland) who each took five-wicket hauls.

At one point, Malaysia seemed to be in control at 38/2 after 10 overs while chasing a target of 113. However, Ramnath's spell triggered a dramatic collapse, as she took four vital wickets—three through bowled or lbw dismissals—helping reduce Malaysia to 59 all out. Malaysia lost their last eight wickets for just 21 runs.

Ramnath struck early in her second over, dismissing Malaysia's captain, Nur Daniya Syuhada, and trapping Nur Izzatul Syafiqah lbw. She later returned to clean-bowl Suabika Manivannan, completing the demolition in the 18th over. Off-spinners Najanni Cumberbatch and Erin Deane also played key roles, combining for four wickets and keeping relentless pressure on the Malaysian batters.

Earlier, after being asked to bat first, West Indies struggled to accelerate but managed to post a competitive total, with Assabi Callender anchoring the innings with a patient 30 off 42 balls.

With India and Sri Lanka already securing their places in the Super Six, West Indies join them as the third team from Group A to advance.

Sachin Tendulkar Foundation Celebrates 5 Years of Transforming Lives

The Sachin Tendulkar Foundation (STF) marked a significant milestone as it celebrated five years of empowering the less privileged and fostering dreams. The celebration, held at The Bombay Club in Mumbai, was a heartfelt gathering that reflected on STF's impactful journey and reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing lives through health, education, and sports, particularly for children.

The evening's theme, "Shine Brighter Together," underscored the Foundation's core mission of creating lasting change, especially for young people, by supporting their aspirations in these key areas. The event was a blend of tributes from well-wishers, family, friends, and non-profit partners, all of whom have been integral to STF's success.

A highlight of the evening was Sara Tendulkar, daughter of cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar, marking her first official engagement as the Foundation's Director. Reflecting on her upbringing, Sara spoke about the influence her family had on her understanding of giving back and the transformative power of the Foundation's work. "Over the last five years, the Sachin Tendulkar Foundation has touched over 100,000 young lives, and that's a hundred thousand reasons to keep going," Sara shared.

The Foundation's journey was intro-



duced through a short film, showcasing the dedication of the Tendulkars and their NGO partners. Over 15 organizations work alongside STF to bring positive change to communities. Chris Martin of Coldplay also attended and engaged in a conversation with Sachin Tendulkar about the Foundation's journey.

Sachin Tendulkar reflected on the inception of STF, explaining that the idea began with a simple vision: to ease the

lives of the underprivileged and inspire young dreamers. With Sara now leading the Foundation, he expressed confidence that STF will continue to impact millions of lives. Looking forward, STF plans to expand its sports-for-development initiatives, improve infrastructure in rural areas, enhance healthcare access, and introduce innovative education programs. With a renewed focus, STF aims to make the next decade a transformative period for millions of children and youth.

India Outclass Sri Lanka by 60 Runs to Enter Super Six in U19 T20 Women's World Cup

India cruised to a dominant 60-run victory over Sri Lanka in their final Group A match of the ICC U19 T20 Women's World Cup, securing their place in the Super Six as group toppers. Openers G Trisha and India's pacers were the stand-out performers in this lopsided encounter.

Trisha played a composed knock of 49 off 44 balls, including 5 fours and a six, guiding India to a total of 118 for 9 on a challenging pitch. Her innings anchored the team's score, allowing them to set a competitive target. Despite some late contributions from VJ Joshitha (14 off 9 balls) and Mithila Vinod (16 off 10 balls), India's total appeared to be a challenging one for Sri Lanka to chase.

Sri Lanka's chase got off to a disastrous start as India's pacers VJ Joshitha and Shabnam tore through the top order. Sri Lanka were reduced to 9 for 4 in just 3.2 overs, and



for 5. The Sri Lankan innings never recovered, and they were eventually restricted to 58 for 9 in 20 overs.

