



**Weather Forecast**

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
H 33° C L 25° C	H 35° C L 26° C	H 36° C L 26° C

## Will Delhi develop by abusing me?

Arvind Kejriwal hits back at Amit Shah

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor Arvind Kejriwal has responded to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent attacks, accusing the BJP of lacking a vision for Delhi and focusing on personal attacks rather than addressing the city's needs.



In a post on social platform X, Kejriwal criticized Shah's visit to Delhi, stating, "Today Amit Shah came to Delhi and abused me and left. Will Delhi develop by abusing me? They have neither any plan nor any vision for Delhi. If nothing else, why not just repeat the facilities we are providing? BJP has surrendered. BJP's election is over."

Kejriwal's comments came in response to Shah's criticism during the launch of the BJP's third 'Sankalp Patra' manifesto. Shah had slammed the AAP government for not fulfilling its promises and accused Kejriwal of spreading lies. Shah also claimed that BJP would

not discontinue any welfare scheme for the poor in Delhi, directly countering Kejriwal's claims. Shah further targeted Kejriwal, accusing him of involvement in a multi-crore liquor scam while promising a corruption-free Delhi. He urged the people of Delhi to vote for a garbage-free city and better water supply, emphasizing that only by making Modi the winner can Delhi become "the number one capital in the world." The Delhi Assembly elections are scheduled for February 5, and the results will be announced on February 8.

# Take That World-Famous Dip

Amit Shah's Yamuna Dare to Kejriwal

BJP pledges to clean the Yamuna in three years if elected.

Aam Admi Kejriwal lives in 50,000 square-foot bungalow.

'Kejriwal playing politics of deceit and lies'

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah has launched a fresh attack on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over the unfulfilled promise of cleaning the Yamuna River, a key issue for the capital city. Addressing a rally in Delhi with less than two weeks left before the assembly elections, Shah mocked Kejriwal's previous pledge to purify the Yamuna and make it resemble London's River Thames.

Shah reminded the Delhiites of Kejriwal's earlier statement where he promised to clean the river within seven years and even take a dip in it to demonstrate his commitment. Shah said, "Kejriwal promised to purify River Yamuna in seven years, just like the Thames. He even said he would take a dip in the Yamuna in front of the people of Delhi. Now, the people of Delhi are waiting for that world-famous dip."

Shah further suggested that if Kejriwal

could not fulfill his promise in the Yamuna, he should take a dip in the Mahakumbh to cleanse himself of his "sins." The BJP leader continued his critique by claiming that the AAP chief's government has not only failed in cleaning the river but has also failed to meet several other promises made to the people of Delhi.

In a direct assault on Kejriwal's credibility, Shah accused him of misleading the public and building a lavish 50,000 square-foot bungalow at the cost of Rs 51 crore while failing to address the issues that matter to Delhiites. "Kejriwal runs a government that makes promises but never fulfills them. He presents false faces to the public," Shah added.

As the election season intensifies, BJP

candidate Parvesh Verma from New Delhi constituency also joined the criticism, showcasing a poster of Kejriwal over the polluted Yamuna river.

Meanwhile, a report from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) released in October 2023 showed that several projects to clean the Yamuna were running behind schedule. This further supports Shah's claims that the cleaning of the river has been a failure under Kejriwal's leadership. This is not the first time that BJP leaders have dared Kejriwal to take a dip in the Yamuna. Earlier, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had also challenged Kejriwal to take a dip in the polluted river, accusing him of turning the holy Yamuna into a "dirty drain."



## Padma Awards 2025

Padma Shri for 100-year-old freedom fighter, Kuwaiti yoga pioneer, Nagaland fruit farmer

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## Republic Day 2025: Theme for Tableaux, Which States Are Participating

Andhra Pradesh's tableau is the most attractive among all the states

TPN Correspondent, New Delhi

India is gearing up for its 76th Republic Day celebration this year, commemorating the adoption of the Constitution in 1950. Preparations are in full swing for grand parades, cultural exhibits, and vibrant state tableaux. The event will take place on Kartavya Path, showcasing the diversity and heritage of India.

Tableaux Theme The tableaux theme for Republic Day 2025 is Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas (Heritage and Development). The theme highlights India's rich heritage and its progress toward development, symbolizing the nation's growth while preserving its cultural legacy.

Participating States and Union Territories Fifteen states and union territories have been selected to participate in the Republic Day parade, including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, each presenting their tableaux to showcase their cultural heritage and development.

Additionally, 15 ministries and government departments will also display their tableaux during the parade. States and union territories that were not selected for the Kartavya Path parade will have the opportunity to showcase their displays at the Bharat Parv, which will be held at Red Fort from January 26 to 31.

Preparation for Tableaux To ensure high-quality displays, authorities held a senior-level meeting in



April of the previous year to finalize guidelines. The tableau designs must be colorful, easily comprehensible, and free of any lengthy explanations or logos unless approved by the Committee.

Each tableau will feature the names of the Union Territories and States in Hindi font at the front, with English at the back. The sides will feature the regional language. Similarly, ministries and other government agencies will display their names in Hindi at the front and English at the back. Virtual reality designs can also be incorporated using CDs and DVDs.

The tableau displays will be a key highlight of the Republic Day parade, reflecting the country's heritage, growth, and the spirit of unity in diversity.

## BJP's 'Jumla Patra' Admission of Defeat in Delhi

Manish Sisodia on BJP's Poll Manifesto

- AAP calls BJP's manifesto a "Jumla Patra."
- Sisodia claims BJP's promises are an admission of defeat.
- BJP's 50,000 job promise dismissed as a hollow pledge.
- Kejriwal responds, accusing BJP of having no vision for Delhi.



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Aam Aadmi Party has dismissed the BJP's manifesto, accusing the party of copying AAP's policies and effectively admitting defeat ahead of the Delhi assembly elections. Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia labeled the BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' as a "Jumla Patra" during a press conference on Saturday. The BJP's final manifesto promises to clean the Ya-

munna in three years, provide ownership rights to residents of 1,700 unauthorized colonies, and introduce welfare measures for gig workers and laborers. It also includes promises such as 50,000 new jobs, life insurance for lawyers, and electric buses. However, Sisodia was quick to point out that many of these initiatives had already been implemented by the AAP government.

Sisodia claimed the BJP had no new plans for Delhi and accused Amit Shah of focusing on personal attacks rather than addressing the city's

needs. He further highlighted that the BJP had stalled efforts to de-seal shops during AAP's tenure and criticized Shah's failure to provide security for Delhi's traders.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also responded, stating that the BJP had no vision for Delhi and was merely repeating old promises. He called out the BJP for once again making unfulfilled promises, especially concerning ownership rights for unauthorized colony residents, which the Prime Minister had promised in 2015 and 2020.

# Padma Awards 2025

Padma Shri for 100-year-old freedom fighter, Kuwaiti yoga pioneer, Nagaland fruit farmer

TPN Correspondent  
| New Delhi

On the eve of Republic Day, 30 remarkable individuals were awarded the prestigious Padma Shri, recognizing their extraordinary contributions across various fields. Among the honorees are a 100-year-old freedom fighter, a pioneering Kuwaiti yoga expert, a Nagaland fruit farmer, and a host of others, including

cultural icons and social influencers. The Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian awards, was conferred on Saturday to individuals who have made significant impacts in their respective domains. These include activists, artists, educators, and community leaders who have shown unparalleled dedication to their crafts, cultures, and causes.

## Some Noteworthy Padma Shri Awardees



### Libia Lobo Sardesai

A pivotal figure in Goa's freedom movement, 100-year-old Sardesai co-founded an underground radio station called 'Voz da Liberdade (Voice of Freedom)' in 1955, rallying resistance against Portuguese colonial rule. Her efforts made a lasting impact on Goa's liberation struggle.



### Gokul Chandra Dey

The 57-year-old Dhak player from West Bengal has broken gender norms by training 150 women in the male-dominated art form. He also innovated a lighter version of the dhak, making it 1.5 kg lighter than traditional instruments. Dey has represented India on international stages and collaborated with legends like Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Zakir Hussain.



### Sally Holkar

At 82, Sally Holkar has been a catalyst in reviving the Maheshwari craft. She founded a handloom school in Madhya Pradesh, dedicating five decades to preserving the traditional weaving techniques of this 300-year-old craft.



### Shaikha A J Al Sabah

A Kuwaiti yoga pioneer, Al Sabah has spread the benefits of yoga in the Gulf region, fostering cross-cultural connections and wellness across borders.



### Hugh and Colleen Gantzer

The renowned travel writers and photographers have chronicled India's diverse landscapes, cultures, and traditions, making valuable contributions to the world's understanding of the country's rich heritage.



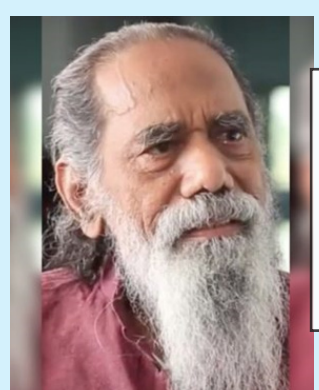
### L Hangthing

An advocate for social reform and cultural preservation, Hangthing has been active in uplifting local communities in Nagaland and promoting the region's heritage.



### P Datchanamoorthy

A distinguished name in Tamil literature and folklore, Datchanamoorthy has contributed significantly to the preservation and promotion of regional literary traditions.



### Maruti Bhujangrao Chitampalli

Chitampalli has been instrumental in promoting India's folk arts, with a special focus on Maharashtra's rural traditions and music.

These awardees come from varied backgrounds, but their shared dedication to cultural preservation, innovation, and societal welfare unites them in their exceptional achievements. The Padma Shri awards are a tribute to their remarkable legacies, each contributing to the national fabric in their unique ways.

# Two Kirti Chakras, 14 Shaurya Chakras in R-Day awards list



TPN Correspondent,  
New Delhi

On the eve of the 76th Republic Day, President Draupadi Murmu approved 93 gallantry awards for personnel of the armed forces and Central Armed Police Forces, including two Kirti Chakras and 14 Shaurya Chakras, the country's second and third highest awards for extraordinary bravery during peacetime.

The list also includes 66 Sena Medals (Gallantry), eight Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry), and two Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry). Additionally, 305 military decorations for distinguished service were granted, including Param Vishisht Seva Med-

als and Vishisht Seva Medals. **Key Awards and Their Recipients:**

- **Kirti Chakra:** The two Kirti Chakras will be awarded posthumously to Naik Dilwar Khan (28 Rashtriya Rifles) and Major Manjit (22 Rashtriya Rifles), both for their valor during counter-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

- **Shaurya Chakra:** Among the 14 Shaurya Chakras, four will be awarded posthumously, including Captain Deepak Singh (48 Rashtriya Rifles) and Havildar Rohit Kumar (Dogra Regiment). Other recipients include Major Ashish Dahiya (50 Rashtriya Rifles) and Subedar Vikas Tomar (1 Para Special

Forces).

**Notable Honors:**

- **Param Vishisht Seva Medal:** This prestigious honor for exceptional service was awarded to 30 officers, including Lieutenant Generals Paramjit Singh Minhas (retd) and Manoj Kumar Katiyar.

- **Uttam Yudh Seva Medal:** Awarded to Lieutenant Generals Rajiv Ghai, Zubin A Minwalla, and Hitesh Bhalla, along with Air Marshals Pan-kaj Mohan Sinha (retd) and Sujeet Pushpakar Dharkar. Colonel Ponung Doming, a woman commanding officer, was recognized for her significant contributions in constructing high-altitude roads in Ladakh's Demchok sector, improving connectivity to military outposts near the China border.

Additionally, Army dog Phantom, posthumously awarded the Mention-in-Despatches for his role in counter-terror operations, was one of the 58 personnel honored.

The honors highlight the bravery and commitment of India's armed forces and paramilitary personnel in serving the nation with extraordinary courage and dedication.

# Court Allows Suspended Lookout Notice for Kwality Ltd. Ex-Promoter

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A Delhi court has directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to suspend the lookout circular (LOC) against Siddhant Gupta, the erstwhile promoter of Kwality Ltd., allowing him to travel abroad for a limited period. The court emphasized that the right to free movement, including international travel, is a constitutional right. Principal District and Sessions Judge Anju Bajaj Chandna granted Gupta permission to visit Singapore from January 25 to February 8 to make arrangements for his daughter's further studies. The court noted that Gupta's anticipatory bail application was pending and listed for hearing on Jan-

uary 30.

- **Court permits Siddhant Gupta to travel to Singapore temporarily.**

- **Judge cites the constitutional right to free movement in the order.**

- **ED opposed the application, citing ongoing investigation.**

The ED opposed Gupta's application, arguing that his departure could harm India's economic interests and that he might not return. Special Public Prosecutor Atul Tripathi pointed out that Gupta is under investigation for allegedly siphoning off loan funds from a consortium of banks, creating dummy companies, and diverting proceeds for personal

benefit.

The court, however, observed that Gupta had been allowed to travel abroad in a related case and concluded that no prejudice would be caused to the ED by permitting his temporary travel.

The allegations against Gupta and his co-promoter Sanjay Dhingra include creating fake entities to inflate Kwality Ltd.'s turnover and misusing loan funds for personal gain.

