



**Weather Forecast**

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



**Punjab CM Dismisses possibility of split**

**90+ AAP legislators discuss Punjab governance in Delhi.**

**AAP reaffirms unity, focuses on Punjab's development.**

# Have Worked Hard to built AAP

TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh

After a meeting with AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann dismissed claims that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab could split, or that his leadership was under threat. Speaking to reporters, Mann expressed confidence in the party's unity and criticized those who claimed the party was fragmenting, attributing such assertions to rivals from Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who, he argued, were prone to switching sides.

The remarks came in response to growing speculation about potential divisions within the Punjab unit of AAP, with some suggesting that Mann's position might be challenged. This was against the backdrop of a high-level meeting convened by Kejriwal at Kapurthala House in Delhi, attended by over 90 AAP legislators and ministers from Punjab. The meeting, which included discussions on the results of the

Delhi assembly elections and matters of governance, was described as a platform to strengthen the party's resolve in Punjab.

Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, who was present at the meeting, echoed Mann's sentiments, emphasizing that AAP was united under Kejriwal's leadership. "No force can break AAP in Punjab," Cheema asserted, adding that the party would continue working harder in the state for the welfare of its people.

Mann also addressed the gathering outside Kapurthala House, expressing gratitude for the hard work put in by Punjab's MLAs and cabinet ministers in the recent assembly elections. He stressed that the party's Punjab government was dedicated to the people and focusing on critical sectors such as infrastructure and healthcare. "We are learning from the work done in Delhi... Together, we have to work to make Punjab a model for the country," he added.

He also pointed out that AAP's volunteers and workers were unwavering in their commitment, unaffected by external temptations. "Our volunteers are dedicated and are not going to fall for any lure," Mann emphasized, reinforcing the idea that AAP's core strength lies in its grassroots support.

Punjab minister Balbir Singh, another attendee at the meeting, said Kejriwal urged AAP leaders to work even harder in the next two years. He dismissed the reports of a potential split within the party, signaling the leadership's confidence in maintaining a unified front.

The Delhi assembly elections, where the BJP secured a landslide victory, winning 48 seats to AAP's 22, were also a key topic of discussion during the meeting. Despite AAP's setback in Delhi, the focus in Punjab remains firmly on the party's developmental agenda for the state.

## Delhi MCD to Present Revised Budget Estimates for 2024-25 and 2025-26

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi's Municipal Corporation (MCD) is set to present its revised budget estimates for 2024-25 and budget estimates for 2025-26 at a special meeting scheduled for February 13. MCD officials stated that the budget presentation and approval process must be completed between February 13 and 15.

As per the Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC) Act, the MCD's budget estimates are typically required to be presented before the standing committee no later than December 10. However, this timeline was delayed due to the non-formation of the standing committee. The announcement of Delhi's elections further complicated the process when the model code of conduct (MCC) was imposed, preventing the budget from being presented on time. With the lifting of the MCC, the MCD decided to proceed with presenting the budget after receiving approval from the mayor, according to officials.



2024-25 and the budget estimates for 2025-26 will be presented by MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar. During the meeting, the schedule of taxes, rates, and cesses to be determined by the MCD for the fiscal year 2025-26 will also be reviewed and considered.

**MCD to present revised 2024-25 and proposed 2025-26 budget on Feb 13.**

**Budget delayed due to standing committee formation, election MCC.**

**Estimated ₹17,000 crore budget to cover sanitation, health, and education.**

As per the DMC Act, once the budget estimates are presented before the standing committee, the panel will review and amend them before forwarding them to the house of councillors for final approval. The process of finalizing municipal tax rates must be completed before February 15 in the house of councillors.

The total budget proposals for the upcoming fiscal years are expected to be approximately ₹17,000 crore. This amount will cover both new projects that MCD plans to initiate and the routine expenditures on essential services such as sanitation, public health, education, and other key areas. In comparison, former MCD Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti presented a ₹16,683-crore budget in a special house meeting last year.

The revised budget estimates for special house meeting last year.

## We fought a better election than 2020: Delhi Cong chief

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav addressed his party's performance in the recent Delhi assembly elections, the INDIA bloc, and the road ahead.

### Congress's Performance in Delhi Elections

Despite securing zero seats for the third consecutive election, Yadav maintained that the party's performance was an improvement over previous years. "Yes, we didn't win any seats, but I would say we fought a better election compared to 2020," he stated. Yadav highlighted that the party had built itself from scratch, introducing a new cadre, and managed to increase its vote share by 2%. "This is not an absolute loss," he emphasized, pointing to the party's presence on the ground and the perception of the election as a triangular fight.



have benefited from an earlier start to its ground campaigns. "People started seeing Congress as a credible alternative after our Nyay Yatra in December, which was hugely popular. If we began similar campaigns earlier, it could have instilled more confidence among voters," he said.

He also noted that Congress's traditional voter base—Dalits, backward classes, and minorities—chose AAP due to doubts about Congress's ability to form the government. Yadav pointed out that AAP's stronghold on these communities played a significant role in the election outcome. "If the AAP was losing, our vote share could have gone up to 25-28%," he explained. Despite this, he remained optimistic, stating that Congress's core supporters now recognize the party as their strong voice, and that the increase in vote share demonstrates growing confidence in the party.

### On Contesting with AAP in the Election

When asked about the decision to

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## BJP's Delhi CM Race Heats Up as Party Leaders Weigh Candidates

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The buzz around who will be the next Chief Minister of Delhi intensified on Monday, just two days after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured a sweeping victory in the Delhi assembly elections. As speculation mounts, several BJP legislators have emerged as possible contenders for the top post.

The results of the Delhi elections, declared on February 8, saw the BJP winning 48 of the 70 seats, marking a dramatic return to power after a 27-year absence. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which had previously dominated the Assembly, saw its strength reduce to just 22 seats from 62. This shift has led to heightened discussions within the BJP regarding the selection of the next Chief Minister.

At least two senior BJP leaders confirmed to HT that if the party opts for a woman CM, Rekha Gupta, the MLA from Shalimar Bagh and national vice president of the BJP's women's wing, could be a leading choice. However, Shikha Roy, the BJP legislator from Greater Kailash, who won in a closely contested battle against AAP's Saurabh Bharadwaj, is also seen as a strong contender.

Other names in the race include three-term MLA from Rohini, Vijender Gupta; Ghonda MLA



Ajay Mahawar; Laxmi Nagar MLA Abhay Verma, who represents the Purvanchali community; and Malviya Nagar MLA Satish Upadhyay. Additionally, Ashish Sood, MLA from Janakpuri and the party's Goa unit in-charge, along with Uttam Nagar MLA Pawan Sharma, the co-in-charge of the Assam unit, are also being considered due to their organizational contributions.

The name of Kapil Mishra, a former AAP minister who triumphed in Karawal Nagar, has also emerged as a potential candidate, along with Parvesh Verma, who made waves by defeating AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal in the New Delhi constituency.

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## Security and Traffic Measures in Place for Maghi Purnima Snan at Maha Kumbh

- Prayagraj expects 3 crore devotees for Maghi Purnima Snan.
- City declared “no vehicle zone” for safety.
- 133 ambulances, 2,000 medical staff deployed.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi



Prayagraj is preparing for another massive turnout at the Maha Kumbh, as authorities focus on security and traffic management ahead of the Maghi Purnima Snan, marking the conclusion of the Kalpvas period. This event, expected to draw around 3 crore devotees, is a critical day in the ongoing Kumbh festival, which began on January 13.