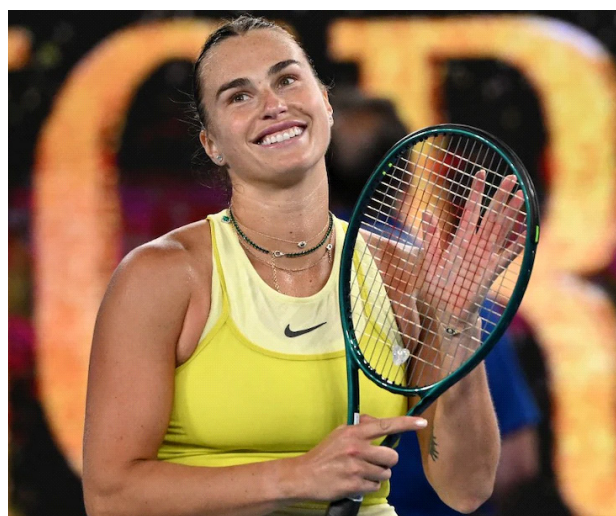
While Rashmika Sewwandi (15 off 12 balls) showed some resistance, the mounting required run rate forced her to take risks, leading to her dismissal. Sisodia (2/7) was the standout spinner for India, along with Ayushi Shukla and Vaishnavi Sharma, who played crucial roles in dismantling Sri Lanka's lower order.

Earlier, India had to battle through a tough patch in their innings, but Trisha's maturity at the top of the order held the innings together. Her aggressive six off Shashni Gimhani was a highlight. Despite a few wickets falling, India's strong finish ensured they set Sri Lanka a difficult target.

With this win, India maintained an unbeaten record in the group stage and are poised for the Super Six phase of the tournament.

Aryna Sabalenka Beats Paula Badosa To Reach Australian Open 2025 Women's Singles Final

Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka displayed her exceptional form by defeating Spain's Paula Badosa 6-4, 6-2 to advance to the Australian Open 2025 women's singles final. The world number one from Belarus, who has been on a stunning 20-match winning streak at Melbourne Park, will now look to secure her third consecutive Australian Open title. She will face either Polish second seed Iga Swiatek or American 19th seed Madison Keys in Saturday's final.



In what was a hard-fought match between close friends, Sabalenka showcased her powerful game on Rod Laver Arena, overcoming early challenges from Badosa. The match began with Badosa taking a 2-0 lead, capitalizing on a few early mistakes from Sabalenka. However, the Belarusian quickly found her rhythm, breaking back after Badosa's error-prone service game. Sabalenka then surged ahead, winning three games in a row to take a 4-2 lead, wrapping up the first set in 53 minutes with a strong display of 19 winners.

The second set saw a more dominant Sabalenka as she capitalized on Badosa's double faults and lack of consistency, breaking early for a 2-1 lead. Badosa, who had stunned world number three Coco Gauff in the previous round, could not recover from Sabalenka's aggressive baseline play and was broken again to seal the match in

straight sets.

Sabalenka's victory not only takes her one step closer to a third consecutive Australian Open title but also keeps her in contention for the top spot in the women's rankings. If she had lost, Iga Swiatek would have reclaimed the number one position. Badosa's run, though ending in the semifinals, marked a remarkable comeback after battling back from a serious back injury in 2023. She will return to the top 10 for the first time since October 2022, a testament to her resilience and determination.

Lakshya Sen, Satwik-Chirag pair bow out of Indonesia Masters

Indian badminton players faced disappointment at the Indonesia Masters Super 500 tournament as Lakshya Sen and the men's doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty were knocked out in the second round on Thursday.

Lakshya Sen, ranked 10th in the world, continued his struggle on the international circuit with a hard-fought loss to Japan's Kenta Nishimoto. The match ended 16-21, 21-12, 21-23 in Nishimoto's favour, lasting 50 minutes. Despite a strong comeback in the second game, Sen couldn't maintain the momentum, and he fell short in the decider.

The disappointment continued for India with the exit of the Asian Games champions, Satwik Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty. The men's doubles pair, who had reached back-to-back semifinals at the Malaysia Super 1000 and India Super 750 tournaments in the past two weeks, lost a tense match to Thailand's Kittinupong Kedren and Dechapol Puavaranukroh. The match was decided by narrow margins, with the Thai pair clinching a 22-20, 23-21 win.

Earlier in the day, the mixed doubles team of Dhruv Kapila and Tanshia Crasto also suffered an early exit. Despite initially taking the lead,



the Indian pair lost 21-18, 15-21, 19-21 to Malaysia's Pang Ron Hoo and Su Yin Cheng in a closely contested second-round match.