The court reiterated that Gupta's travel abroad is restricted to the specified period and purpose and noted that constitutional rights cannot be curtailed without justified reasons.

# Delhi-NCR's Air Quality Improves; Ghaziabad, Noida AQI 'Satisfactory'



TPN Correspondent  
| New Delhi

The air quality in Delhi-NCR showed improvement on Saturday morning, with most monitoring stations reporting moderate to poor air quality, as a shallow layer of fog blanketed the region.

In Delhi, the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 195 around 7 am. The Mandir Marg monitoring station recorded the best air quality at 136, while Bawana recorded the worst at 270. AQI readings are catego-

rized as follows: 0-50 (Good), 51-100 (Satisfactory), 101-200 (Moderate), 201-300 (Poor), 301-400 (Very Poor), and 401-500 (Severe).

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasts clear skies for Delhi on Saturday, with surface winds expected from the northwest. Wind speeds will be less than 8 km/h in the morning, increasing to 12-14 km/h by the afternoon, and decreasing to under 10 km/h by evening. Smog or mist may develop at night.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to reach 22°C and 8°C, respectively.

**Noida and Ghaziabad Weather**

In Noida and Ghaziabad, both adjoining cities of Delhi, the AQI remained in the 'Satisfactory' range, with readings of 100 and 96, respectively. Sector 116 in Noida recorded the best air quality with an AQI of 85. The temperature is expected to vary between 9.16°C and 23.58°C.

In Ghaziabad, fog and mist will prevail in the morning, with clear skies later. The temperatures will range between 23°C and 11°C. The Sanjay Nagar station recorded the best AQI in the city at 85.

**Gurugram Weather**

In Gurugram, air quality remained moderate to poor, with the Teri Gram station reporting the worst AQI of 241. The forecast for the day suggests temperatures between 9.02°C and 22.44°C.

# Avoid Fake Narratives, Disruptive Campaign

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
On the occasion of the 15th National Voters' Day, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar called on political parties to refrain from engaging in "disruptive campaigning" and spreading "fake narratives," emphasizing that such practices could lead to disillusionment among the youth regarding the democratic process. Addressing the event in the presence of President Droupadi Murmu, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, and political representatives, Kumar described misinformation and fake narratives as the most significant threats

to democratic systems globally. "I urge political parties to avoid fake narratives and disruptive campaigns to ensure our youth remain engaged with the electoral process," he stated. Kumar assured that the Election Commission (EC) would sincerely address the concerns and suggestions of political parties, offering written responses to improve transparency and trust in the electoral process. "With humility and respect, we will examine every suggestion and provide written feedback. However, I reiterate the importance of avoiding fake narratives," he said.

National Voters' Day has been celebrated since January 25, 2011, marking the establishment of the EC on January 25, 1950. The event aims to raise awareness among citizens about the importance of voting and their role in strengthening democracy. Kumar's remarks came amid criticism from the opposition Congress, which accused the EC of undermining constitutional values and voter trust. Despite the criticism, the CEC reinforced the commission's commitment to safeguarding democratic processes from misinformation and promoting a positive electoral environment.



## Congress Slams Election Commission on National Voters' Day



**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
The Congress criticized the Election Commission on Saturday, accusing it of compromising its professionalism and independence under the influence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. The opposition party claimed that the poll panel's current functioning "makes a mockery of the Constitution" and undermines the voters it is meant to serve. In a post on X, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge expressed concern over the erosion of the Election Commission's institutional integrity over the past decade, describing it as a grave threat to democracy. He emphasized the need to safeguard the independence of democratic institutions to prevent authoritarianism and preserve constitutional principles. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also criticized the poll panel, stating that its self-congratulatory celebrations on National Voters' Day

fail to hide the compromises made to its integrity. He highlighted the contributions of legendary Election Commissioners like Sukumar Sen and TN Seshan, contrasting their achievements with the present situation. Ramesh also pointed out instances of alleged partisanship in recent assembly elections and mentioned that some decisions of the Election Commission are currently under challenge in the Supreme Court. He further recalled criticism of universal adult franchise by the RSS in 1952, noting that the first general elections in India were a milestone in establishing electoral democracy. Ramesh added that the reduction of the voting age to 18 in 1989 further strengthened the democratic process. The Congress leaders reiterated the importance of an impartial Election Commission in ensuring the faith of citizens in India's democratic framework.

## Amit Shah says BJP will continue free schemes in Delhi

**TPN Correspondent, New Delhi**  
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday released the final part of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) manifesto for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, outlining promises such as ownership rights for people in unauthorised colonies, the establishment of a welfare board for gig workers, and 50,000 government jobs. Shah emphasized that the BJP would continue all existing welfare schemes in Delhi, despite claims by the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) that the BJP would halt such initiatives upon taking power. Shah rejected AAP's narrative, calling it a "serious lie" aimed at influencing the election. He affirmed that free schemes like 200 units of free electricity, 20,000 litres of free water,

and free bus rides for women would continue under BJP rule. He also criticized AAP for making unfulfilled promises and not delivering on key issues like pollution control and the cleaning of the Yamuna River. The BJP's manifesto, developed with feedback from over 1,80,000 Delhiites and 12,000 outreach meetings, also includes promises of ₹2,500 monthly allowances for women, free education from KG to PG, and ₹21,000 one-



time aid for pregnant women. The manifesto reiterates BJP's previous pledges of ₹500 LPG cylinders for the poor and pension increases for senior citizens. Shah also accused Delhi's ruling government of corruption, referencing several alleged scams involving AAP ministers. He urged voters to choose the "politics of performance" over the "politics of lies," advocating for BJP's vision of development through a "double engine government" and the transformative impact of central schemes like Jan Dhan Yojana. With Delhi's election approaching, the BJP is positioning itself as a party of continuity and progress, promising further growth and stability under its governance.

## Hindu Sena President's Car Allegedly Fired Upon Near Ajmer

**TPN Correspondent | Jaipur**  
Two unidentified individuals early Saturday morning near Gangwana village on the Ajmer-Delhi Expressway. Gupta, who had visited Ajmer for a court hearing regarding a controversial petition, escaped unhurt in the incident. Ajmer Superintendent of Police (SP) Vandita Rana confirmed that a bullet hole was found on Gupta's car, and a Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team has been called to investigate.

The police are reviewing CCTV footage from the area and questioning Gupta to trace the culprits. The Hindu Sena president had filed a petition last year claiming a Shiva temple existed beneath the Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Dargah in Ajmer, citing records from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). He alleged that this attack was orchestrated by individuals who oppose uncovering the "truth" about the dargah. Recalling the incident, Gupta said, "While on the highway, two men on

a two-wheeler suddenly appeared and began firing at my car. I instructed my driver to accelerate, and when I looked back, I saw the attackers fleeing. I immediately contacted the police." The police stated that Gupta had previously reported receiving several life threats. They assured that all angles, including the alleged threats, are being investigated to identify and apprehend the attackers.

## AAP's new campaign poster features Rahul Gandhi in 'dishonest' list



**TPN Correspondent, New Delhi**  
Ahead of the February 5 Delhi Assembly elections, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has unveiled a new campaign poster that features Congress leader Rahul Gandhi among the "dishonest" figures who will face Arvind Kejriwal's honesty. The poster reads, "Kejriwal ki imandari sare beyimano par padegi bhari" (Kejriwal's

honesty will take on the dishonest), and includes images of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and several BJP leaders, alongside Rahul Gandhi. This is the first time AAP has targeted Rahul Gandhi in such a manner, despite the two parties being part of the opposition bloc 'INDIA' at the nation-

level. Both AAP and Congress are in a fierce contest for the Delhi assembly, with the Congress criticizing AAP for its alleged corruption and lack of development in the capital. Congress candidate Alka Lamba accused Kejriwal of undermining the party by aligning with the BJP during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and challenged him to quit the INDIA bloc. Meanwhile, AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar has alleged that Congress has a "secret alliance" with BJP, accusing the party of being silent on several issues, including the distribution of black money and voter manipulation. The poster and the war of words between AAP and Congress are intensifying the already bitter rivalry between the two parties in the lead-up to the Delhi elections.

## Delhi constituency watch In GK, civic issues belie idea of opulence

**TPN Correspondent, New Delhi**  
Greater Kailash (GK) is one of Delhi's wealthiest constituencies, known for its affluent markets, upscale residential areas, and tree-lined streets. However, beneath its elegant exterior lies a different reality, where civic issues such as irregular water supply, sewage problems, traffic mismanagement, narrow streets, and waterlogging dominate local concerns. The constituency is home to nearly 200,000 voters, spread across areas like Greater Kailash 1, Greater Kailash 2, and Panchsheel Park, alongside upper-middle-class localities like Chittaranjan Park, Asiad Village, and Kailash Colony. The constituency also includes urban villages such as Zamrudpur and Shahpur Jat, as well as slum clusters like Jagdamba Camp, highlighting the disparities within the seat. AAP's Saurabh Bharadwaj, a three-time MLA, is facing challenges from BJP's Shikha Rai and Congress candidate Gar-

vit Singhvi. While Bharadwaj defends his tenure, pointing to visible improvements under the Kejriwal government, his opponents argue that civic infrastructure has deteriorated under AAP's rule. Rai, from BJP, claims that water shortages and waterlogging have plagued the area for years and promises comprehensive plans for infrastructure development, including multi-storey parking. Singhvi, representing Congress, emphasizes unity and progress, accusing AAP of neglecting development in the constituency and promising a better future. He is determined to turn Greater Kailash into Delhi's best constituency. On the ground, residents express mixed views. While some praise Bharadwaj for im-

provements in sanitation and water supply, others, like business owners in Shahpur Jat and Chittaranjan Park, highlight persistent issues with dilapidated infrastructure, high water bills, and uncollected garbage. In urban villages like Zamrudpur and Jagdamba Camp, residents face more severe challenges, with unsafe living conditions, overhead wires, and open drains that remain unresolved despite repeated complaints. As the February 5 elections approach, Greater Kailash voters are weighing their options. While Bharadwaj's supporters point to the progress made under AAP's governance, those disillusioned by the state of local infrastructure are considering alternatives, with the BJP and Congress offering their own visions for change. This constituency is poised to be a key battleground, reflecting the broader political dynamics of Delhi.



## Punjab Ranks Last in Fiscal Health Index 2025, SAD Demands CM Mann's Resignation

Shiromani Akali Dal demands probe into alleged misuse of public funds.

TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh

Punjab's performance in the National Fiscal Health Index 2025, where it ranked last among 18 major states, has drawn sharp criticism from the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). Senior leaders Bikram Singh Majithia and Dr. Daljit Singh Cheema have slammed Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's administration, accusing it of failing comprehensively on all five fiscal health parameters outlined by Niti Aayog.

The index evaluated states on quality of expenditure, revenue mobilisation, fiscal prudence, debt indices, and debt sustainability. Punjab's poor showing has been attributed to alleged mismanagement by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

- Punjab allocated just 10% of its development expenditure on capital projects.
- SAD accuses the AAP government of diverting public funds for party use.
- Demands include resignations



of CM Bhagwant Mann and Finance Minister Harpal Cheema. The SAD leaders expressed shock at Punjab's fiscal performance, highlighting that the state allocated only 10% of its development expenditure to capital investments. This, they claim, indicates a diversion of public funds for political purposes. "The AAP government has failed to demonstrate fiscal prudence and has jeopardized the state's financial health," Majithia said, calling for a high-level probe into the

alleged misappropriation. The opposition also demanded the immediate resignation of Chief Minister Mann and Finance Minister Harpal Cheema, holding them accountable for Punjab's financial distress.

The report has sparked a political debate, with critics questioning the AAP's governance and its impact on the state's fiscal stability. Meanwhile, the Mann administration has yet to issue a detailed response to the allegations.

## First Sikh CJ I Khehar, Cricketer Ashwin Among Padma Awardees for 2025

139 distinguished individuals receive Padma Awards, including 23 women and 13 posthumous recipients.



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Government of India announced the prestigious Padma Awards on the eve of the 76th Republic Day, honoring 139 eminent personalities for their contributions across various disciplines. The awards include seven Padma Vibhushan, 19 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri decorations.

Justice (Retd) J.S. Khehar, the first Sikh Chief Justice of India, received the Padma Vibhushan for his exceptional service to the judiciary. Suzuki's former CEO, the late Osamu Suzuki, folk singer Sharda Sinha (posthumously), and celebrated author M.T. Vasudevan Nair were also among the recipients of the Padma Vibhushan.

Former cricketer R. Ashwin and hockey goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh were honored with the Padma Shri for their sports achievements. Telugu superstar Nandamuri Balakrishna earned a Padma Bhushan for his contributions to cinema. Former SBI Chairperson Arundhati Bhattacharya received the Padma Shri for her leadership in fi-

nance.

Among the 19 Padma Bhushan recipients are economist Bibek Debroy, ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas, filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, and former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi. Posthumous awards were conferred upon leaders like Manohar Joshi, former Maharashtra Chief Minister and ex-Lok Sabha Speaker. The Ministry of Home Affairs highlighted that 23 of the awardees are women, while 10 recipients hail from the NRI, PIO, or OCI categories. The awards span diverse fields such as art, social work, public affairs, trade and industry, medicine, literature, sports, and civil service.