In light of the tragic stampede that claimed 30 lives last month during the ‘Amrit Snaan’ or holy dip, significant measures have been implemented to ensure the safety of attendees. Prayagraj has been declared a “no vehicle zone” to prevent congestion and allow for smoother movement of devotees during the event. Kalpvas, a sacred practice where devotees live near the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati river, will officially conclude with this ritual. More than 10

lakh devotees are participating in this year’s Kalpvas at the Triveni Sangam, a key pilgrimage site.

To manage health emergencies, 133 ambulances have been stationed across the city, with 125 regular ambulances, seven river ambulances, and one air ambulance on standby. Over 40 hospitals are on high alert, with 2,000 medical personnel deployed throughout the Mahakumbhnagar area. Additionally, 200 blood units are available, and more than 250 beds have been reserved in hospitals. Special medical teams, including experts from AIIMS Delhi and Banaras Hindu University, are on-site to provide advanced care if needed.

## 2 Soldiers Killed In Action As Terrorists Set Off Bomb In J&K

TPN Correspondent | Delhi



Two Indian Army soldiers were killed in action today in a suspected Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir’s Akhnoor sector. The incident occurred while the soldiers were conducting a “fence patrol” along the Line of Control (LoC).

The White Knight Corps of the Indian Army confirmed the casualties in a post on X, paying tribute to the soldiers for their supreme sacrifice. “White Knight Corps salutes and pays tribute to the supreme sacrifice of two gallant soldiers,” the army said.

The IED attack took place in a region that has witnessed heightened tensions, and the soldiers’ patrol was part of the routine security operations along the LoC. Following the attack, the army has intensified opera-

tions in the area, with search efforts currently underway to locate the perpetrators.

This tragic incident follows a recent series of hostile actions along the LoC. Just yesterday, a soldier was critically injured in the Rajouri district by gunfire from across the LoC. The soldier, stationed at a forward post in the Kallal area of the Nowshera sector, was hit by a bullet in the afternoon. Initial reports indicate that the gunfire originated from the other side of the LoC at approximately 2:40 pm. The soldier was promptly evacuated to a military hospital for treatment.

## Supreme Court Calls for Serious Effort in 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots Appeals

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Supreme Court of India on Monday stressed the importance of taking appeals against acquittals in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots cases “seriously” rather than treating them as a mere formality. The bench, led by Justice Abhay S. Oka, questioned the Centre about whether efforts are being made to engage experienced and senior lawyers to reopen cases that ended in acquittals.

The court was reviewing a status report filed by the Anti-Riots Cell of the Delhi Police, which informed the court about its intention to file appeals in the Supreme Court against six acquittal orders passed by the Delhi High Court. The bench, also comprising Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, expressed concern about the approach taken towards these cases. “This has to be done seriously



and not just for the sake of it,” the bench remarked, urging the Centre to ensure a focused effort in handling these appeals.

The Additional Solicitor General (ASG), Aishwarya Bhati, presented the report to the court, highlighting challenges such as the absence of evidence in some cases. She mentioned that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) led by former Delhi High Court judge Justice S.N. Dhingra, which submitted a report in April 2019, recommended filing fresh appeals in eight cases. However, the lack of evidence has been a significant hurdle.

## Yogi Adityanath Defends Maha Kumbh Arrangements, Slams Opposition



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday responded sharply to opposition criticism regarding the chaos at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, where devotees were reportedly stuck in massive traffic jams for several hours without access to food or water. Adityanath defended the state government’s efforts, suggesting that the criticisms were coming from those accustomed to “VIP treatment.”

Speaking at a public event, the Chief Minister remarked, “The people who are now criticizing the arrangements at Maha Kumbh are the same individuals who have always opposed

India and Sanatan traditions, and indulge in disinformation campaigns.” He did not name any specific individuals but made it clear that he believed these critiques were politically motivated.

Adityanath highlighted the historic significance of the event, noting that approximately 45 crore devotees had taken a ritual bath at the sacred Sangam over the past 29 days, calling it a momentous occasion. “What can be more significant than this?” he said, referring to the enormous number of devotees. He also took a dig at those trying to link the mishaps with VIP baths, accusing them of misleading the public.

## Busy days for birders: Delhi-NCR to host 3 avian counts this month



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Birdwatching enthusiasts in the National Capital Region (NCR) are in for a busy few days, with three major birding activities taking place in the coming days — the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), the annual Big Bird Day (BBD), and the educational Campus Bird Count. These events are set to offer birders a chance to explore and document the diverse avian life in and around Delhi.

The GBBC and Campus Bird Count will be held simultaneously from February 14-17, while the BBD will take place on February 16. Over 30 teams are expected to participate across Delhi-NCR, surveying various locations to spot different bird species. Birders consider these activities a prime opportunity to observe rare species and gain insight into the diversity and population of birds in the region.

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## BJP’s Delhi CM Race Heats Up as Party Leaders Weigh Candidates

However, BJP leaders clarified that the final decision on the CM nominee will only be made after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from his trips to France and the United States, expected on February 14 or 15. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva emphasized that the

central leadership will take the final call on the CM selection, and the new cabinet will likely include representatives from diverse communities such as Jats, Dalits, Purvanchalis, Sikhs, Paharis, and Banias.

## We fought a better election than 2020: Delhi Cong chief

contest the elections separately from AAP, Yadav defended Congress’s stance. He explained that the INDIA bloc was initially an alliance for the Lok Sabha elections, but since then, parties had chosen to contest separately in various states. “Both parties de-

cidated to contest the elections on their own, and we did our best,” he said, adding that his party had continually pointed out the issues with AAP’s governance, such as infrastructure problems and corruption, that people in Delhi were frustrated with.

## Two Juvenile Boys Arrested for Murder of 24-Year-Old Man in East Delhi

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi Police have arrested two juvenile boys in connection with the murder of a 24-year-old man near Smriti Van in East Delhi. The investigation revealed that one of the minors, a 16-year-old, had instigated the killing. The victim was the boyfriend of the boy’s mother, and the incident unfolded after a dispute over the relationship.

The body of the victim was discovered on Monday morning by local residents, who reported it to the authorities after spotting it in a pond near Smriti Van. Upon investigation, police found injury marks on the victim’s head, leading them to suspect foul play. A team from the crime branch and Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) was dispatched to the



scene to gather evidence, and the body was sent to Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital for a post-mortem examination.

Police officers analyzed the deceased’s Call Detail Records (CDR) and found that he had been in contact with a woman who lived nearby. A police team was

sent to question the woman, who revealed that she had been in a two-year relationship with the victim. On the night of the incident, she had asked her son, the 16-year-old, to drop the victim home.

Upon further questioning, the 16-year-old boy admitted to the crime, claiming that he was “annoyed” by his mother’s relationship with the victim. He, along with his 17-year-old friend, killed the victim by hitting him on the head with bricks. The police managed to apprehend both boys and recover the brick and the bike used in the crime.

The arrest of the juveniles has raised concerns about the increasing violence among young people, with the case now under further investigation.

# Rahul Gandhi and Kharge Skip Karnataka Summit



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi will not attend the inaugural function of the investors' summit in Bengaluru on Tuesday evening, citing their ongoing commitments in Parliament. Jairam Ramesh, Congress General Secretary for communication, informed that both leaders are preoccupied with the continuing Budget debate in the Parliament and have regretted their inability to participate in the event.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Ramesh explained, "Both the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, and

the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, are extremely tied up in Parliament today on account of the continuing debate on the Budget. Hence, they have regretted their inability to attend the inauguration of the Karnataka Investor Summit this evening in Bengaluru."