Lakshya Sen, who had previously won an Asian Games silver and a Commonwealth Games gold, started poorly in his match, losing the first game. Although he managed to bounce back in the second game, the lack of consistency proved to be his downfall, and he was ultimately unable to close out the match.

With all the Indian players eliminated in the second round, the Indonesia Masters has turned out to be a disappointing outing for India's shuttlers, raising concerns about their form going into upcoming international tournaments.



Bollywood Struggles in 2025: Can Sky Force Revive the Industry's Fortune?

The Hindi film industry has been grappling with a tough phase in recent years, with South Indian films dominating the pan-India box office. While Bollywood continues to struggle, a few standout films like Pathaan, Jawan, Gadar 2, Animal, and Stree 2 have managed to perform well, but they have been the exception rather than the rule. The primary reasons for Bollywood's decline have been attributed to lackluster scripts, repetitive storytelling, and a shortage of fresh ideas.

Even 2025 hasn't brought much relief. The year started on a disappointing note with the release of Sonu Sood's action thriller Fateh on January 10, which quickly became a box office failure. Just a week later, Ajay Devgn's Azaad and Kangana Ranaut's Emergency hit theaters on January 17, only to fall flat with audiences despite featuring prominent stars. These films struggled to create a lasting impact and join the ranks of Bollywood's successful releases.

The upcoming Republic Day weekend is expected to bring a glimmer of hope for the industry with the release of Ak-



shay Kumar's Sky Force. Akshay, who has been facing a rough patch in recent years with several low-performing films, is under pressure to deliver a hit. However, there are no high expectations surrounding Sky Force, as its trailer has not received a positive reception. Many have expressed concerns that it's yet another generic patriotic military-based film that fails to offer anything new or exciting.

The real test for Sky Force will be whether Akshay Kumar can defy all odds and deliver Bollywood's first major hit of 2025. If the film fails to make a mark, the Hindi film industry may have to face yet another month of disappointing box office returns, potentially marking January as a dud for Bollywood. Only time will tell if Akshay can bring the much-needed revival to the industry.

Tamil Hit Madha Gaja Raja Set to Release in Telugu on January 31

After a long wait of 12 years, the Tamil comedy film Madha Gaja Raja, starring Vishal, Santhanam, Anjali, and Varalaxmi Sarathkumar, was finally released in Tamil Nadu on January 12, 2025, as a special treat for Pongal. Directed by Sundar C, the film has proven to be a moderate success at the box office, capturing the interest of audiences with its light-hearted humor and engaging performances.

Following its successful theatrical run in Tamil, Madha Gaja Raja is now gearing up for its Telugu release, set for January 31, 2025. The Telugu version will be released globally by Sathya Krishnan Productions, with Gemini Film Circuit handling the presentation. The film's music, composed by popular Kollywood actor Vijay Antony, has already been well-received and adds another layer of appeal to this comedy entertainer.



The release of Madha Gaja Raja was initially planned for 2023, but the film faced multiple delays for reasons that were not publicly disclosed. Despite the setbacks, the excitement surrounding its release remains high, especially with the star power of its cast, which includes leading actors who enjoy a significant fan base in both Tamil and Telugu cinema. This ensures that the film is poised to make a strong impact when it opens in theaters across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Shahid Kapoor's Deva to Keep Audiences on Edge with a Multiple-Ending Climax Twist

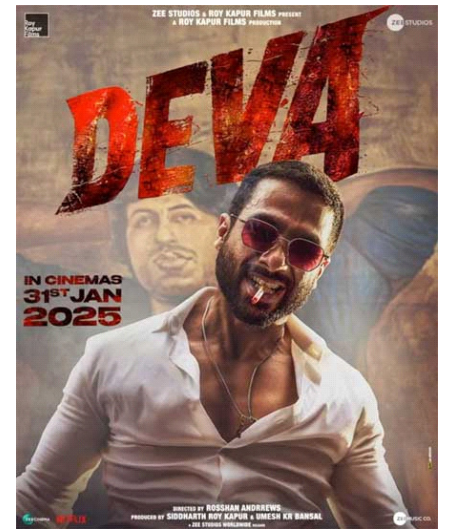
Shahid Kapoor's upcoming film Deva is already generating immense buzz, thanks to its gripping trailer and intriguing storyline. Directed by Rosshan Andrews, the film stars Kapoor as a cop, with Pooja Hegde playing the female lead. The film's suspenseful plot and action-packed sequences have captured the attention of fans, making it one of the most anticipated films of the year.