The Padma Awards, one of India's highest civilian honors, celebrate individuals whose contributions significantly impact society. Padma Vibhushan recognizes exceptional service, Padma Bhushan is for distinguished service of high order, and Padma Shri is awarded for excellence in any field.

## Decades of Aspiration Fulfilled: Vande Bharat Train Reaches Srinagar in Trial Run

A new era of connectivity for Jammu and Kashmir, with advanced features tailored for the region's winters.

TPN Correspondent | Srinagar

A historic milestone was achieved on Saturday as the Vande Bharat Express train made its inaugural trial run to Srinagar, bridging Kashmir to the rest of India in just over three decades since the project's inception. Starting its journey from Katra station at 8 am, the state-of-the-art train reached Nowgam station in Srinagar in just three and a half hours. The trial continued with a brief halt at Nowgam before proceeding to Budgam station, marking the successful completion of the Jammu-Srinagar route trial.

Designed to cater to Jammu and Kashmir's unique needs, the train is equipped with advanced heating systems to ensure seamless operations in sub-zero temperatures during harsh winters.

A three-decade-long vision of better connectivity to Kashmir finally ma-

terializes with the advanced Vande Bharat Express. The Jammu-Srinagar route promises reduced travel times, enhancing accessibility and regional integration. Special features like winter-ready heating systems highlight the train's adaptation to the region's extreme conditions. This development is poised to significantly enhance the socio-economic fabric of Jammu and Kashmir, offering faster, more reliable connectivity while symbolizing progress and unity in the region.



## Anurag Thakur Slams Kejriwal Over AAP's "Dishonest" Poster; Congress Joins Criticism

Delhi CM faces backlash from BJP and Congress for labeling opposition leaders as "dishonest".

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Anurag Thakur took aim at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) released a controversial poster branding several opposition leaders as "dishonest." The poster, shared on AAP's social media platforms, prominently featured Kejriwal alongside BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Congress figures like Rahul Gandhi, with a caption claiming, "Kejriwal's honesty will prevail over all the dishonest people."

Thakur, whose image was also included, questioned Kejriwal's self-proclaimed integrity and accused him of excluding his party colleagues.

Thakur called out Kejriwal for excluding Atishi's face, alleging gender bias.



The BJP leader accused AAP of corruption, including the alleged Delhi liquor scam.

Congress criticized AAP for "insulting" figures like Manmohan Singh and Sheila Dikshit.

"Why is Delhi Minister Atishi missing from the poster? Kejriwal only sees himself as 'Delhi ka Shehensha'," Thakur remarked, accusing the Delhi CM of ignoring women in his party.

He further linked Kejriwal to the Delhi liquor scam, claiming, "People of Delhi will not elect someone who thinks about governing from behind bars."

Meanwhile, Congress leader Alka Lamba condemned AAP's labeling of Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sandeep Dikshit, and Ajay Maken as "dishonest." She pointed out that Kejriwal had previously praised former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's honesty, saying, "He should apologize to Dr. Singh's wife." Lamba also called Kejriwal out for earlier seeking Congress's support during elections, branding the alliance a mistake.

As Delhi heads to the polls on February 5, political tensions continue to escalate, with the poster controversy becoming a central topic of discourse. Votes will be counted on February 8.

## Allocate funds for Bengaluru in Union Budget: DK Shivakumar to Sitharaman

DK Shivakumar seeks Centre's support for tunnel roads, double-decker flyovers, and more.

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

With just a week left before the Union Budget 2025, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, urging financial allocation for Bengaluru's ambitious infrastructure projects. These projects include tunnel roads, double-decker flyovers, a peripheral ring road, and expanded water supply systems, aimed at addressing the city's rapid urban growth.



Shivakumar emphasized Bengaluru's growing status as a global tech hub, highlighting its contribution to job creation and economic progress. However, the city's burgeoning population, now nearing 1.5 crore, has placed immense pressure on its infrastructure. "Developing Bengaluru's infrastructure is vital to maintaining its reputation as India's Silicon Valley," he stated, appealing for the Centre's financial assistance in the upcoming budget.

Tunnel roads from Hebbal to Silk Board Junction proposed at Rs 15,000 crore.

Double-decker metro flyovers in Phase 4 estimated at Rs 8,916 crore.

Peripheral Ring Road and water projects to cost over Rs 27,000 crore.

Among the most critical projects is the 18.5 km north-south tunnel road from Esteem Mall to Silk Board Junction, aimed at decongesting the city's notoriously clogged roads. This Rs 15,000 crore project is part of a broader tunnel road network, including a 28.5 km corridor from KR Puram to Nayandahalli Junction, costing Rs 25,000 crore.

The government also plans to extend the successful double-decker metro flyovers from Phase 2 to Phase 4, with a 45 km route connecting JP Nagar to Hebbal and Hosahalli to Kadabagere, projected at Rs 8,916 crore.

To further tackle traffic woes, 17 new flyovers spanning 99.5 km are planned across 11 major junctions, alongside a 300 km buffer zone road to address encroachments near water bodies.

Additionally, the Bangalore Development Authority is spearheading the eight-lane, 73 km Peripheral Ring Road project at Rs 27,000 crore, while the Cauvery Stage VI project aims to secure 500 MLD of additional water by 2028.

The Karnataka government has invited public discussions on several of these projects, reflecting its commitment to inclusive planning. Shivakumar expressed hope that the Union Budget will provide the necessary support to realize these transformative initiatives, ensuring Bengaluru's continued growth as a global city.

## Karnataka Court Accepts Closure Report in Bribery Case Against CM Siddaramaiah

Lokayukta police find no evidence of quid pro quo in Rs 1.3 crore bribery allegations.



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A special court in Karnataka designated to handle criminal cases against elected representatives has accepted the closure report submitted by the Karnataka Lokayukta police in a bribery case involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

The allegations, made by a BJP leader, accused Siddaramaiah of receiving Rs 1.3 crore during his earlier tenure as Chief Minister in exchange for appointing a steward at the Bengaluru Turf Club (BTC).

On January 18, the court ruled in favor of the

Lokayukta's findings, stating, "The closure report filed by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Karnataka Lokayukta, Bengaluru, dated 12.9.2024, is hereby accepted." While acknowledging that records showed Siddaramaiah received Rs 1.3 crore from the accused L. Vivekananda, the court noted that this transaction could not be definitively linked to a quid pro quo arrangement related to the steward's nomination at BTC.

The case centered on alleged bribery involving a high-profile appointment at Bengaluru Turf Club. No conclusive evidence of quid pro quo was found in the Lokayukta's investigation. The court had previously directed the Lokayukta to reopen and further probe the matter. The case initially gained traction after the special court ordered the Lokayukta police to reopen the investigation. However, the subsequent inquiry did not substantiate the claims of corruption, leading to the filing and eventual acceptance of the closure report.

This decision serves as a significant relief for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who faced the allegations during a politically sensitive time. The ruling also highlights the complexities involved in proving bribery cases, particularly those involving high-ranking officials.

# Voters Should Rise Above Narrowmindedness and Inducements

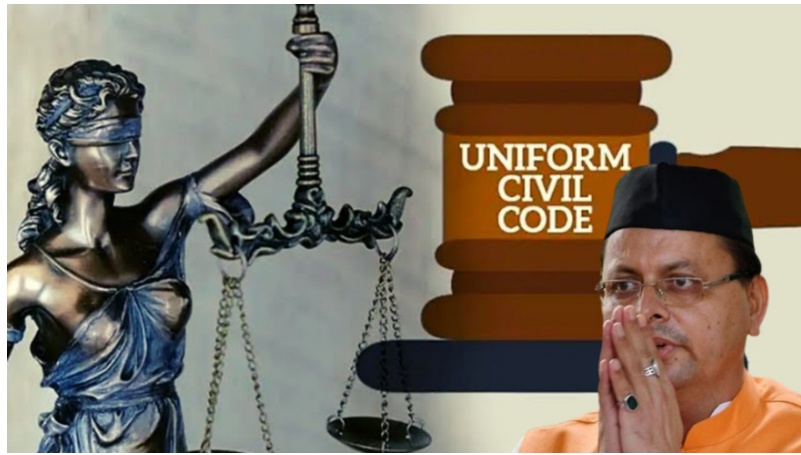
**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
President Droupadi Murmu urged voters to rise above narrowmindedness, discrimination, and allurement while exercising their franchise, emphasizing the importance of faith in democracy. Speaking at the 15th National Voters' Day event in New Delhi, she highlighted the vital role of enlightened voters in strengthening democracy. Addressing an audience that included Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, and other dignitaries, President Murmu lauded the Election Commission (EC) for its efforts to enhance transparency

and inclusivity in the electoral process. The President praised the increasing participation of women in elections, calling it a sign of societal and national development. She also commended the EC's initiatives to facilitate voting for citizens aged 85 and above, differently-abled individuals, and tribal voters in remote areas. Union Law Minister Meghwal underscored the government's commitment to electoral reforms. He highlighted the passage of laws for 33% reservation for women in legislatures and the ongoing consideration of simultaneous polls, a

measure he believes will enhance governance. On the occasion, President Murmu presented the Best Electoral Practices Awards to state and district officials for their exemplary contributions to ensuring smooth elections. She also received the first copy of India Votes 2024: A Saga of Democracy. National Voters' Day has been observed since January 25, 2011, to mark the establishment of the Election Commission on January 25, 1950, a day before India became a republic. The event aims to celebrate and strengthen the country's democratic values.



## Uttarakhand to Roll Out Uniform Civil Code on January 27



**TPN Correspondent | Dehradun**  
Uttarakhand is set to become the first state in India to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) on January 27, the same day Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit. The UCC portal will be launched at 12:30 pm from the Secretariat, marking a historic move for the state. The Uniform Civil Code will be enforced across Uttarakhand, making it the pioneering state to adopt the law, which was officially notified earlier this week. The law is designed to provide legal guidelines on marital matters, individual rights, and social harmony, aiming for uniformity in personal laws across the state. **UCC to Impact All Residents of Uttarakhand**  
As per the state's announcement, the UCC will apply to all residents of Uttarakhand, both

within the state and those residing outside. However, certain groups, including Scheduled Tribes and persons with protected status, are exempt from the provisions of the UCC. **What is the Uniform Civil Code?**  
The Uniform Civil Code aims to create a unified set of personal laws for all citizens, irrespective of their religion, gender, or caste. It addresses key areas such as marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, and succession. The law includes comprehensive provisions related to marriage, divorce, annulment, succession, and even live-in relationships. However, opposition leaders have expressed concerns, calling it "unfeasible" and potentially divisive along religious lines. Responding to critics, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama emphasized earlier this

week that the UCC is designed to create a "uniform system and law for all," dismissing accusations of divisiveness. **The Constitutional Basis of UCC**  
Article 44 of the Indian Constitution discusses the need for a Uniform Civil Code: "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India." Prime Minister Modi highlighted in his Independence Day speech the Supreme Court's recommendations and the spirit of the Constitution, urging a serious national dialogue on the matter. **UCC Portal Functionality**  
The newly introduced UCC portal will allow citizens to register marriages, divorces, inheritance rights, live-in relationships, and their termination, starting next week. The process can be carried out remotely via mobile phones, with status updates provided through e-mail and SMS. An online complaint system will also be available for citizens to address concerns. In addition to the UCC implementation, Uttarakhand recently conducted local body elections, with voting taking place on January 23 for 11 Municipal Corporations, 43 Municipal Councils, and 46 Nagar Panchayats. The counting of votes is currently underway on January 25.

## 'Mamata Banerjee can't disown...'

### RG Kar rape case victim's parents allege bid to 'hush up ghastly incident'

**TPN Correspondent | Kolkata**  
The parents of the RG Kar hospital rape-murder case victim have accused Kolkata police and hospital authorities of attempting to cover up the crime and protect the 'main conspirators'. They allege that the investigation was mishandled and that key evidence was tampered with in an attempt to conceal the truth. The victim's mother told a Bengali TV channel that the entire system, including the Kolkata Police, hospital administration, and TMC representatives, worked together to suppress the incident. "The truth was hidden to ensure it didn't come to light," she stated, blaming the local authorities and even the state government for their role in the cover-up. The mother raised serious questions about the handling of the crime scene, point-

ing out that the evidence was compromised when a large number of onlookers entered the area before the scene was sealed. She also questioned why, despite the footage of 68 individuals in the vicinity on the morning of August 9, only one person, Sanjay Roy, was identified as the perpetrator. She further accused both the CBI and Kolkata Police of a lackluster investigation, claiming that they did not address the suppression of facts and failed to uncover the larger conspiracy behind the crime. The victim's father echoed the same concerns, accusing both agencies of shielding the real culprits with a poor investigation. In response, Kunal Ghosh, a spokesperson for Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, called the allegations "unfortunate" and claimed they were

influenced by external forces aiming to defame the CM. He emphasized that it was under Mamata Banerjee's instruction that the police accelerated the investigation, arresting Sanjay Roy promptly. He added that the case had been handed over to the CBI after the Calcutta High Court intervened. Ghosh also defended the state's track record, stating that the state police had achieved convictions in similar rape-murder cases in the past. The RG Kar case revolves around the brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old post-graduate trainee, whose body was found on August 9, 2024, in a semi-naked state at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. Sanjay Roy, the lone convict, was sentenced to life imprisonment on January 20, 2025, by the trial court.