Ramesh further conveyed the leaders' best wishes for the summit and expressed confidence that it would be productive and successful, highlighting Karnataka's unique competitive and comparative advantages.

However, sources suggest that the absence of Kharge and Gandhi may not only be due to their Parliament

schedules. Reports indicate dissatisfaction over the presence of Union Ministers and prominent BJP leaders at the event organized by the Congress-led Karnataka government. The two Congress leaders reportedly felt uncomfortable with the political significance of BJP figures being given prominence during the summit, leading to their decision to skip the inauguration.

Despite their absence, the Congress party is likely to remain focused on ensuring that Karnataka continues to foster its investment-friendly environment, even as the party leaders prioritize their responsibilities in Parliament.

- Jairam Ramesh cites ongoing Budget debate as reason for absence.
- Reports suggest dissatisfaction over BJP leaders' prominence at the event.

## Count Your MLAs: Mann Hits Back At Congress Over AAP Punjab Legislators Exodus Claim



TPN Correspondent | Punjab

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday strongly refuted the claim made by Congress leader Pratap Singh Bajwa, who alleged that around 30 AAP MLAs in Punjab were in contact with him, signaling a potential exodus. The CM's comments came after Bajwa's recurring claims over the past three years that several AAP MLAs might defect to Congress.

Mann dismissed Bajwa's statement, saying, "Bajwa has been repeating this claim for the past three years. He can continue making such claims. I would ask him to first count how many MLAs Congress has in Delhi," pointing out the incongruity in the Congress leader's accusations.

This development follows a meeting between Mann and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday, just days after AAP suffered a significant defeat in the Delhi assembly elections. The meeting, held at the Kapurthala House, was attended by all 91 Punjab MLAs,

along with top AAP leaders, including Manish Sisodia, former Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi.

During the interaction, Mann emphasized that the AAP government in Punjab is focused on improving infrastructure and easing the toll burden on the state's residents. He also acknowledged the party's ongoing efforts to bring tangible change in Punjab, similar to the work done in Delhi.

"The AAP government is committed to developing Punjab and will use Delhi's experience to build a state that will set an example for the entire country," said Mann. He further reiterated, "Victory and defeat are part of the political game, but we are determined to make Punjab a model state in the next two years."

Mann's statements underscored the party's commitment to progress and laid out a vision for Punjab's future, with the aim of showcasing it as a leader in governance and development.

## BJP's Promises for Delhi: Freebies, Welfare Schemes, and Tackling Corruption

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Ahead of its election victory in Delhi, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unveiled a series of ambitious promises, ranging from welfare schemes to tackling corruption. With a focus on delivering benefits to women, senior citizens, and the underprivileged, the BJP's manifesto emphasizes a commitment to improving the lives of Delhi's residents through various social and financial aid programs.

The BJP has vowed to continue existing welfare schemes while making them more effective by eliminating corruption. Key promises include providing Rs 2,500 monthly assistance to women from poor families under the Mahila Samridhi Yojana, and Rs 21,000 along with six nutritional kits to every pregnant woman under the Mukhya Mantri Matritva Suraksha Yojana.

In line with its commitment to social welfare, the BJP has promised LPG cylinders at a subsidized rate of Rs 500 for women from low-income

households, with one free cylinder each on Holi and Diwali. Additionally, the government plans to implement the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, offering free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh, and an additional Rs 5 lakh coverage for poor families.



Further efforts include increasing the senior citizens' pension for those aged 60-70 from Rs 2,000 to Rs 2,500 and for citizens aged 70+, widows, disabled individuals, and the destitute from Rs 500 to Rs 3,000. The BJP has also pledged to set up Atal Canteens in JJ clusters to provide nutritious meals at Rs 5.

A significant promise involves ad-

ressing corruption within the AAP government. The BJP has committed to adopting a "zero tolerance" policy against AAP's alleged misgovernance, with plans to constitute an SIT to investigate various scams. The party has also promised free education for poor students from KG to PG in Delhi's government institutions and financial assistance for youth preparing for competitive exams.

While the BJP's manifesto guarantees free water for all residents, it remains unclear whether free electricity will continue, though the party has promised to extend free electricity to poor households under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

In addition, the BJP has emphasized its commitment to cleaning up the Yamuna River and transforming Delhi into one of the cleanest and greenest cities in the country. With its promises in place, the BJP now faces the challenge of fulfilling these commitments and proving its ability to govern effectively in Delhi.

## BJP's Gupta on AAP's Downfall: "The Common Man Party Won't Last Long"



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

After the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) victory in the recent Delhi Assembly elections, there has been significant speculation about who will be appointed as the Chief Minister. While the party has yet to announce the CM candidate, newly elected BJP MLA Arvinder Singh Lovely weighed in with his thoughts. He stated that the final decision on the CM post will be made by the party's top leadership, emphasizing that Prime Minister Na-

rendra Modi's leadership will play a key role in the selection process.

Lovely also shared the BJP's priorities for Delhi, stating that the cleaning of the Yamuna River would be a top guarantee for the party. In a subtle attack on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Lovely criticized Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal for his "habit of living in a Sheeshmahal" – a reference to his elite lifestyle, which contrasts with the BJP's focus on addressing common people's issues.

Vijendra Gupta, another BJP leader, added to the rhetoric, predicting the downfall of AAP. He confidently stated that the AAP's reign in Delhi is over and that the party would no longer be able to cover up its shortcomings. Delhi BJP MP Yogendra Chaudhary also joined the chorus, alleging a collaboration between Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal, while declaring that Congress has been effectively eliminated from Delhi's political landscape.

In the midst of this speculation, sources indicate that BJP leader Entrance Verma could be a strong contender for the CM post. Verma, who defeated AAP's national convener and former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in the New Delhi seat, has reportedly garnered support from both the BJP and RSS.

The BJP's success in this election is significant, as the party won 48 out of the 70 seats, securing almost two-thirds of Delhi's legislative assembly. In contrast, AAP, which had dominated the city for the past several years, won only 22 seats, a stark drop from their commanding victories in the 2015 and 2020 elections.

## FIR Against AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan for Obstructing Police

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met with France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noel Barrot, in Paris, where the two leaders engaged in discussions on a wide range of cooperative efforts between India and France. The focus of their meeting was primarily on artificial intelligence (AI), innovation, connectivity, clean energy, and shared regional and global challenges.

Jaishankar, who is in Paris as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's three-day visit to France, expressed his pleasure at meeting Barrot, noting the strengthening of India-France

ties in key areas. The two ministers acknowledged the significant progress made in their strategic partnership and discussed ways to further enhance collaboration in the future.

In a post on social media, Jaishankar highlighted the "strong convergence" between the two countries, a sentiment shared by Barrot, who emphasized that AI would be a new frontier in their growing partnership. Barrot further announced that in 2026, India and France would jointly celebrate a "Year of Innovation," marking a milestone in their collaborative efforts.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Modi's arrival in Paris was met with a warm



welcome from the Indian diaspora. Despite the chilly weather, the community showed its strong support for the Prime Minister, reflecting the deep ties between India and France. Modi's visit includes a co-chairing role in the AI Action Summit alongside French President Emmanuel Macron.