In a recent interview, Shahid Kapoor revealed that the film's climax played a key role in his decision to take on the project. According to the actor, the intensity and unexpected twist in the film's conclusion were major factors that drew him to the role. This revelation has sent waves through the media, with fans eagerly speculating about the shocking twist that awaits them.

However, there's a growing buzz in Mumbai's film circles that the makers of Deva have shot multiple versions of the climax and are still undecided about which one to include in the final cut. According to reports, the film's ending will be nothing short of surprising, promising to leave audiences on the edge of their seats.

Shahid Kapoor looks impressive as a tough, no-nonsense cop, and early reactions to his performance have been positive. Meanwhile, Pooja Hegde, who has been away from the limelight for a while, is making her big comeback with this film. Her performance has been described as solid, and fans are hoping that Deva will mark a successful return for the actress to the top of the box office.

With a mix of action, drama, and an unpredictable climax, Deva is shaping up to be a film that's not to be missed. As the release date approaches, anticipation continues to build for what promises to be an unforgettable cinematic experience.



Pushpa 2 Celebrates 50 Days in Theaters with Special Fan Show at Iconic Hyderabad Theater

The massive success of Pushpa 2: The Rule, starring Allu Arjun and directed by Sukumar, continues to captivate audiences across the globe. Since its release on December 5, 2024, the film has been breaking records and receiving rave reviews for its gripping storyline, stellar performances, and powerful direction. With a worldwide gross of over Rs. 1800 crore, Pushpa 2 has firmly established itself as one of the biggest blockbusters in recent cinema history.

Today, the film celebrates a major milestone—its 50th day in theaters. To mark this special occasion, a fan screening has been scheduled at the renowned Sandhya 70mm theater in Hyderabad, where fans will get a chance to relive the magic on the big screen. The evening show promises to be a memorable event, as fans eagerly await the possibility of appearances from the film's stars and crew.

The film boasts a talented ensemble cast, including Rashmika Mandanna, Fahadh Faasil, Sunil, Anasuya, Rao Ramesh, and Jagapathi Babu, each delivering compelling performances that have contributed to the film's widespread appeal. The music, composed by Devi Sri Prasad and Sam CS, enhances the emotional depth of the movie, with its unforgettable tracks resonating with fans everywhere.

Produced by Mythri Movie Makers, Pushpa 2 continues to be a cinematic marvel, capturing the hearts of moviegoers with its gripping narrative and impressive visuals. As the film enters its 50th day in theaters, it remains a cultural phenomenon, solidifying its place in Indian film history. Fans are sure to cherish this special event and eagerly anticipate the future of the Pushpa franchise.

Vikram's Veera Dheera Sooran Sets Release Date for March 27, 2025

Chiyaan Vikram, known for his diverse and powerful performances, is all set to return to the big screen with his highly anticipated gangster action drama, Veera Dheera Sooran. Directed by SU Arun Kumar, best known for his work on Chithha, the film has already generated significant buzz with its intriguing glimpses, leaving audiences eager for more. Dushara Vijayan stars opposite Vikram in the film, taking on the role of the female lead.

As the movie enters its final stages of post-production, the makers have officially locked in the release date. Veera Dheera Sooran is slated to hit theaters on March 27, 2025. The film will face competition at the domestic box office, going up against highly anticipated titles like Sikandar, L2E (Lucifer 2), Robinhood, and Mad 2. Originally, Veera Dheera Sooran was planned for a Pongal 2025 release, but with Ajith's Vidaamuyarchi al-

ready slated for the festive season, the makers decided to postpone their film to avoid direct competition.

Produced by Riya Shibu under the HR Pictures banner, Veera Dheera Sooran promises to be an intense action-packed drama, combining gangster elements with Vikram's powerhouse performance. The music for the film is composed by the talented GV Prakash Kumar, who is known for his memorable soundtracks in Tamil cinema.

The Telugu states' distribution rights for the film have been secured by NVR Cinema, ensuring a wide release across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. With Vikram's immense popularity and the film's thrilling storyline, Veera Dheera Sooran is set to make a strong impact upon its release, and fans are eagerly awaiting to see the actor in yet another compelling role.