## Suspect in Multiple Murders Killed in Police Encounter in Meerut



**TPN Correspondent | Lucknow**  
A suspect wanted in multiple murder cases, including the brutal killings of five family members on January 9, was shot dead in a police encounter early Saturday morning in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. Naeem, who had been on the run for 25 years, was tracked down after a 15-day manhunt. On January 9, five hacked bodies were discovered in a rented house in Sohail Garden, Meerut. The victims, including Mohd Moin, his wife Aasma,

and their three young daughters, were believed to have been murdered by Naeem, who was with the family the night of the killings. UP Director General of Police (DGP) Prashant Kumar confirmed that Naeem had been under a ₹50,000 bounty for his involvement in the murders. Police attempted to arrest him at Samar Garden, where he had visited family members. As they tried to apprehend him, Naeem opened fire, prompting the police to retaliate, fatally

injuring him. He was declared dead after being transported to a hospital. The police also stated that Naeem had been involved in multiple killings over the years, including the murder of two traders in Mumbai in 2006. He had assumed different identities in various cities, including Malegaon, Mumbai, and Delhi, and was married to three women across different locations. Despite the murders, Naeem had maintained his distance from his families.

## Lawrence Bishnoi's Associate Arrested in Punjab

**TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh**  
In a significant breakthrough, Punjab Police's Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) has arrested an associate of the Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldy Brar gang in connection with the Dera Bassi firing incident. The accused, identified as Meh-fuj, alias Vishal Khan, was apprehended near the Punjab-Haryana border, police said on Saturday. The operation, conducted jointly with Mohali Police, also led to the recovery of a .32 calibre pistol and five cartridges from the accused. Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav confirmed the arrest on social

media, stating, "In a major breakthrough, Punjab Police's AGTF, in coordination with Mohali Police, apprehended an associate of Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldy Brar gang." DGP Yadav further revealed that Vishal Khan, along with another gang member, Man-jeet, who is currently lodged in Tihar Jail, masterminded the firing incident outside an immigration centre in Dera Bassi on September 19, 2024. According to Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Promod Ban, the operation was based on precise intelligence about Khan's hideouts. Special teams under Assistant Inspector General (AIG) Gurmeet Chauhan

and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mohali Deepak Pareek coordinated efforts to track and apprehend him. AIG Gurmeet Chauhan stated that Vishal Khan has a criminal history and has been linked to delivering weapon consignments for the gang. He also received arms from Haryana-based gangster Joginder, alias Joga, who was previously involved in providing logistical support for the Sidhu Moosewala murder case. The arrest marks a significant blow to the gang's operations, with further investigations expected to uncover more details about their activities.

# India, Indonesia To Enhance Ties In Defence, Maritime Security: PM Modi

PM Modi and President Prabowo discuss collaboration in trade, defence, and digital innovation.

**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto held pivotal bilateral discussions on Saturday at Hyderabad House, New Delhi, reinforcing a shared commitment to regional peace, economic growth, and cultural exchange. The meeting resulted in the signing of multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) covering diverse sectors, including health, digital infrastructure, and defence.

India and Indonesia to celebrate 2025 as the India-ASEAN Year of Tourism, enhancing cultural and tourism exchanges.

Bilateral trade between the two nations surpassed \$30 billion, showcasing robust economic ties. Collaborations in maritime security, counter-terrorism, and de-radicalisation were key highlights of the agreements. Strategic and Regional Collaboration PM Modi underscored Indonesia's central role in ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific regions, aligning with India's 'Act East' policy. He reiterated the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and adherence to international laws in the Indo-Pacific, reflecting shared interests in regional stability.



The leaders also pledged collaboration in emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Fintech, and the Internet of Things. Defence cooperation included agreements on maritime safety, counter-terrorism, and capacity building, aiming to enhance security across shared waters.

Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bali Jatra. He also emphasised India's contributions to preserving Indonesia's Prambanan Hindu Temple, symbolising enduring cultural cooperation.

President Prabowo echoed these sentiments, noting the historical connection between the two nations. He expressed gratitude for India's support during Indonesia's independence struggle and lauded India's assistance in trade, tourism, and technology.

**Looking Ahead**  
The leaders agreed to celebrate 2025 as the India-ASEAN Year

of Tourism, promoting cultural exchanges and bolstering tourism. They also acknowledged Indonesia's participation in BRICS as an avenue for advancing Global South interests. President Prabowo expressed honour at being the Chief Guest for India's Republic Day celebrations, marking a symbolic continuation of the ties forged when Indonesia's President Sukarno attended the first Republic Day parade in 1950. The bilateral discussions underscored the shared vision of a prosperous Indo-Pacific, reflecting the depth of India-Indonesia ties and setting the stage for an enduring strategic partnership.

## Pakistan Reports First Monkeypox Case of 2025 Amid Rising Concerns

A patient returning from Dubai tests positive for mpox, taking Pakistan's total cases to 10

**TPN Correspondent | Pakistan**  
Pakistan has confirmed its first case of Monkeypox (mpox) for 2025, detected in a patient who returned from Dubai on January 24. The individual was identified during screening at Peshawar airport and has been transferred to Services Hospital Peshawar for treatment, as reported by ARY News.

This case brings Pakistan's total confirmed mpox cases to 10 since the health emergency was declared. The Ministry of Health has assured citizens that stringent measures are being implemented to curb the virus's spread, especially considering the patient's travel history linked to Gulf nations, raising concerns about regional transmission.

Patient screened at Peshawar airport after returning from Dubai; isolated for treatment. Mpox symptoms include fever, rash progressing through vesicles and pustules, and exhaustion. Health authorities intensify screening and preventive measures to control the spread. Earlier, a passenger traveling from Sharjah exhibited symptoms of mpox during medical checks at another airport. Identified as Javed Ahmed, the individual was taken

to an isolation ward in Rajanpur as a precautionary measure. Health officials have termed the situation alarming and are reinforcing safety protocols.

**Understanding Monkeypox**  
Mpox, caused by the Mpox virus, typically begins with a rash appearing 1 to 3 days after fever onset. The rash progresses through stages including vesicles, pustules, and scabs, often starting on the face before spreading across the body. Other symptoms include swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion, and headaches.

The virus has an incubation period ranging from 5 to 21 days and usually lasts between 2 to 4 weeks. While the natural reservoir of the virus remains unidentified, African rodents and non-human primates are suspected carriers.

As Pakistan grapples with this new case, health authorities continue to monitor incoming travelers and enforce isolation protocols to prevent a larger outbreak. The incident highlights the importance of international cooperation and local vigilance in addressing the resurgence of viral diseases.



## 4 Israeli Women Hostages Freed by Hamas in Second Ceasefire Swap

Fragile truce facilitated by Qatar, Egypt, and the US shows potential for ending the war in Gaza.



**TPN Correspondent | Israel**

Four female Israeli soldiers were released by Hamas today under the terms of a fragile ceasefire agreement between Israel and Gaza. The hostages—Naama Levy (20), Daniella Gilboa (20), Liri Albag (19), and Karina Ariev (20)—were handed over to the Red Cross in military uniforms and escorted out of Gaza.

Captured on October 7, 2023, the women were taken from the Nahal Oz military base, just one kilometre from the Gaza border. Their releases mark the second exchange in a ceasefire deal mediated by Qatar, Egypt, and the

United States.

Hamas released the soldiers in exchange for 200 Palestinian prisoners. Naama Levy and Daniella Gilboa appeared injured during their initial capture. Ceasefire negotiations facilitated by Qatar, Egypt, and the US led to this exchange. The agreement stipulates that 33 hostages believed to be alive will be returned over a 42-day truce in exchange for 1,900 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

The deal has raised hopes for a more permanent resolution, though challenges remain. Displaced Gazans returning home

find themselves amidst devastating rubble. "Even if we thought about returning, there is no place for us to put our tents because of the destruction," shared Thegra Qasem, a displaced woman.

US President Donald Trump claimed full credit for the ceasefire via his Truth Social platform, calling it an "EPIC ceasefire agreement" following his election victory.

The next phases of the agreement will focus on reconstruction in Gaza and recovering the bodies of deceased hostages, as both sides work towards a permanent resolution.

## Polio Returns To Pakistan, Afghanistan As Vaccinations Stall

The resurgence of poliovirus in conflict-hit regions underscores the urgent need

**TPN Correspondent | Pakistan**  
The global fight against polio has faced a severe setback as cases rise sharply in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Once close to eradication, the disease is making a troubling comeback. In 2023, Pakistan recorded only six cases of wild poliovirus, but the number surged to 73 in 2024, highlighting a dramatic reversal in progress.

Pakistan's polio cases surged from six in 2023 to 73 in 2024, alarming global health experts. In Afghanistan, ongoing conflict and restrictions on female health workers hamper immunisation efforts. Regional collaboration and revised immunisation strategies are key to tackling the crisis. The resurgence of polio is closely tied to regional dynamics, with Afghanistan's conflict and governance issues



significantly influencing the spread of the virus. Zulfikar Bhutta, an expert in child immunisation strategies, confirms that genetic strains in Pakistan trace back to Afghanistan.

He attributes the spread to poor sanitary conditions, restricted healthcare access under Taliban rule, and inadequate immunisation coverage. Afghanistan's deteriorating health

infrastructure has also contributed to the rise of other infectious diseases, such as pneumonia, dengue, and measles, further complicating efforts to combat polio. Bhutta's observations underline the importance of addressing broader health challenges in conjunction with targeted polio eradication programs.

**Challenges in Eradication Efforts**  
Pakistan has invested heavily in its immunisation efforts, spending \$10 billion since 2011. Yet, disparities in vaccination coverage persist, with rates as high as 85% in Punjab but as low as 30% in Balochistan. Bhutta emphasizes that achieving uniform coverage of at least 85-90% across provinces is essential for eradication. He calls for strengthening routine immunisation programs to tackle multiple infectious diseases, not just polio.

**Collaboration for a Solution**  
Despite the challenges, Bhutta offers a pathway forward: fostering collaboration with the Taliban. Drawing from his experience of working with the group to deliver smallpox vaccines during negotiated peace periods, Bhutta stresses that the Taliban share common health concerns. He advocates for leveraging such shared priorities to facilitate healthcare delivery in conflict zones.

The resurgence of polio in Pakistan and Afghanistan is a stark reminder of the fragile gains in public health. A comprehensive strategy that combines international support, regional cooperation, and strengthened healthcare systems is vital to overcoming this crisis and eradicating poliovirus for good.

# “Plan For The Unplanned” And 5 Other Maxims From S Jaishankar



**TPN Correspondent, New Delhi**  
External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar shared insightful advice on how to live well, during an event in Australia over three months ago. His tips, which were well-received by the audience, focused on stress management, relationships, and health. Speaking at the release of the book *Live While You're Alive* by motivational speaker Shiv Khera, Jaishankar presented six of his personal maxims, which he believes can guide anyone towards success. Among his takeaways were: “plan for the unplanned,” “invest in relationships,” “no appeasement,” “no toxicity,” “respect time,” and “get a good night’s

sleep.” The minister also reflected on how, in his demanding role, he has learned to deal with stress. Over time, he has focused on what he calls the three Cs of success: Contact, Chemistry, and Credibility. He explained that building strong relationships (contact) and getting along with people (chemistry) are vital, but it’s credibility – being known for keeping promises – that ultimately gains trust and influence. Jaishankar also touched upon the importance of staying fit, noting that physical health plays a crucial role in mental sharpness. He shared that he dedicates an hour each day to fitness, combining yoga with competitive

squash. He emphasized that regular physical activity helps maintain both physical and mental well-being. Shiv Khera, in his speech, also pointed out the growing impact of stress, which he referred to as a “silent killer.” He stressed the need for a better work-life balance and for people to focus on managing stress to preserve both health and relationships. The discussion sparked interest in how modern society is handling stress, with Jaishankar’s insights providing a lighter, yet profound perspective on staying grounded and fit, despite the pressures of high-stakes political roles.

## BSF Seizes Phensedyl Bottles Worth ₹1.4 Crore Near Bangladesh Border



**TPN Correspondent | Kolkata**  
In a significant operation ahead of Republic Day, the Border Security Force (BSF), in collaboration with local police, busted a major smuggling racket along the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB) in West Bengal’s Nadia district. The joint operation led to the discovery of three underground storerooms in the Naghata area of Majhdia town on Saturday, containing 62,200 bottles of Phensedyl, a banned codeine-based cough syrup. The estimated value of the seized bottles is ₹1,40,58,444. Phensedyl, widely smuggled across the IBB into Bangladesh, is sold at high prices as a recreational drug. DIG and spokesperson for the South Bengal Frontier, N K Pandey, stated, “The scale of this seizure took us by surprise. Smugglers had

devised a new method of storing large quantities near the border for easier transportation. Acting on reliable intelligence, troops of the 32 Bn BSF and officers from Kishanganj police station conducted a cordon and search operation, delivering a significant blow to the smuggling syndicate.”