Additionally, Modi and Macron are set to inaugurate the new Consulate General of India in Marseille during this visit. This marks the sixth time that Modi has visited France, underscoring the importance of the bilateral relationship.

As India and France continue to deepen their cooperation in areas like AI and clean energy, the upcoming "Year of Innovation" promises to be a pivotal moment in strengthening their strategic partnership even further. FIR Filed Against AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan for Obstructing Police, Aiding Fleeing Criminal

Delhi Police filed an FIR on Mon-

day against Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Amanatullah Khan for allegedly obstructing police work, aiding a proclaimed offender's escape, and assaulting a police team in Jamia Nagar, southeast Delhi.

A senior police officer stated that while questioning Shahbaz, a group of men intervened, questioning the police and forcibly pulling Shahbaz away. The men identified themselves as associates of Amanatullah Khan and claimed the MLA was nearby. The mob surrounded the police team, preventing Shahbaz's arrest, pushing and assaulting the officers. During the commotion, Shahbaz managed to flee.

# Need To Be Careful About AI Biases: PM Modi At AI Summit In Paris

- Modi stresses AI's role in daily life at Paris summit.
- Calls for transparent, bias-free AI and global collaboration.
- Emphasizes AI-driven innovation in healthcare, education, and jobs.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a global Artificial Intelligence summit in Paris today, emphasizing the transformative role AI is playing in daily human life. Speaking to a gathering of world leaders, PM Modi called for collective global efforts to harness AI's potential, particularly focusing on the need for inclusivity, transparency, and addressing biases in AI systems.

"We must pool our resources and talent to develop open-source systems that foster trust and transparency while ensuring the creation of quality datasets free from biases," PM Modi stated. He stressed that AI applications must be people-centric, ensuring that they serve the global population equitably, especially the Global South. The Prime Minister also raised concerns about the risks posed by AI, including cybersecurity issues, disinformation, and deep fakes, calling for urgent solutions to mitigate these challenges.

PM Modi also highlighted the potential of AI to revolutionize sectors like healthcare, education, and agriculture, suggesting that AI could accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. "AI can help transform millions of lives," he said, noting that its application could make the path to sustainable development faster and more efficient.



Addressing concerns about AI-induced job loss, the Prime Minister assured that technological advancements do not equate to the disappearance of work. "The nature of jobs changes with time, and new types of jobs are created," he explained. To ensure the workforce is prepared for an AI-driven future, PM Modi emphasized the importance of investing in skilling and re-skilling programs to equip people with the necessary tools for emerging job markets.

The Prime Minister also acknowledged the

high energy demands of AI systems, underscoring the need for green energy solutions to fuel AI's future. "We must scrutinize the high-energy intensity of AI and explore sustainable power options," he added.

PM Modi, co-chairing the AI Action Summit alongside French President Emmanuel Macron, used the platform to advocate for a global approach to AI development that benefits all and minimizes risks, ensuring technology remains a force for good in the world.



## Deepika Padukone Talks About Mental Health On 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' 2025

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The second episode of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025', set to air on Wednesday, promises an insightful discussion on mental health and well-being, featuring Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone. Known for her candidness about mental health struggles, Deepika will engage with students, focusing on the importance of mental well-being, particularly in the context of education.

In a video preview shared by the actress, she responds to a student's question about ways to improve mental health. Deepika emphasized the importance of expressing one's feelings rather than suppressing them, encouraging students to share their thoughts with family and friends. "Always express, never suppress. Be it with anybody," she advised.

During the episode, Deepika will also open up about her personal battle with depression, shedding light on her journey and the significance of mental health awareness. "I want to thank our Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving us this platform to come out as warriors, not worriers," she said, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to speak on such an important issue.

The 39-year-old actress has been an advocate for mental health, using her platform to encourage open conversations about mental well-being. Her candid admission about her struggles has inspired many, making her an influential voice in promoting mental health awareness.

In a post on Instagram, Deepika shared her excitement for the upcoming episode: "Pariksha Pe Charcha' is back with its 8th edition! And this time, we'll also be discussing the importance of mental health. Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister @narendramodi, for your commitment to this cause. I look forward to launching our episode... #PPC2025."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative, 'Pariksha Pe Charcha', provides a platform for students and educators to discuss relevant issues, including education, stress, and mental health, fostering a supportive environment for young people across the country.



## India-Indonesia business ties get fresh boost with Prabowo visit

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

During the State Visit of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto to India from January 24-27, 2025, a series of business meetings, government-to-government interactions, and industry-level talks were held, fostering stronger trade and investment ties between the two nations. The visit marked a significant step towards deepening economic collaboration, with new initiatives aimed at boosting bilateral trade and enhancing mutual investment opportunities.

The President's entourage included over 100 delegates from the Indonesian National Chamber of Trade and Industry (KADIN), all of whom were keen to strengthen Indonesia's economic relationship with India. These meetings focused on fostering deeper business connections and exploring new avenues for trade across various sectors. The discussions encompassed industries such as manufacturing, infrastructure, agriculture, and renewable energy, aiming to identify opportunities for cross-border investments and partnerships. During the visit, both nations expressed a shared commitment to advancing their trade relations, leveraging India's growing market and Indonesia's strategic position as a key player in Southeast Asia. The discussions also focused on overcoming trade barriers and creating a more conducive environment for long-term economic growth.

In addition to formal talks, the visit included networking events, workshops, and roundtable discussions that provided a platform for businesses from both countries to explore potential collaborations. As a result, new avenues of cooperation in areas like digital economy, health, and sustainable development were identified, paving the way for stronger economic ties moving forward. This visit is expected to result in significant improvements in India-Indonesia trade relations, with the possibility of future trade agreements and expanded cooperation in various sectors. Both governments expressed their enthusiasm for strengthening their partnership and ensuring that the momentum generated during the visit leads to tangible benefits for businesses and industries in both countries.



## Sundar Pichai Advocates for Global AI Regulation at AI Action Summit 2025

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Google CEO Sundar Pichai called for balanced regulations to address the risks associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI) while ensuring the continued innovation and positive impact of the technology. Pichai made these remarks on the first day of the AI Action Summit in Paris, France, where global leaders and tech experts are gathered to discuss the future of AI.

In his speech, Pichai emphasized the need for a global AI regulatory framework that is aligned across nations. He highlighted the importance of drawing from existing laws to fill in regulatory gaps, rather than creating entirely new laws from scratch. "It's essential to develop regulations that are not overly restrictive, allowing AI to continue driving progress while addressing the risks it may pose," he said.

Pichai's comments come at a time when AI technology is evolving rapidly and raising concerns regarding its potential misuse, including issues of bias, privacy, and job displacement. While acknowledging these concerns, Pichai urged policymakers to strike a balance between regulation and innovation. He stressed that an international approach would ensure consistency across borders and help prevent fragmented rules that could stifle technological advancements.

The Google CEO also discussed the transformative potential of AI across industries, including healthcare, education, and climate change. He urged governments to foster collaboration with the private sector to develop AI technologies that can contribute positively to global challenges.

The AI Action Summit aims to bring together leaders to discuss AI's future role in society, its ethical implications, and how it can be harnessed for the greater good. Pichai's speech marked a key moment in the ongoing global dialogue on how best to regulate and harness the potential of AI in a responsible and sustainable way.

## J&K Legislative Assembly Holds First Full Session After Seven Years

TPN Correspondent | Jammu

The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly has convened its first full session after a seven-year hiatus, with a significant turnout from the 90 Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs). A total of 82 MLAs have submitted nearly 800 questions and 80 private members' bills, demonstrating active participation and a strong desire to address critical issues.