- **62,200 bottles of Phensedyl seized from underground storerooms near IBB.**
- **Storage facility discovered in West Bengal’s Nadia district; estimated value ₹1.4 crore.**
- **Smuggling syndicates use Phensedyl as a recreational drug in Bangladesh.**

Of the three storerooms, two were hidden under dense vegetation, while the third was located beneath a hut constructed with corrugated galvanized iron sheets. Unfortunately,

no individuals were present during the raid, raising suspicions of lookout activity by smugglers. DIG Pandey noted that the storage facility had the capacity to hold more stock, suggesting additional consignments may have already been smuggled across the border. The cartons of seized bottles have been handed over to the concerned department for further legal action. Investigations are underway to trace the source of the Phensedyl bottles and identify the supply chain from manufacturing units to the border. “This operation has uncovered a complex smuggling network, and further revelations are expected as the investigation progresses,” DIG Pandey added.

## Pakistan’s ISI Sends High-Level Delegation To Dhaka; India Says “Keeping An Eye”

**TPN Correspondent, New Delhi**  
In a move that has raised concerns in New Delhi, Pakistan’s spy agency, ISI, sent four top officials to Dhaka on January 21, including Major General Shahid Amir Afsar, Director General of Analysis in the ISI. This visit marks the first time in nearly two decades that an official ISI delegation has been dispatched to Bangladesh. The delegation arrived aboard an Emirates Airlines flight, which had a layover in Dubai. Upon arrival, they were received by a senior official from Bangladesh’s Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI). India’s Ministry of External Affairs has acknowledged the visit and assured that it is closely monitoring the developments in the region, particularly those that could impact national security. A spokesperson emphasized that India is always vigilant about activities in its immediate neighborhood and will take “appropriate action” if necessary. This visit by the ISI delegation follows a Bangladeshi military delegation’s visit to Rawalpindi,

Pakistan, just days earlier. During their visit, which took place from January 13 to 18, the Bangladeshi delegation met with senior military officials, including the Pakistan Army Chief Gen. Asim Munir. The delegation, led by Lt. Gen. SM Kamrul Hasan, had extensive talks about strengthening military ties between the two nations. The ISI delegation’s trip to Bangladesh is being closely scrutinized, as it includes high-ranking officials like Afsar, who has previously served as Pakistan’s defense attache in Beijing. Reports indicate that the ISI delegation is touring several military facilities in Bangladesh and is being briefed on the country’s military readiness and capabilities. The visit comes after a significant shift in Bangladesh’s military policy under the leadership of its interim government, which has been fostering closer ties with Pakistan. Historically, under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh had significantly curtailed ISI activities in the

country due to the agency’s covert operations and interference in Bangladesh’s internal affairs. Sheikh Hasina’s government had cracked down on ISI operatives during her tenure, particularly in the 1990s when the ISI used Bangladeshi soil to fund insurgency activities in India’s northeastern states. While the ISI had been effectively barred from operating in Bangladesh during Hasina’s tenure, the current political climate under the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus has seen an uptick in military cooperation between Bangladesh and Pakistan, raising alarms in New Delhi about the potential consequences for regional security. India has expressed its concerns over the growing military engagement between Bangladesh and Pakistan, with external affairs ministry officials reiterating that they are closely monitoring the situation and will act decisively if the developments pose a threat to India’s national interests.



## Ricky Gill, Saurabh Sharma, Kush Desai Indian-Americans Part Of Trump 2.0

**TPN Correspondent, Washington**  
US President Donald Trump has appointed three Indian-Americans to key roles in his second term, further strengthening the diversity of his administration. Ricky Gill, Saurabh Sharma, and Kush Desai have each been entrusted with significant responsibilities within the White House. Ricky Gill, an expert in international relations, returns to the National Security Council (NSC) as Senior Director for South and Central Asia. He previously served as Director for Russia and European Energy Security during Trump’s first term. In addition to his time at the NSC, Gill has experience as a Senior Advisor in the State Department’s Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. After his initial tenure in government, he led Gill Capital Group and worked as an adviser on European and Asian energy for TC Energy, the company behind the Keystone XL Pipeline. Saurabh Sharma, a Bengaluru-born conservative strategist, has been appointed to the Presidential Personnel Office, where he will focus on staffing and appointments. Sharma previously served as the President of American Moment, an organization dedicated to personnel development. A graduate in Biochemistry from the University of Texas at Austin, Sharma was recognized during Trump’s first term as one of ten student activists invited to the White House. Kush Desai, a seasoned communications strategist, has been appointed Deputy Press Secretary in the White House. Desai brings extensive experience from his previous roles, including Deputy Communications Director for the 2024 Republican

National Convention and Communications Director for the Republican Party of Iowa. He has also played a pivotal role in shaping messaging in crucial battleground states, including Pennsylvania, during his tenure with the Republican National Committee. These appointments underscore Trump’s continued efforts to diversify his team and leverage the expertise of Indian-Americans in shaping the administration’s policies.

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## Terrorists To Economic Offenders: 5 Fugitives India Is Trying To Extradite

**TPN Correspondent, New Delhi**  
India is engaged in a fierce battle to extradite several fugitives, including terrorists and economic offenders, who have sought refuge abroad. According to government sources, about one-third of these fugitives are believed to be hiding in the United States, which is being viewed as a “safe haven” for criminals and terrorists. Among the most high-profile cases, the extradition of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman

Tahawwur Hussain Rana has seen significant progress. **Anmol Bishnoi** Anmol Bishnoi, the brother of notorious gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, is implicated in high-profile murders, including that of singer Sidhu Moosewala. Arrested in the US for entering the country illegally, India has requested his extradition. However, sources indicate his extradition may not happen quickly despite his custody status in the US. **Vijay Mallya** Liquor baron Vijay Mallya, facing a

massive loan default case exceeding Rs 9,000 crore, has been in the UK since 2016. Despite legal hurdles, India has been pursuing his extradition for his role in defrauding financial institutions. Last year, a fresh non-bailable warrant was issued against him in a separate loan default case, intensifying the legal battle. **Nirav Modi** Diamantaire Nirav Modi, the prime accused in the Rs 14,000 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud, fled India in 2018. Arrested in the UK, Modi

has faced multiple failed petitions against his extradition. His uncle Mehul Choksi, involved in the same fraud, is in Antigua, with both men at the center of one of India’s largest financial scams. Apart from these key fugitives, India is also working to extradite other offenders, including arms dealer Sanjay Bhandari, wanted for tax evasion and money laundering, and Sourabh Chandrakar, who faces money laundering charges and is currently in

Dubai. India’s legal efforts continue, with various agencies working tirelessly to ensure these individuals face justice in the country.





## Telangana's Success at Davos Reflects Congress' New Economic Vision

*Innovation, inclusion, and strategic planning drive record investments and growth in Telangana*

The World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos has brought Telangana unprecedented success, with investments soaring to ₹1,78,950 crore, creating an estimated 49,550 jobs. This marks a significant leap from ₹40,000 crore in 2024 and ₹19,900 crore in 2023, underlining global trust in Telangana's development model and the Congress-led government's policies.

Key sectors drawing investment include IT, pharmaceuticals, green energy, defense, and manufacturing, with Amazon committing ₹60,000 crore for data centers and Sun Petrochemicals allocating ₹45,500 crore for pumped storage projects. Hyderabad remains central to this transformation, strengthening its role as a hub of innovation and human capital. Telangana attracts ₹1,78,950 crore in investments at Davos 2025, a fourfold increase from 2024. Hyderabad's Future City project

emphasizes AI, sustainability, and next-gen industries.

Congress' focus on inclusive growth aligns with global expectations for economic justice.

**The Congress government attributes this success to three pillars:**

**1. Innovation and Inclusion:** The state's policies prioritize skill development, new industry growth, and equitable opportunities. Telangana's inclusive governance contrasts sharply with the exclusivist narratives of previous regimes.

**2. Harnessing Hyderabad:** As Telangana's economic powerhouse, Hyderabad continues to lead in IT, biotechnology, and pharmaceuticals, contributing significantly to the state's GDP growth of 9.2%, outpacing the national average of 8.2%. The upcoming Future City project exemplifies the city's forward-thinking approach, planned as a Net Zero Carbon zone focused on cutting-edge

sectors.

**3. Prepare and Plan:** Strategic foresight under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has positioned Telangana as a trendsetter. Initiatives like zoned development around Hyderabad's Ring Roads ensure long-term sustainability and growth.

The Congress' development model, echoing the principles of former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, emphasizes fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. Telangana's performance at Davos highlights how stable leadership with a pro-people agenda can deliver broad-based economic growth.

As Telangana paves the way for inclusive and sustainable development, it sets an inspiring example for the nation, reinforcing its role as a beacon of progress under the Congress' transformative vision.

## A New Era for India-Indonesia Relations: Strengthening Cultural and Strategic Ties



This year, Prabowo Subianto, the President of Indonesia, is the chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade, marking a significant moment in the long-standing bilateral relationship between India and Indonesia. The ties between these two nations, which span over two millennia, are deeply rooted in cultural exchanges, commercial interactions, and a shared history of collaboration on the global stage.

The India-Indonesia relationship gained momentum during the era of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indonesia's first President, Sukarno. Their personal rapport was instrumental in establishing a strong foundation for diplomatic ties. The two leaders are also credited with founding the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Bandung Conference in 1955, a historic event that provided a platform for countries seeking independence amid the Cold War. This initiative remains one of the 20th century's most groundbreaking multinational efforts. As a reflection of their close ties, Sukarno was invited as the chief guest for India's first Republic Day celebrations in 1950.

However, the relationship between the two nations has not always been smooth. There have been periods of tension, such as the violent attack on the Indian embassy in Jakarta and Indo-

nesia's support for Pakistan during the 1965 India-Pakistan war. Despite these challenges, the ties between India and Indonesia have evolved, and the focus has shifted to a new era of cooperation.

The cultural connections between the two countries have remained steadfast over the centuries. The spread of Hinduism and Buddhism from India to Indonesia left a lasting imprint on Indonesian culture, which is evident in the widespread influence of Indian epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata in Indonesian art, folklore, and traditions. These shared cultural values have been reinforced through joint initiatives like the naval exercises between India and Indonesia, aptly named "Samudra" and "Garuda," symbolizing the strength and unity of both nations.

Prabowo Subianto's Republic Day visit is expected to deepen the strategic partnership between New Delhi and Jakarta, fostering stronger ties in areas such as defense, trade, and regional security. This visit marks a turning point, as India and Indonesia look to build on their historical connections and usher in a new chapter of collaboration for the future. The strengthening of the bilateral relationship will not only benefit both nations but will also have a broader impact on the stability and growth of the Indo-Pacific region.

## The Illusion of 'Civilisational Justice' A Reflection on History, Morality, and Politics

*Examining the controversial quest for "civilisational justice" in India's socio-political landscape.*

The term "civilisational justice," recently championed by Organiser editor Prafulla Ketkar, has ignited debates about its implications for India's historical, cultural, and political discourse. It suggests a grievance masked as a right, advocating for the correction of perceived historical wrongs, often through acts of retribution. However, this concept raises more questions than it answers about morality, governance, and the role of religion in society. Ketkar's editorial linking the Shri Harihar Mandir-Jama Masjid dispute in Sambhal to a broader quest for "civilisational justice" calls for an inclusive debate on the interpretation of India's itihasa (history). Yet, this approach seems to endorse an agenda of division, where state-endorsed excavations of contested religious sites are used to perpetuate communal strife. Such actions distract from pressing socio-economic challenges, exploiting historical narratives for political gain.

"Civilisational justice" is being framed as a moral imperative to reclaim India's past, but its implications undermine societal harmony. Historical complexities reveal a shared heritage, challenging the exclusivity of such narratives. Justice, as defined in India's Constitution, focuses on socio-political equality, not historical retribution.

### The Politics of Historical Retribution

The quest for civilisational justice often prioritises religious and communal identity over constitutional ideals. Ravi Joshi, in his critique, argues that

this approach misrepresents the essence of Hindu dharma, which embodies a morally self-sustaining universe rather than a religion of conquest or vengeance. Destroying mosques to build temples contradicts this ethos, turning faith into a tool for political manipulation. Furthermore, the selective reclamation of historical wrongs raises questions about whose version of history is valid. India's shared heritage spans Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, and British influences. Can justice truly be served by erasing one community's contributions to elevate another's?

### Morality, Justice, and Governance

Atal Bihari Vajpayee's assertion that rajdharna (the duty of governance) supersedes all other duties serves as a reminder of a ruler's moral obligation to protect all citizens, irrespective of faith or caste. The pursuit of "civilisational justice" as a political tool undermines this principle, fostering division instead of unity.

### Conclusion

India's historical and cultural narrative is one of coexistence and pluralism. Any effort to claim exclusivity over this heritage distorts its essence and weakens the moral foundation of governance. True justice lies in upholding the constitutional promise of equality and fostering a shared sense of belonging, rather than exploiting history for political expediency.

## Curbing Cacophony HC Takes Tough Stand on Loudspeakers Use

The Bombay High Court has made a significant ruling stating that the use of loudspeakers is not an essential part of any religion. This decision is a welcome relief to millions of Indians who endure the daily disruption caused by loud, intrusive sounds. With noise pollution being flagged as a serious health hazard, the court has directed law enforcement agencies to take swift action against those using loudspeakers that exceed legal decibel limits. Though the ruling pertains specifically to Maharashtra, noise pollution is a widespread issue across India, affecting citizens in every state.

Loudspeakers and public address systems are commonly used in places of worship, often without the required permission from local authorities. This unauthorized use can occur without any regard for the well-being of the surrounding residents. Fear of offending religious sentiments often paralyzes police officers, who are hesitant to take action on complaints from the public. Many citizens, too, avoid lodging complaints for fear of being targeted or ostracized in their communities. The lack of effective enforcement has made noise pollution a persistent issue that hampers the quality of life for millions of people.

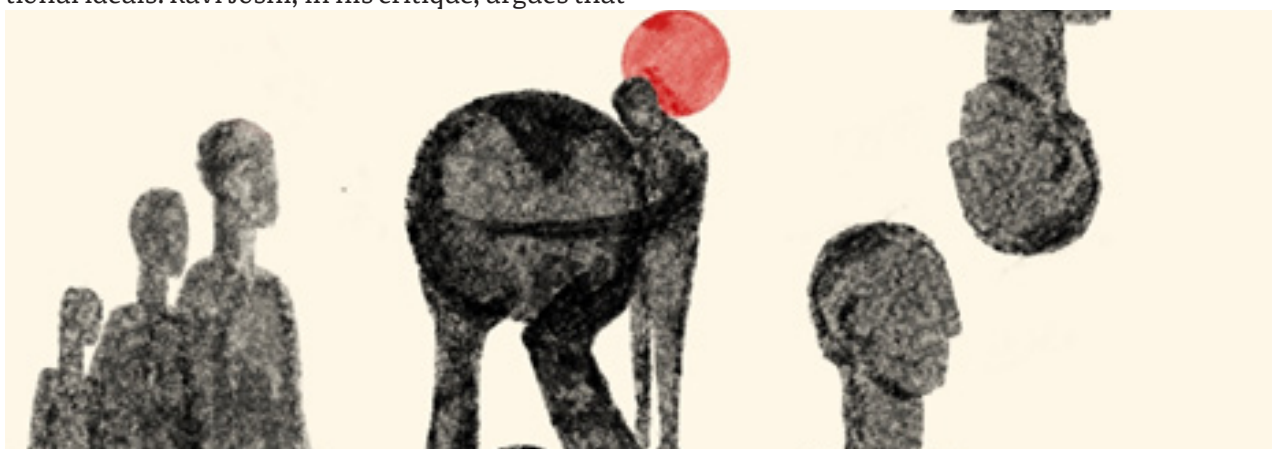
The Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, established 25 years ago, were designed to regulate and maintain acceptable noise levels in public spaces. However, enforcement has often been lax, leaving citizens to endure noise levels that exceed the permissible limits. In many cases, offenders justify their actions by citing constitutional rights such as freedom of speech (Article 19) and freedom of religion (Article 25). However, the Bombay High Court has clarified that denying permission



to install loudspeakers does not violate these rights if it serves the public interest.

In recent years, public address systems have become tools for religious expression and even competition. They have been linked to incidents of communal unrest, as seen during the Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti processions in 2022, where loudspeakers played a role in escalating tensions in various states. In response, the Uttar Pradesh government took a hardline approach, cracking down on unauthorized loudspeakers in religious spaces. Such measures should be implemented nationwide to protect public health and ensure peace.

Ultimately, the use of loudspeakers should be measured, respectful, and within the boundaries of law. Priests and devotees should recognize that spirituality does not need to be amplified at the expense of others' peace and well-being. It is crucial that actions are taken to ensure that public spaces remain conducive to everyone's health, sleep, and overall quality of life.





# Money is Made When the Market is Rising, Wealth is Made When the Market is Falling



The financial markets are a reflection of human psychology, oscillating between optimism and fear, greed and caution. Every investor has heard the saying, "Buy low, sell high," but executing it effectively requires a nuanced understanding of market cycles. The statement, "Money is made when the market is rising, wealth is made when the market is falling," captures this dynamic beautifully. It emphasizes that while rising markets create opportunities for short-term gains, falling markets lay the groundwork for long-term wealth creation.

## Riding the Bull: How Money is Made in Rising Markets

A rising market, often called a bull market, is characterized by growing investor confidence, economic expansion, and a positive outlook on corporate earnings. Stock prices climb steadily, and the market is often fueled by favorable news, low interest rates, or technological advancements. In these conditions, making money becomes relatively straightforward:

**1. Momentum Investing:** Investors capitalize on trends, buying stocks that are already performing well and selling them as prices climb higher.

**2. Speculation:** Many traders engage in speculative investments, betting on volatile stocks, IPOs, or cryptocurrencies to deliver exponential gains in the short term.

**3. Leverage and Risk Appetite:** During bull markets, even average investors are willing to take on more risk, leveraging their portfolios to amplify returns.

However, the gains made during a bull market often rely on timing and momentum. It's easier to generate profits, but the high valuations in such periods make it challenging to ensure sustainable growth. Many investors, lured by quick wins, often overpay for assets or chase speculative opportunities, leaving themselves exposed when the market eventually turns.

## The Bear's Den: Building Wealth in Falling Markets

Bear markets, marked by declining prices and pervasive pessimism, are often viewed as times of doom and gloom. Yet, they are precisely when the seeds of wealth are sown. The reason is simple: during market downturns, assets are sold at discounts, and opportunities abound for those with a steady hand and a long-term

view.  
**Why Falling Markets Create Wealth:**

**1. Valuation Opportunities:** High-quality companies with strong fundamentals often see their stock prices drop alongside the rest of the market, regardless of their intrinsic value. This creates an opportunity for investors to buy great businesses at bargain prices.

**2. Dividend Reinvestment:** For investors holding dividend-paying stocks, bear markets allow for reinvesting dividends at lower prices, leading to higher share accumulation. This enhances compounding over time.

**3. Behavioral Edge:** Bear markets test an investor's discipline. Those who stay invested, or better yet, invest more, reap the rewards when the market recovers.

Take the example of the 2008 financial crisis. Investors who bought into the market during the downturn – whether it was blue-chip stocks, index funds, or even real estate – saw remarkable growth over the next decade as the market recovered and expanded.

## The Psychological Divide: Fear vs. Opportunity

The biggest barrier to building wealth in falling markets is fear. It's human nature to avoid risks when uncertainty looms, and this leads many investors to sell their assets in a panic. Conversely, those who understand market cycles see bear markets as a rare chance to acquire assets at a discount.

Warren Buffett's famous advice, "Be fearful when others are greedy, and greedy when others are fearful," speaks to this principle. Acting against the crowd during a bear mar-

ket requires a deep understanding of market fundamentals, a clear long-term strategy, and the emotional strength to withstand short-term losses.

## Key Strategies for Wealth Building During Bear Markets



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**1. Focus on Fundamentals:** Look beyond short-term price movements and focus on the intrinsic value of an asset. Companies with strong balance sheets, high cash reserves, and a competitive edge are likely to bounce back stronger after a downturn.

**2. Diversification:** Bear markets often reveal the weaknesses of over-concentration. A diversified portfolio across sectors, geographies, and asset classes can mitigate risks while providing exposure to opportunities.

**3. Invest Regularly:** Adopting a dollar-cost averaging strategy – investing a fixed amount regularly regardless of market conditions – ensures that you accumulate more shares when prices are low.

**4. Build Liquidity:** Having cash on hand during a market downturn is invaluable. It allows you to seize opportunities without being forced to sell existing assets.

**5. Patience and Perspective:** Bear markets don't last forever. Maintaining a long-term perspective helps you focus on the recovery ahead rather than the current downturn.

## Bridging the Cycles: From Bull to Bear and Back

Investors who excel at building wealth are those who understand the interconnectedness of market cycles. Bull markets create money, but they often sow the seeds of overvaluation and complacency. Bear markets, while painful in the short term, reset valuations and create the conditions for

outsized returns. Consider legendary investors like Peter Lynch, who famously remarked that "The key to making money in stocks is not to get scared out of them." Their success lies in their ability to navigate both bull and bear markets with a clear strategy and unshakable confidence in their long-term plans.

## Lessons from History

History has shown us that every market correction or crash is eventually followed by recovery and growth. From the Great Depression in the 1930s to the dot-com bubble burst in the early 2000s, and even the COVID-19 crash in 2020, investors who stayed the course and invested during the downturns emerged significantly wealthier over time. For example, someone who invested in the S&P 500 during the 2008 crisis would have seen their portfolio grow manifold by 2021. Similarly, buying into real estate or undervalued businesses during economic slumps has historically yielded substantial wealth.

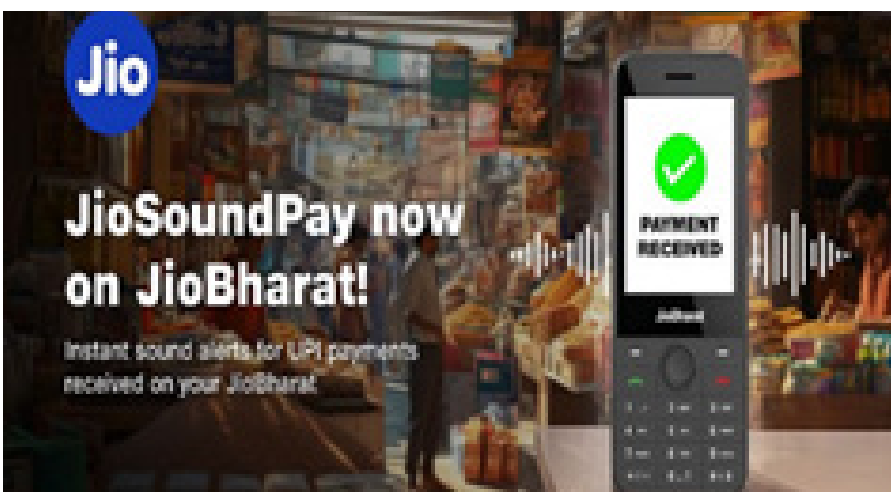
## Conclusion

The phrase "Money is made when the market is rising, wealth is made when the market is falling" encapsulates a timeless truth of investing. Rising markets create an environment for quick gains, but true wealth is built through strategic decisions during downturns.

It's in the storms of the financial world that the seeds of fortune are planted. For those with the courage to invest in uncertainty, the patience to wait for recovery, and the discipline to stick to a strategy, bear markets transform fear into opportunity and opportunity into lasting wealth.

So, the next time the markets turn red, remember: it's not the end of the road; it's the beginning of a journey toward enduring prosperity.

## Jio Introduces JioSoundPay for Small Merchants, Empowering India's Digital Economy



In a groundbreaking initiative that highlights Jio's commitment to empowering every Indian, the company has launched the JioSoundPay feature for its JioBharat device. This industry-first innovation will benefit 5 crore small-scale merchants across the nation, including kirana stores, vegetable vendors, and roadside eateries, making it easier for them to handle UPI payments. JioSoundPay revolutionizes the merchant experience by offering instant, multilingual audio confirmations for each transaction. The new feature enables small businesses to efficiently manage payments, overcoming language barriers and improving customer satisfaction. Traditionally, small and micro merchants paid around Rs 125 per month for a sound box. With JioSoundPay, JioBharat users can now save up to Rs 1,500 annually, as the feature will be provided completely free.

The JioBharat phone, which was launched over a year ago, continues to set the standard for affordability. Priced at just Rs 699, it is the world's most affordable 4G phone. Merchants who purchase the phone can recover its cost in just six months, making it an at-

tractive investment for business owners.

This move is aligned with Jio's focus on driving India's digital transformation, enabling entrepreneurs in even the remotest parts of the country to access technology that enhances their business operations. The introduction of JioSoundPay underscores Jio's dedication to a Digital India, ensuring that technology is accessible to everyone, including small-scale entrepreneurs. To mark the 75th year of India's Republic, Jio is also offering contemporary renditions of Vande Mataram on JioSoundPay, a tribute to India's rich musical heritage. These modern renditions can be set as JioTones via the MyJio app or JioSaavn.

Sunil Dutt, President of Jio, emphasized the company's mission, stating, "With JioSoundPay, we celebrate the spirit of India, empowering every Indian and furthering our commitment to a Digital India."

Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited, a subsidiary of Jio Platforms Limited, continues to drive innovation and digital accessibility across India.

## IDFC FIRST Bank Reports Strong Q3 FY25 Results with Significant Growth in Key Areas

IDFC FIRST Bank has delivered a robust performance for Q3 FY25, posting a Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs. 339 crore, despite challenges in the microfinance sector. The bank achieved a 15% YoY increase in core operating profit, driven by impressive growth in customer deposits and loans.

### Key Financial Highlights:

Customer deposits surged by 28.8% YoY, reaching Rs. 2,27,316 crore as of December 31, 2024.

Retail deposits grew by 29.6% YoY to Rs. 1,80,752 crore, while CASA deposits increased by 32.3% YoY, standing at Rs. 1,13,078 crore.