This session marks a significant shift in the legislative process, as the introduction of bills is now subject to approval by the Law Department—a procedural change brought about following the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories (UTs) in 2019. Previously, such a requirement did not exist when the region functioned as a state.

The decision to hold a comprehensive session is seen as a much-needed platform for MLAs to introduce reforms, engage with the concerns of their constituencies, and address pressing issues. As part of the session, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly had instructed each MLA to submit 20 questions—10 in starred and 10 in unstarred categories—along with three private member's bills by February 10. Notably, all eligible legislators have complied with this requirement, reflecting a commitment to active participation and governance. However, since the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, there have been changes in the scope of legislative discussions. MLAs are no longer permitted to raise questions about the Police Department, anti-militancy operations, law and order, or All India Services, as these fall under the jurisdiction of the central government.

# India Aims To Add 500 GW Of Renewable Energy Capacity By 2030: PM Modi



- Modi invites global investors to India's energy sector at IEW'25.
- Highlights 500 GW renewable energy and 5M tonnes green hydrogen goal.
- India leads in carbon reduction, solar expansion, and energy innovation.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged global investors to explore the vast investment opportunities in India's energy sector, emphasizing the country's ambitious renewable energy goals for the next five years. Addressing the India Energy Week 2025 (IEW'25) virtually, the Prime Minister highlighted India's target of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity and producing 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030.

"India offers many possibilities for investment in these sectors. There are new opportunities with the launch of fresh bidding rounds for oil and gas assets," said PM Modi, adding that these efforts align with the nation's broader energy ambitions. The Prime Minister described the energy sector as one of the key pillars of India's growth in the 21st century, stating that India's economic strength, political stability, and strategic geographical position make it an attractive destination for energy investments.

PM Modi also noted that India's commitment to global sustainability is opening

up new avenues for the country's energy future. "Our energy goals are aligned with the deadline of 2030," he said, reiterating targets for India's green energy transformation, including the goal to make Indian Railways net-zero by 2030 and increase solar power generation capacity.

The Prime Minister pointed out the significant progress India has made in the energy sector over the past decade. From becoming the world's fifth-largest economy to increasing solar generation capacity by 32 times, India's energy transformation is on track. India is also the first G20 country to meet its carbon emission reduction target set at the Paris climate conference.

IEW'25, which will feature energy buyers and producers engaging in key discussions in the national capital, is expected to be the second-largest global energy event in terms of participation. It will also showcase India's success with the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, which aims to provide clean cooking energy to households and serve as a model for global adoption.

## Prayagraj Declared 'No Vehicle Zone' Ahead Of 'Maghi Purnima Bath' At Kumbh



TPN Correspondent | Mhakhumbh

The Prayagraj administration has put in place a comprehensive traffic plan for Maghi Purnima on Wednesday, marking the end of the Kalpvas period during the Maha Kumbh. The special measures aim to manage the large influx of devotees expected to take a dip at the Sangam, ensuring their safety and the smooth flow of traffic.

The fair area will be designated as a 'no vehicle zone' starting from 4 am on Tuesday. The restriction will extend to the entire city from 5 pm onwards, with exceptions made for emergency and essential services. The move is intended to prevent congestion and ensure safe access for the devotees, with authorities expecting more than 10 lakh people to participate in the bathing ritual.

To avoid traffic jams, the administra-

tion has marked designated parking areas for both public and private vehicles, making it easier for devotees to reach the bathing ghats on foot. Additionally, a special traffic plan will remain in effect until the conclusion of the bathing ritual to facilitate the safe evacuation of devotees in case of any emergency.

Kalpvas, an important tradition during the Maha Kumbh, involves devotees living near the sacred river for a set period of time, focusing on fasting, self-discipline, and spiritual purification. The administration has urged all Kalpvasis to follow the rules and park their vehicles in the authorized lots.

In light of the large crowds, the administration has also decided to shift secondary schools in Prayagraj to online classes from February 7 to February 12, ensuring the safety and convenience of students. On Monday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed the arrangements, emphasizing the importance of effective crowd and traffic management.

With the influx of devotees expected to continue, the Chief Minister directed officials to take strict action against the spread of false information, urging them to ensure accurate communication with the public to prevent confusion or panic during the event.

## INDIA bloc still strong but internal discussion required: Kapil Sibal

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal has reassured that the INDIA bloc, a coalition of opposition parties, remains strong and has a promising future, though internal discussions are crucial for its success. In an interview with IANS, Sibal dismissed rumors of the alliance disintegrating and emphasized that the unity within the bloc would hold firm during national elections.

He explained, "There is no such issue. This is a national alliance, as Sharad Pawar Ji mentioned. The alliance will remain intact for national elections. However, at the state level, there isn't a national alliance as such." His comments came amid growing speculation surrounding the future of the alliance, particularly as various state-level issues and individual party interests have emerged.

Sibal also addressed remarks made by Congress leader Tariq Anwar, who recently questioned the party's leadership and called for significant internal reforms. While acknowledging the validity of Anwar's concerns, Sibal noted that such discussions should have taken place earlier. "There is



some truth in what Tariq Anwar Sahab has said. However, this issue should have been raised when Kejriwal Ji was fielding candidates in states like Haryana, Goa, Gujarat, and Karnataka. Nevertheless, it is an important topic that must be discussed," he added.

In light of ongoing tensions, particularly in West Bengal, where Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC) is reportedly considering contesting the next elections independently, Sibal refrained from making direct comments. "I have no comments on that. These are mature and responsible leaders who will sit together

and decide the way forward," he remarked, emphasizing the autonomy of the leaders involved in such decisions.

The INDIA bloc is currently facing significant challenges, with Mamata Banerjee blaming the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress for the opposition's failure in the recent Delhi and Haryana Assembly elections. Banerjee has also ruled out any potential alliance with Congress for the 2026 West Bengal polls. Despite these hurdles, Sibal remains confident that the alliance will continue to move forward, albeit with necessary internal discussions.

## RG Kar case: HC says corruption in high places has serious impact on public confidence

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday emphasized the importance of a prompt trial in a case involving financial irregularities at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital. The court was hearing an appeal by Sandip Ghosh, the former principal of the institution, seeking a postponement of the framing of charges. Ghosh, along with four others, was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for alleged financial misconduct during his tenure.

A division bench, comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Gaurang Kanth, observed that corruption at high levels has a severe impact on public trust in government affairs. "Corruption in high places has serious impact on public confidence in the affairs of the state," the bench stated, highlighting the need for swift judicial ac-

tion to maintain public faith in the justice system.



The court further pointed out that a prompt trial would not only reinforce public trust but also ensure the accused, currently in judicial remand, receive a fair and timely trial. "A prompt trial of persons accused of corruption would reinforce the faith of the people in the justice delivery system," the bench remarked.

As the hearing began, the CBI submitted a report to the court, outlining its progress in the investigation, which was initiated following a directive from the high court. The bench noted that the CBI had agreed to provide electronic or scanned copies of relevant documents to the accused by Wednesday, ensuring transparency in the legal process. The accused would have the opportunity to verify the documents and request the CBI to submit a report to the trial judge.

The division bench also directed the special court handling the case to set a date for the trial before the next hearing in the high court, underscoring the urgency of addressing the serious charges involved. The court's comments reflected a commitment to ensuring justice is served efficiently while upholding the rights of both the accused and the public.

## Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri says India has achieved 100 per cent clean cooking access

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, announced on Tuesday that India has successfully achieved 100% clean cooking access through a combination of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, city gas expansion, and solar cooking initiatives. His statement was made during the opening ceremony of the Indian Energy Week (IEW) 2025 in New Delhi.

Puri emphasized that the real challenge in energy transition is not technology, but rather the scaling of solutions in an equitable manner. He highlighted that India's achievement of universal clean cooking access showcases how policy-driven initiatives can significantly improve the lives of millions.

"The future of energy transition lies in strategic investments across both hydrocarbons and renewables. We need smart capital reallocation, such as deploying wind and solar energy where intermittency is manageable, utilizing biofuels where liquid fuel de-



mand persists, and using gas for firm power needs," he explained. Puri stressed that this approach ensures energy affordability and sustainability for India's growing population.

The Union Minister further discussed India's commitment to the energy transition, noting the importance of balancing renewable energy sources with traditional fuels to meet the country's energy demands efficiently. The Indian government has made substantial investments in renewable ener-

gy infrastructure, aiming to play a pivotal role in global efforts to combat climate change.

India Energy Week 2025, held from February 11 to 14 in New Delhi, is one of the largest international events for the energy sector, underscoring India's position as a key player in the global energy transition. The event is expected to bring together stakeholders from around the world to discuss policies, innovations, and collaborations that will drive a sustainable and affordable energy future.

## Welcome to Paris, my friend: Emmanuel Macron welcomes PM Modi ahead of AI Summit

- Modi welcomed in Paris for AI Action Summit with Macron.
- Indian diaspora celebrates, requests cultural center in France.
- Modi, Macron to inaugurate India's first Marseille consulate.

TPN Correspondent | France

French President Emmanuel Macron warmly welcomed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Paris, expressing excitement for the upcoming AI Action Summit, which the two leaders are set to co-chair. Macron also extended a greeting to US Vice President JD Vance, who will be attending the summit alongside global tech leaders. Sharing the moment on social media, Macron wrote, "Welcome to Paris, my friend @ NarendraModi! Nice to meet you dear @VP Vance! Welcome to all our partners for the AI Action Summit. Let's get to work!"

Upon arrival in Paris, PM Modi was greeted enthusiastically by members of the Indian diaspora, with some even singing 'Hare Krishna' in celebration. One member of the community shared their joy, stating, "Today is my birthday, it's a big day for me and he (PM Modi) blessed me." Another expressed pride in the Prime Minister's visit, noting the importance of the AI summit and the



opening of a new consulate. The communi-

ty also made a request for a cultural center to be established in the city.

The visit is significant not only for the AI summit but also for the deepening India-France strategic ties. Modi and Macron will discuss key advancements in AI for societal benefit, and jointly inaugurate India's first consulate in Marseille, marking a key diplomatic milestone. The two leaders will also review the Horizon 2047 Roadmap, which focuses on long-term cooperation in various sectors.

During his stay, PM Modi will travel to Marseille with Macron to visit the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), a major nuclear fusion research initiative. Additionally, he will pay tribute to Indian soldiers who lost their lives during the World Wars by visiting the Mazargues War Cemetery. Following his visit to France, PM Modi will travel to the United States for a two-day visit at the invitation of President Donald Trump.



## Bangladesh govt aims to hold polls by December: Ex-PM Khaleda Zia

TPN Correspondent | Dhaka

Bangladesh is working towards holding its general elections by December, according to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) following a meeting with Muhammad Yunus, the chief adviser to the interim government. Yunus, the Nobel Peace laureate, has been leading the caretaker government since August, when mass protests forced then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign and seek refuge in neighboring India.

The BNP, led by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, and Hasina's Awami League have alternated in power for most of the past three decades, marking a longstanding rivalry between the two political parties. Despite the ongoing political turbulence, there is growing anticipation for the upcoming elections as both major parties prepare for what could be a contentious battle for power.

In a statement following the meeting, a BNP official revealed that the party had once again pressed Yunus on the timeline for the elections. Yunus reassured them that efforts were underway to ensure the elections are held by December. The caretaker government, which is tasked with overseeing the election process, has been working to stabilize the country and maintain order during this transitional period.

The announcement comes amid increasing pressure from the political opposition to ensure free and fair elections, with the BNP seeking guarantees from the interim government. The opposition party has expressed concerns over the potential for election manipulation under Hasina's rule and is pushing for reforms to ensure the integrity of the election process.

As Bangladesh heads towards the critical December deadline, the country is bracing for heightened political activity, with both the Awami League and BNP gearing up for what promises to be a high-stakes election.



## Be Psychologically Prepared For Terror Attack: Singapore Minister Warns People

TPN Correspondent | Singapore

Singapore's Law and Home Affairs Minister, K Shanmugam, issued a stark warning on Tuesday, urging the public to mentally prepare for a possible terror incident, as the city-state has seen a rise in radicalized individuals. The minister highlighted recent cases where a teenager, a housewife, and a cleaner were detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for their extremist plans.

Speaking at the Sri Thendayuthapani Temple during the Thaipusam 2025 celebrations, Shanmugam referenced a disturbing case involving an 18-year-old student who had been arrested for promoting far-right extremist ideologies. The student, who had been consuming racist and far-right propaganda, idolized the Australian white supremacist responsible for the 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks. He had plans to attack Muslims at a mosque in Singapore and had even gotten tattoos and T-shirts featuring neo-Nazi and far-right symbols.

The Internal Security Department (ISD) detained the student in December 2024. Additionally, Shanmugam noted that a housewife and a cleaner were also targeted for their support of Islamist militant groups. The housewife, a Singaporean Muslim, had been managing social media groups that supported terrorist organizations. Meanwhile, the Malaysian cleaner was arrested in November 2024 and repatriated to Malaysia.

Shanmugam emphasized that while Singapore's authorities have been proactive in combating radicalization, the increasing number of cases signals that the threat is growing. He reassured that ISD's swift actions had prevented many potential threats, but warned that Singaporeans must remain psychologically prepared. "It's not like in other countries.

## Ukraine May Be Russian Someday: Trump Ahead Of Zelensky-Vance Meeting

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

US President Donald Trump has sparked controversy by suggesting that Ukraine "may be Russian someday," signaling a potential shift in American policy toward Moscow. His remarks came just days before his vice president, JD Vance, was scheduled to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The comments also come nearly three years after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as Russian forces continue to make steady progress on the battlefield, while Kyiv struggles with shortages of soldiers and weapons.

In an interview with Fox News, Trump discussed the ongoing conflict, saying, "They (Ukraine) may make a deal. They may not make a deal. They may be Russian someday, or they may not be Russian someday." Trump also expressed a desire for the US to secure a return on the financial aid sent to Ukraine, suggesting the possibility of brokering a trade deal for Ukraine's natural resources, such as rare earth minerals. He claimed that Ukraine had essentially agreed to provide the US with \$500 billion worth of these resources.

Ukrainian officials have previously shown interest in partnering with the US and oth-



er allies for resource extraction in exchange for security guarantees, though no specifics have been disclosed regarding such an arrangement. Meanwhile, Zelenskyy has insisted on tough security guarantees from the West, fearing that any agreement without military commitments—such as NATO membership or peacekeeping forces—would allow Russia to regroup for another attack.