CASA ratio remained strong at 47.7%. The cost of funds for the bank was 6.49% in Q3 FY25, with a stable deposit cost of 6.38%.

### Loans and Advances:

Loans and advances grew by 22% YoY, reaching Rs. 2,31,074 crore by December 31, 2024.

The bank's retail loan book grew by

21.3%, while corporate (non-infrastructure) loans saw a 28.9% YoY increase. The microfinance portfolio saw a slight decrease, contributing 4.8% of the total loan book, down from 5.6% in September 2024.

### Asset Quality:

Gross NPA reduced to 1.94% from 2.04% YoY, with a stable net NPA of 0.52%. Excluding microfinance, GNPA stood at 1.81%, down from 1.88% in Q2 FY25.

The bank's provision coverage ratio (PCR) improved to 73.6% from 66.9% YoY. Profitability and Revenue:

Net Interest Income (NII) grew by 14% YoY to Rs. 4,902 crore, with a stable Net Interest Margin (NIM) of 6.04%.

Fee and other income increased by 20% YoY, reaching Rs. 1,757 crore. Operating income rose 15% YoY to Rs. 6,682 crore.

### Microfinance and Provisions:

The bank continues to monitor its microfinance business closely, with a higher provisioning for Q3 FY25, impact-

ed by slippages in this segment. Microfinance loans now have increased insurance coverage, with 58% of the portfolio insured by CGFMU.

### Capital Position and Merger:

The bank's successful merger with IDFC Ltd in October 2024 strengthened its capital base, with total CRAR at 16.11% and a CET-1 ratio of 13.68%.

CEO's Comments: V Vaidyanathan, MD & CEO, stated, "We are seeing strong growth in both loans and deposits. The microfinance credit issues are transitional, and we are confident they will be resolved in the coming quarters. Our diversified banking model is performing well across all sectors."

About IDFC FIRST Bank: IDFC FIRST Bank, formed through the merger of IDFC Bank and Capital First, focuses on providing ethical, customer-friendly, and tech-driven banking solutions. The bank continues to prioritize financial inclusion and has a strong track record of serving underserved segments across India.

## Staffing Firms Call For Cutting GST Rate To 5%

Staffing firms in India are pushing for a reduction in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on employment services, advocating for a decrease from the current 18% to 5%. The Indian Staffing Federation (ISF) has highlighted the low-profit margins in the sector, emphasizing that a reduction in GST would significantly aid in promoting organized employment and supporting the growth of staffing solutions across the country.

The staffing sector, which plays a crucial role in providing temporary and contract-based labor, has faced challenges due to the high GST rate, which has resulted in increased costs for businesses. By lowering the GST rate, staffing firms argue that they would be able to pass on the benefits to clients, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often struggle with

compliance costs. This would encourage businesses to adopt organized staffing solutions and contribute to formalizing the labor market. The request for a reduction in GST comes alongside a plea for the staffing sector to be granted industry status. According to ISF, granting industry status would open doors for better access to financial resources, tax benefits, and other government incentives. It would also enhance the credibility of the sector, encouraging more businesses to adopt staffing solutions.

Staffing firms also argue that reducing GST would help align India with global practices, where the taxation on employment services is generally lower. Countries with favorable tax policies on staffing services have seen the sector thrive, with more businesses opting for flexible and cost-effective labor solu-

tions. Lowering GST in India could create a similar environment, driving the growth of staffing firms and expanding organized employment. In addition, the sector's growth could contribute to reducing the unemployment rate in the country by facilitating the creation of more job opportunities, especially in the informal labor market. The Federation believes that these measures will not only benefit staffing firms but also foster economic growth by improving efficiency and providing businesses with a more diverse talent pool. In conclusion, the staffing sector's call for a reduction in GST and the granting of industry status is aimed at promoting organized employment, enhancing growth, and creating a more conducive environment for businesses to scale their operations efficiently.

## Bengaluru Is Closed : Social Media Post Reignites Kannada Language Debate

A recent post on social media has reignited the ongoing debate over the importance of the Kannada language in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The post, shared on X (formerly Twitter), made waves when it suggested that people from northern India and neighboring states who are unwilling to learn Kannada should avoid Bengaluru altogether. The user who shared the post argued that those who don't respect the local language and culture have no place in the city.



However, the post was met with criticism from others who see the call to learn Kannada as exclusionary, especially in a cosmopolitan city like Bengaluru, which is home to people from across the country and the world. Critics argue that the city thrives on its multicultural and diverse population, and imposing a single language requirement could lead to alienation. They point out that English and Hindi are commonly used in business, education, and daily communication, making it unnecessary for people to learn Kannada to function effectively in Bengaluru.

The statement quickly sparked a heated online debate, with supporters of the Kannada language arguing that learning it is a sign of respect for the local culture and identity. They believe that as Bengaluru continues to grow as a major urban hub, it is important for residents and newcomers to embrace the language that binds the local community together. Advocates say that speaking Kannada fosters a sense of belonging and helps maintain the city's unique heritage.

## Canadian Photographer Sets Guinness World Record For Deepest Underwater Photoshoot

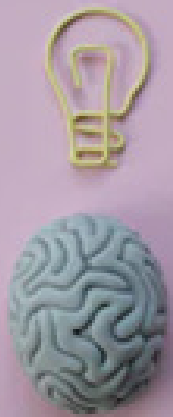
Canadian photographer Steven Haining has once again made waves in the world of underwater photography by setting a new Guinness World Record (GWR) for the deepest underwater model photo shoot. This time, the shoot took place on the deck of the Hydro Atlantic shipwreck, located off the coast of Boca Raton, Florida, USA, at an impressive depth of 50 meters (163.38 feet).



The Hydro Atlantic shipwreck was chosen for its unique challenges, as it lies beyond the decompression zone, adding an extra layer of complexity to the shoot. Haining, who previously held the record twice, reclaimed his title with this bold and ambitious effort. In 2021, Haining set the first record by shooting at a depth of 21 feet, and in September 2023, he raised the bar by capturing images at 30 meters. However, in December 2023, Canadians Kim Bruneau and Pia Oyarzun surpassed Haining's achievement by conducting their own photoshoot at a depth of 131 feet in the Bahamas, prompting Haining to embark on this daring underwater adventure to reclaim his crown.

The photo shoot was a formidable challenge for both the photographer and the model. Ciara Antowski, the model, went without an oxygen tank, wearing a flowing white gown and black boots, making the photoshoot even more challenging. The crew, including Antowski, underwent intensive training to ensure safety and precision while working at such great depths. This rigorous preparation was essential to ensure the success of the shoot, as underwater photography at this level requires impeccable coordination, timing, and safety protocols.

## Brain Ageing Could Be Fault Of Mothers, Study Suggests



A new study has discovered that the X chromosome passed down from the mother may play a role in accelerating brain aging, potentially increasing the risk of conditions like Alzheimer's disease. The X chromosome, which carries a significant amount of genetic material, is unique in that females have two X chromosomes (XX) while males only have one X and one Y (XY). In females, one of the X chromosomes is randomly inactivated in each cell, a process that can impact brain function and aging.

er or lower levels of maternal X chromosomes in their cells, just by chance, and we know very little about the potential consequences of this."

To investigate further, the team conducted an experiment using female lab mice of different ages. Some of the mice had the paternal X chromosome silenced, leaving only the maternal X chromosome active. These mice were compared with others that had both maternal and paternal X chromosomes active.

The results showed that while the younger "Mom-X" mice exhibited cognitive abilities similar to those of their peers, the older mice experienced significant cognitive decline. In particular, the maternal X chromosome appeared to accelerate biological aging in the hippocampus, a region of the brain essential for memory and learning.

"This raises the possibility that women who express more of their mother's X chromosome, just by chance, could face more cognitive impairment as they age, or have an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's," explained Ms. Dubal.

Though women generally live longer than men and exhibit lower rates of dementia, Alzheimer's disease affects them at a significantly higher rate. Intriguingly, some studies have shown that women with Alzheimer's may survive longer than their male counterparts. Researchers have long been puzzled by these gender differences and have turned to the X and Y chromosomes for potential answers.

"Skewing of the X chromosome is common among humans," said Dena Dubal, the senior author of the study. "There are women who naturally have high-

## Penguin 'Divorce' Study Reveals Impact on Breeding Success and Conservation

A decade-long study on little penguins on Philip Island has revealed fascinating insights into the complex social lives of these birds. While penguins are often thought to "mate for life," the study found that divorce, or changing partners after a poor breeding season, is not uncommon. In fact, the research found that penguins are more likely to seek new partners when faced with disappointing reproductive outcomes, but this quest for a better mate doesn't always lead to improved success.

The study, which spanned 13 breeding seasons and tracked around a thousand penguin pairs, found that approximately 250 divorces occurred over the course of the research. While this may seem like a strategy for improving breeding success, the data indicated that divorce often resulted in lower reproductive outcomes for the penguins involved.

"In good times, they largely stick with their partners, although there's often a bit of hanky-panky happening on the side," said Richard Reina, co-author of the study. He added that after a poor breeding season, penguins are more inclined to find a new mate to try to improve their reproductive success the following year.



However, the study also highlighted significant drawbacks to this behavior. Divorce often led to lost time spent searching for and courting new mates, which delayed reproduction and sometimes even prevented it entirely. This disruption can also result in penguin parents being forced to forage for food in challenging conditions when food availability is low.

Additionally, new penguin pairs may struggle with the coordination required for tasks like nest-building, egg incubation, and chick-rearing, which established pairs tend to handle more efficiently. In contrast, penguin pairs that remain together over multiple seasons tend to have increased reproductive success.

## Meta Begins Testing Ads on Threads as Platform Surpasses 300 Million Active Users

Meta is set to begin testing ads on its social media platform, Threads, with a select group of brands in the U.S. and Japan. This marks a significant step as the app surpasses 300 million monthly active users. Starting on Friday, image ads will appear within the Threads home feed, placed between regular posts for a small percentage of users. The company emphasized that this is an early-stage test, and they will monitor the results closely before expanding it on a broader scale. Businesses will also be able to extend their current Meta ad campaigns to include Threads.

In addition to the image ads, Meta is also testing a new inventory filter for advertisers. Powered by AI, this feature allows businesses to control the sensitivity level of organic content alongside which their ads will be displayed. This move is aimed at en-



sure that ads appear next to content that aligns with the brand's values and image.

The timing of this ad launch, following Meta's recent content moderation updates, has raised some eyebrows in the advertising world. However, with the volatili-

ty surrounding TikTok, many brands are now seeking alternative platforms for ad placements, and Meta sees this as an opportunity to position Threads as a viable contender. Jasmine Enberg, a principal analyst at Emarketer, notes that the changes at TikTok have made advertisers more open to exploring other platforms, making Threads a promising option for Meta.

Threads was launched in July 2023 as a competitor to X (formerly known as Twitter), aiming to capture users from the microblogging platform during its turbulent period under Elon Musk's ownership. Despite its growth, Meta does not expect Threads to contribute significantly to 2025's revenue. Instead, the company is focusing on expanding its AI infrastructure, with a budget of up to \$65 billion for this year. This investment is aimed at strengthening Meta's position against rivals like OpenAI and Google in the rapidly advancing AI sector.

## New Zealand Secures Direct Entry to ICC Women's World Cup 2025

New Zealand has secured a direct entry into the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 following Bangladesh's loss to the West Indies in their final ICC Women's Championship match on Friday in Basseterre. Both New Zealand and Bangladesh finished the 10-team tournament with 21 points, but New Zealand's superior number of wins—nine compared to Bangladesh's eight—earned them the coveted spot.

The tournament featured all teams playing eight three-match series—four at home and four away—and New Zealand's performance ensured their direct qualification. Along with the hosts India, the top five teams in the standings—Australia, India, England, South Africa, and Sri Lanka—have secured automatic berths for the upcoming World Cup.



Australia clinched the ICC Women's Championship title with an impressive 39 points, while India closely followed in second place with 37 points. England (32), South Africa (25), and

Sri Lanka (22) also guaranteed their spots for the World Cup, leaving the bottom four teams to battle for the remaining qualification spot through the upcoming World Cup Qualifier.

Bangladesh (21), West Indies (18), Pakistan (17), and Ireland (eight) will join Scotland and Thailand—ranked the highest as of October 31, 2024—at the Qualifier. The details for the Qualifier will be announced soon, with two spots available for the World Cup.

India will host the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup for the fifth time, marking the first global women's tournament held there since 2016 when India hosted the T20 World Cup alongside the men's event. The 2025 edition will be similar to the 2022 tournament, with eight teams competing across 31 matches.

## Madison Keys stuns Aryna Sabalenka to win her first Grand Slam title

USA's Madison Keys captured her first Grand Slam title on Saturday with a thrilling 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 victory over world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka in the final. Keys' win in Melbourne ended Sabalenka's impressive winning streak at the Australian Open, where the Belarusian was aiming for a third consecutive title.



later, Keys finally broke through to claim her maiden Grand Slam title. Her previous best result in a major was reaching the US Open final in 2017, where she was defeated by Sloane Stephens.

This win marked Keys' 46th appearance in the main draw of a Grand Slam, a remarkable achievement in itself. According to Opta, only Flavia Pennetta (49), Goran Ivanisevic (48), and Marion Bartoli (47) have made more main

draw appearances before winning their first Grand Slam singles title in the Open Era.