As part of his efforts to end the war, Trump

revealed plans to send his special envoy, Keith Kellogg, to Ukraine on February 20, just days before the third anniversary of Russia's invasion. Kellogg is tasked with drafting a proposal to halt the conflict, though Trump has not yet outlined a clear strategy to bring both sides to the negotiating table. Despite his push for peace, both Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin have previously ruled out direct negotiations, with significant barriers remaining between the two sides.

## Pakistan: Imran Khan requests court to conduct open hearing of his cases

TPN Correspondent | Islamabad

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has formally requested that his legal cases be heard in an open court, filing a petition with the Islamabad High Court. In the petition, Khan claimed that several "false" cases had been filed against him and that his trial was being conducted in a "controlled" environment at Adiala Jail. He argues that the trial in prison violated both legal procedures and the Constitution of Pakistan.

Since his arrest in 2023, Imran Khan, the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has not been presented in an open court. His trials have instead been conducted in makeshift courts set up within the jail. The petition highlights concerns about the lack of transparency in the proceedings, with Khan's legal team facing harassment and restricted access. It also states that the jail administration has not allowed international media to cover the trial, with only a few selected reporters permitted to attend. Additionally, the media was instructed not to use Khan's



name but to refer to him only as the "PTI founder."

In the petition, Khan's legal team urged the Islamabad High Court to issue an order for an open trial to ensure fairness and transparency, as guaranteed under Pakistan's Constitution. Khan's legal representatives

argued that conducting the trial in such a restricted manner violated his fundamental rights, including the right to a fair trial and the right to public and media scrutiny of legal proceedings. Meanwhile, Imran Khan's sister, Aleema Khan, revealed that her brother would write a third letter to Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, next week. This follows two previous letters that Khan had sent to General Munir, which were shared with the media. The military establishment, however, has denied receiving any communication from Khan. Imran Khan's petition and his ongoing attempts to secure a fair trial have sparked widespread attention in Pakistan, raising concerns about the integrity of his legal proceedings and the state of justice in the country.

## India and Egypt Begin Joint Special Forces Exercise 'Cyclone-III' in Rajasthan



- India, Egypt begin Cyclone-III Special Forces drill in Rajasthan.
- Focus on counter-terrorism, sniping, and combat tactics.
- Strengthens bilateral military cooperation and interoperability.

TPN Correspondent  
| Chandigarh

India and Egypt have launched the latest edition of their annual joint Special Forces exercise, Cyclone-III, at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in northwest Rajasthan. The two-week-long exercise aims to bolster military cooperation, enhance interoperability, and improve special operations capabilities between the two nations.

The exercise features a contingent of 25 Indian personnel from two Special Forces battalions and an equal number of Egyptian personnel from the Egyptian Special Forces Group and Task Force. The primary objective is to strength-

en counter-terrorism operations, reconnaissance, and raid tactics, along with other advanced special forces skills and procedures.

Training activities during the exercise will cover a range of high-level military operations, including sniping, combat free-fall, surveillance, target designation, and neutralizing human and material threats. Both sides will also focus on physical fitness, joint tactical planning, and coordination during these complex drills.

The Indian and Egyptian forces will engage in various tactical and combat scenarios designed to test their capabilities in real-world situations. The collaborative training seeks to

improve the operational readiness of both forces by refining their response to contemporary security challenges. This annual exercise alternates between India and Egypt, with the previous edition having taken place in Egypt in January 2024. The motto of the exercise, "Together we train, together we excel," reflects the commitment of both nations to enhancing their military ties.

The Cyclone exercise is a key part of the growing defense cooperation between India and Egypt, and aims to build lasting relationships between their Special Forces units. The ongoing drills not only serve to sharpen the tactical skills of the participants but also contribute to strengthening bilateral defense ties in a region that faces complex security challenges.

## UK Targets Indian Restaurants In Trump-Style Immigration Crackdown

TPN Correspondent  
| Washington

In a move reminiscent of US President Donald Trump's tough immigration policies, the United Kingdom's Labour government has launched a nationwide crackdown on illegal working. Described as a "UK-wide blitz," the operation targeted industries such as Indian restaurants, nail bars, convenience stores, and car washes, where migrant workers are often employed under illegal conditions.

Overseen by British Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, the Home Office reported a record-breaking January, with officials raiding 828 premises – a 48% increase compared to the previous January. Arrests surged to 609, marking a 73% increase from the year before. The crackdown focused heavily on sectors like restaurants, takeaways, cafes, and the food, drink, and tobacco industries. A raid at an Indian restaurant in Humberside, northern England, resulted in

seven arrests and four detentions, further highlighting the scale of the operation.

"The immigration rules must be respected and enforced. For too long, employers have exploited illegal migrants, and too many people have been able to work illegally without consequence," said Cooper. She emphasized that the



crackdown not only aimed to curb illegal working but also to prevent dangerous migration practices, such as crossing the English Channel in small boats. She also warned that the exploitation of vulnerable migrants undermines both the immigration system and the economy.

Amid increasing pressure from the rising Reform UK party, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government has been forced to show its tough stance on illegal immigration. One of its strategies has involved the use of bespoke charter flights to deport "immigration offenders" to countries around the world, including some of the largest migrant return flights in UK history, which have carried over 800 people.

In a "show, not tell" strategy, the government has released TV footage of deportations, depicting migrants being escorted from buses to charter planes. Some deported individuals are reported to have criminal records, including convictions for drug offenses, theft, and even rape and murder. Since Labour took office, nearly 19,000 foreign criminals and illegal migrants have been removed, with the government highlighting these actions in a bid to prove its commitment to tackling illegal

## Relief to Adani? Trump pauses enforcement of foreign bribery law

TPN Correspondent  
| Washington

In a significant move, U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order directing the Department of Justice (DoJ) to pause enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), a landmark law dating back to 1977. The FCPA prohibits both American companies and foreign firms from engaging in bribery of foreign government officials in exchange for business advantages. This decision has far-reaching implications, as the FCPA has been a cornerstone in some of the U.S. Department of Justice's most high-profile international corruption cases.

The executive order targets ongoing investigations into the Adani Group, a multinational conglomerate based in India. The FCPA played a crucial role in launching a bribery investigation against Gautam Adani, the group's chairman, and his nephew Sagar Adani. Last year, under the administration of President Joe Biden, the DoJ charged the Adani Group for allegedly paying over USD 250 million (around Rs 2,100 crore) in bribes to Indian offi-



cial. These bribes were supposedly made to secure favorable terms for solar power contracts.

According to prosecutors, the bribes were concealed from U.S. banks and investors, despite the Adani Group raising billions of dollars for the project from American financial institutions. The case highlights the FCPA's power to address foreign corruption if there are connections to U.S. investors or markets. The investigation into the Adani Group was among the most notable of recent years, drawing attention to potential violations of the FCPA and rais-

ing concerns about corporate transparency and ethical business practices.

With this executive order, President Trump has now directed U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi to pause further enforcement of the law, raising questions about the future of such international corruption investigations and the potential impacts on U.S. business practices abroad. This development could signal a shift in the U.S. government's approach to foreign bribery cases and may have significant consequences for multinational companies operating in global markets.

## Indian nationals aged 18-30 invited to apply for UK-India Young Professionals Scheme 2025



TPN Correspondent  
| New Delhi

The UK-India Young Professionals Scheme (YPS) 2025 ballot is set to open next week, providing Indian nationals between the ages of 18 and 30 with the chance to live, study, work, and travel in the UK. The ballot will open on February 18 and close on February 20.