It was a bitter-sweet moment for Sabalenka, the two-time defending champion, who had been on a high after an incredible run at the tournament. However, Keys fought back after losing the second set, showing great resilience and composure to win the match in a tense third set.

The victory was particularly emotional for Keys, who had come close in previous years, notably losing to Sabalenka in a hard-fought US Open semifinal in 2023. Just over a year

Keys' perseverance paid off in Melbourne, as she joins an exclusive list of players who have broken through to win their first Grand Slam after many attempts. The victory not only marks a major milestone in her career but also puts her among the elite players in tennis history.

## Shubman Gill's Century in Vain as Punjab Falls to Karnataka in Ranji Trophy

Shubman Gill's stylish century wasn't enough to save Punjab from a heavy defeat against Karnataka in their Ranji Trophy Group C match on Saturday. Despite Gill's determined knock of 102, Punjab succumbed to an innings and 207-run loss, with Karnataka's dominant performance overshadowing his efforts.



Gill, who resumed on 7, made a valiant effort in Punjab's second innings, scoring 102 runs from 171 balls. His innings featured 14 boundaries and three sixes, with the first 50 runs coming off 119 balls and the next 50 off just 40 balls. However, his dismissal as the eighth wicket left Punjab struggling at 213 all out in 63.4 overs, following a massive 420-run deficit from Karnataka's first innings.

Punjab had earlier been bowled out for a meager 55 runs in their first innings, with Gill contributing just four runs. At the end of day two, Punjab was already in deep trouble, sitting at 24 for 2 in their second innings. Despite Gill's efforts, they couldn't recover, and the team was dismissed for a second time, losing by a large margin.

Karnataka's formidable performance was built around Ravichandran Smaran's maiden first-class double century, as he scored an unbeaten 203 in his team's first innings total of 475/7 in

122.1 overs. Karnataka's bowlers, Yashovardhan Parantap and Shreyas Gopal, were key to Punjab's collapse, taking three wickets each in the second innings.

This defeat further highlighted Shubman Gill's recent struggles with form, following a disappointing run in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia. In five Test innings, the 25-year-old right-hander managed only 93 runs, with a highest score of 31, leading to his drop for the fourth Test before being recalled for the fifth, where he failed to impress with scores of 20 and 13.

## Jammu and Kashmir Defeat Mumbai in Historic Ranji Trophy Victory

In a stunning upset, Jammu and Kashmir triumphed over defending champions Mumbai by five wickets in their ongoing Ranji Trophy Group A league match. This victory, coming after a decade-long wait, has almost sealed their spot in the knock-out phase of the tournament. Their last win against Mumbai was in December 2014 at the Wankhede Stadium, making this victory all the more significant.



struggling to stay grounded for long periods, and failed to make an impact on the game.

Mumbai's squad boasted a star-studded lineup, including India's Test and ODI captain Rohit Sharma, former captain Ajinkya Rahane, ODI regular and IPL-winning skipper Shreyas Iyer, star opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, seasoned all-rounder Shardul Thakur, and off-spinner Tanush Kotian, who was a part of the Border-Gavaskar squad. Despite this powerhouse team, Mumbai was unable to hold their ground as Jammu and Kashmir outperformed them.

With 29 points from six matches, Jammu and Kashmir now lead Group A, and a single point in their final match against Baroda would confirm their spot in the knock-out rounds. Baroda, who are currently on 27 points from five games, are facing Maharashtra. If Baroda manages a first-innings lead against Jammu and Kashmir, Mumbai (with 22 points from six games) could be knocked out of the group league phase, even if they win their match against Meghalaya.

Rohit Sharma's return to the Ranji Trophy after a decade did not go as planned, with the opener managing just 31 runs across two innings. He appeared out of form,

This impressive victory further cements Jammu and Kashmir's remarkable run in the tournament, and with only one match left, they are on the brink of a historic Ranji Trophy campaign.

## Rohit Sharma Named Captain of ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year 2024

India's cricket captain Rohit Sharma has been named the skipper of the ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year 2024 after a remarkable year both as a leader and a batter. Sharma, who led India to their second ICC T20 World Cup title in June 2024, had an unforgettable run in the tournament and beyond, making significant contributions with the bat. He amassed 378 runs in 11 matches, with an average of 42.00 and a striking rate of over 160. Sharma played a key role in India's T20 World Cup triumph, including a match-winning 92 against Australia in the Super Eight stage. His leadership was instrumental in guiding the team through high-pressure situations, solidifying his legacy as one of India's greatest T20I captains.



The T20I Team of the Year also features other Indian cricket stars, including pacer Jasprit Bumrah, left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh, and all-rounder Hardik Pandya. Pandya, with 352 runs and 16 wickets in 17 matches, reaffirmed his status as one of the world's finest all-rounders. His standout moment came in the T20 World Cup final against South Africa, where he defended 16 runs in the final over, leading India to victory. Bumrah returned to T20I cricket with a vengeance in 2024, claiming 15 wickets in eight matches at an incredible average of 8.26, with his lethal yorkers proving pivotal in India's success.

Arshdeep Singh emerged as India's most prolific wicket-taker of the year, with 36 wickets in 18 matches at an impressive average of 13.50. His performances, particularly his 4/9 against hosts USA in the T20 World Cup, made him a key figure in India's bowling attack.

The team also includes standout players from other nations: Australia's Travis Head, England's Phil Salt, Pakistan's Babar Azam, West Indies' Nicholas Pooran (wk), Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza, Afghanistan's Rashid Khan, and Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga.

India's dominance in the 2024 T20I calendar is evident with the inclusion of so many players from the squad, making the year a standout for the Men in Blue.



## Rajamouli Locked The Lion: SSMB29 New Adventure Begins with Mahesh Babu

Tollywood's highly anticipated project, SSMB29, is officially underway as director S.S. Rajamouli has shared an exciting update about the film. Fans of superstar Mahesh Babu and Rajamouli, who previously collaborated on the mega-hit Baahubali, have been eagerly awaiting news about this new venture, and the latest announcement has generated immense buzz in the industry.



In a recent video post, Rajamouli confirmed that the shooting for SSMB29 has commenced. The video, titled "Capture," shows a symbolic scene featuring a lion (representing Mahesh Babu) locked in a cage, unable to escape. The video's caption, "Capture," hints at the thrilling narrative of the film, which is expected to have an adventurous backdrop. Rajamouli's update suggests that the project is progressing well, with much of the pre-production work already completed.

Further adding excitement to the announcement, the film's heroine has been revealed as Priyanka Chopra. The Bollywood star's casting marks an exciting collaboration, and she responded to the update with a simple

yet enthusiastic "Finally." Mahesh Babu, too, expressed his excitement about the project, referencing his iconic Pokiri dialogue, "Once committed, I will not listen to myself," signifying his dedication to the film.

SSMB29 is set in an adventurous setting, with a plot revolving around the Amazon jungle. The project promises to be a high-octane thriller, combining Rajamouli's signature storytelling and visual grandeur with Mahesh Babu's charismatic presence.

As the production gears up, expectations are soaring for this action-packed film, which has already caught the attention of movie lovers and fans alike. With the shooting now underway, it's only a matter of time before we get more details about this exciting Tollywood blockbuster.

## Payal Rajput Stuns in Revenge Drama 'Venkatalacchimi'



Actress Payal Rajput, who gained popularity with her performances in films like RX 100 and Mangalavaram, is back on screen with her latest venture, Venkatalacchimi. The film, which marks a significant milestone in her career, opened in Hyderabad on Friday, drawing attention for its gripping storyline. Payal plays the titular role in this revenge drama, which is set to release in six languages, aiming for a pan-India audience.

Directed by Muni, Venkatalacchimi tells the intense story of an Adivasi woman seeking vengeance. The narrative promises to keep viewers engaged, with Muni emphasizing the film's emotional depth and powerful narration. The film has garnered attention not just for its storyline, but also for the strong performance expected from Payal Rajput in a challenging role.

In a statement, Payal shared her excitement about the project, expressing that she was so moved by

the script that she believes the audience will start referring to her as "Venkatalacchimi" after seeing the film. She spoke passionately about how deeply connected she felt to the character and the emotional journey it takes.

The music of the film has been composed by Vikas Badisha, contributing to the film's intense atmosphere. The screenplay and direction are both handled by Muni, who is confident that the film's unique storyline and engaging execution will resonate with audiences.

Produced by SS Chowdhury and Muni Raja, Venkatalacchimi is a highly anticipated film for its intense portrayal of revenge, emotion, and the resilience of a woman fighting for justice. With its pan-India release and strong performances, it's expected to be a significant addition to Payal Rajput's filmography.

## Venkatesh Unveils Telugu Trailer for Vishal's Pongal Hit Madha Gaja Raja

Kollywood star Vishal's comedy entertainer Madha Gaja Raja, which had been delayed for over 12 years, finally released during the Pongal festival, receiving a great response and grossing over Rs 50 crore at the box office. The film's success in Tamil has generated significant excitement, and now, the movie is set to hit Telugu theatres with the same title on January 31, 2025.



To mark the Telugu release, senior Tollywood actor Venkatesh launched the film's fun-filled trailer, giving fans a sneak peek of Vishal's comedic prowess. The trailer showcases a perfect blend of humor, action, and drama, making it clear that director Sundar C has packaged the film to

appeal to a broad audience. Vishal's comedic timing and entertaining performances have been a highlight, and fans are eagerly awaiting the film's Telugu debut.

The film also stars popular Kollywood comedian Santhanam, Anjali, Varalaxmi Sarathkumar, and

Sonu Sood in key roles, adding to the star power of the project. Madha Gaja Raja has been produced by Gemini Film Circuit and is being presented in Telugu under the Sathya Krishnan Productions banner. The soundtrack, composed by Vijay Antony, further adds to the film's appeal with energetic tunes.

With the successful reception of Madha Gaja Raja in Tamil, anticipation is high for its Telugu release, especially with the star-studded cast and the comedy-action genre that appeals to a wide audience. Fans are looking forward to the film's debut on January 31 and are hoping that the movie continues to perform well at the box office.

## Thalapathy Vijay's Thalapathy69 Aiming for Pongal 2026 Release

Thalapathy Vijay is gearing up for his final cinematic venture, Thalapathy69, which is currently in production. This highly anticipated film, a remake of the blockbuster Bhagavanth Kesari starring Balakrishna, is already making waves in the industry. The film's first look poster, featuring Vijay in a dynamic role, is set to be revealed on January 26, 2025, alongside the official title.

Initially, the makers had planned for a theatrical release in October 2025. However, recent buzz in trade circles suggests that the film's release could be delayed until the festive season of Pongal 2026. Fans and industry insiders are eagerly awaiting official confirmation on the release date, which could be clarified with the unveiling of the first look on January 26.

Pongal is a crucial time for Kollywood releases, with many films



targeting this lucrative period to maximize box office collections. If Thalapathy69 does indeed hit the screens during Pongal 2026, it is

poised to become a major industry hit, further solidifying Vijay's legacy as one of Tamil cinema's biggest stars.

The movie features an impressive ensemble cast, including Pooja Hegde, Bobby Deol, Mamitha Baiju, Prakash Raj, Priyamani, Narain, and Gautham Vasudev Menon in pivotal roles. Produced by KVN Productions, the film is expected to have a stellar soundtrack composed by the talented Anirudh Ravichander, whose music is already anticipated to be a hit.

With a star-studded cast, a highly anticipated release, and a powerful director at the helm, Thalapathy69 is shaping up to be one of the most significant films in Thalapathy Vijay's illustrious career. Fans are eagerly awaiting more updates as the release date approaches.



## Naga Chaitanya's Thandel Trailer Drops on January 28 with a Fresh Poster

Tollywood actor Akkineni Naga Chaitanya is all set to entertain audiences with his upcoming film Thandel. Directed by Chandu Mondeti and produced under the prestigious Geetha Arts banner by Allu Aravind, the film has generated significant buzz in the industry. The movie, featuring the talented Sai Pallavi as the female lead, is set to hit theaters on February 7, 2025, and the team has already wrapped up shooting.

As excitement builds for the film's release, the makers have shared a major update about the trailer. The Thandel trailer will be unveiled on January 28, 2025, and the crew has released a new poster to mark the occasion. The poster promises an intriguing blend of action, drama, and romance.

The storyline of Thandel follows Naga Chaitanya's character, who travels to Veeraval, Gujarat, in search of a living. While fishing, he is caught by the Pakistan Coast Guard and impris-

oned. The film explores his daring escape from a Pakistani prison, with an added layer of love story and patriotism that elevates the film's narrative, making it an engaging commercial entertainer.

The film has piqued the interest of audiences with its thrilling premise, combining high stakes with emotional depth. Along with the action-packed sequences, Thandel will also showcase a strong patriotic theme, giving fans a dose of national pride while also tugging at their hearts with its love story.

With its release date drawing closer, fans are eagerly awaiting the trailer's release on January 28. Thandel promises to be a captivating film, offering a mix of intense action, emotional drama, and a storyline filled with patriotic fervor. Naga Chaitanya's performance in this unique role is expected to be one of the highlights of the film.