In a statement, the British High Commission in New Delhi announced that the ballot

will offer 3,000 spots for eligible Indian applicants. To be considered, Indian nationals must enter the ballot through the official gov.uk website. There is no fee to participate, and successful applicants will be randomly selected.

To qualify for the scheme, applicants must be at least 18 years old on the date they plan to travel to the UK. They must also hold a qualification at the level of a UK bachelor's degree or higher and provide proof of

having at least £2,530 in savings to support themselves while in the UK. The British High Commission urged applicants to carefully review all eligibility requirements before entering the ballot to ensure they meet the necessary criteria.

Lindy Cameron, the British High Commissioner to India, expressed enthusiasm about the program, calling it an excellent opportunity to foster a modern understanding between the two nations. She encouraged individuals from across India, from cities like Itanagar and Coimbatore to Leh and Surat, to apply for the scheme.

The UK-India Young Professionals Scheme offers a unique opportunity for young Indians to gain international experience and deepen ties between the UK and India. By participating, successful applicants will have the chance to immerse themselves in British culture, while contributing their skills to the UK's workforce.

## Indian space start-up Digantara launches operations in Colorado

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepares for his visit to the United States, Bengaluru-based space start-up Digantara has announced the expansion of its operations to Colorado. The company, which specializes in space surveillance, revealed that it has invested Rs 8.67 crore (\$1 million) in the US market and plans to invest an additional Rs 86 - 130 crore (\$10-15 million) over the next six to eight months. This expansion is aimed at serving clients such as the US Department of Defense (DoD), including its various agencies like the US Space Development Agency (SDA) and others involved in critical defense and intelligence operations.

Colorado Governor Jared Polis welcomed Digantara's expansion, highlighting the state's commitment to fostering innovation and strengthening ties with India's growing space industry. He reaffirmed the state's role in supporting new technologies that drive space surveillance and security, an area of increasing importance as space threats evolve globally.

Digantara's move into the US is seen



as a result of strategic India-US initiatives, such as the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET) and the INDUS-X framework. The start-up has been actively engaged in these initiatives, which aim to bolster collaboration in the space sector.

As part of its support for Digantara's expansion, the State of Colorado has committed nearly USD one million in operational incentives. The company has also been working on flagship programs that cater to the needs of defense and intelligence agencies, including the Space Rapid Capability Office, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD), and the Space Systems Command's SDA TAP LAB initiative.

## Bangladesh seeks full power supply restoration from Adani plant

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Bangladesh has formally requested Adani Power to fully resume electricity supplies from its 1,600-megawatt plant in India after more than three months of reduced sales. A Bangladesh official confirmed the move, which follows a period of halved supplies due to low winter demand and a series of payment disputes. The dispute began on October 31 when Adani Power reduced its supply to Bangladesh, citing delayed payments as the country grappled with a foreign exchange shortage. This led to the shutdown of one of the plant's units on November 1, leaving the plant operating at just 42% of its capacity.

During this time, Bangladesh's Power Development Board (BPDB) struggled to meet its financial obligations, which led to the reduction in electricity supply. In response, the BPDB stated that it had been paying approximately Rs 738 crore (\$85 million) per month to Adani Power to clear its outstanding dues. The Bangladesh authorities have now asked the company to resume supply from the plant's second unit, as the financial situation has improved. "Right now, we are making a payment of Rs 738 crore (\$85 million) per month. We are trying to pay more, and our intention is to reduce the overdue. Now there is no big issue with Adani," said an official from the BPDB.

# Paris AI Action Summit 2025: From Data to Development

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping societies around the globe, but its transformative potential remains inaccessible to many, particularly in developing nations. While wealthy countries harness vast datasets to spur technological progress, many others grapple with fragmented, unreliable, or inaccessible data. Without equitable access to high-quality, local data, the benefits of AI for development remain largely untapped. This is not just a technological issue but a critical development challenge.

The Paris AI Action Summit, held with the aim of supporting AI development in the interests of all, including developing countries, represents a step toward addressing this gap. One of the key discussions at the summit will focus on ensuring that AI innovations are accessible to all, with a particular focus on democratizing access to data.

Data is the backbone of AI development, and its importance cannot be overstated. Data-driven solutions have the potential to address complex societal challenges. For example, the Bermuda Principle's data-sharing arrangements in the 1990s, as part of the American Human Genome Project, revolutionized vaccine development. In a similar vein, the rapid creation of COVID-19 vaccines was facilitated by transparent and real-time data sharing. Locally accessible, contextually relevant data can drastically improve living standards, as seen in London's Transport for London (TfL) system, where making non-public data publicly available fostered the creation of over 600 services benefiting millions of residents.

However, in developing countries, barriers like limited computing infrastructure, lack of skilled talent, and inadequate funding prevent AI from reaching



its full potential. A critical issue is the lack of usable, local data for AI development. This challenge is compounded by underdeveloped data governance frameworks, which hinder the creation of policies that protect citizens' data while fostering innovation. These nations must balance the desire to participate in global AI development with the need to maintain control over their data resources and ensure digital sovereignty.

International dialogues such as the Paris AI Action Summit are vital to overcoming these barriers. With non-standardized systems for cross-border data sharing, countries are often isolated in their AI efforts, limiting collaborative opportunities. Developing regions still struggle to access quality datasets suited to their local needs, which exacerbates global in-

equalities in AI. India's approach to leveraging technology for development offers valuable insights for other emerging economies. With initiatives like the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), India has made significant strides in financial inclusion and technology-driven growth. Prime Minister Modi's participation in the Paris AI Summit could steer global discussions toward inclusive and equitable AI-driven progress.

The Paris AI Action Summit 2025 presents an opportunity to cast AI as a tool for equitable, inclusive, and effective global development. By prioritizing collaborative policies and data democratization, the summit can help bridge the AI divide, ensuring that no region is left behind in the race for AI innovation.



## Can Gautam Gambhir Silence His Critics as India's Head Coach?

Being the head coach of the Indian cricket team is no easy feat. The immense pressure to deliver results, especially in the face of fierce scrutiny, makes the role incredibly challenging. Gautam Gambhir, a veteran with a rich cricketing legacy, is now in that hot seat. Having played a key role in India's World Cup victories and led the Kolkata Knight Riders to three IPL titles, Gambhir took over the reins as head coach with high expectations. However, his journey has been anything but smooth.

Gambhir's appointment as India's head coach was met with skepticism. Critics questioned his lack of coaching experience, drawing a sharp distinction between mentoring an IPL team and managing an international squad. The pressure grew when India faced disappointing defeats, including a historic loss to Sri Lanka in a bilateral ODI series and a whitewash in a home Test series. The critics were quick to blame Gambhir, doubting whether he was the right man for the job.

However, it's essential to understand that coaching an international team involves a different set of challenges than playing for one. A top-level athlete's individual approach to the game, honed over years, doesn't change overnight just because they transition to a coaching role. Gambhir, known for his no-nonsense attitude as a player, has carried this persona into his coaching role. While it has ruffled some feathers, it's this very tenacity that has allowed him to handle the pressure.

Gambhir's tenure has been marked by a rough start. Taking over after the high of India's T20 World Cup victory, he inherited a team with its own set of expectations, following the leadership of Rahul Dravid. His early challenges were inevitable. Critics began to point fingers when results didn't match the standards set by his predecessors. However, it's important to note that Gambhir has had less than seven months to settle into the role, a brief period to adapt to new dynamics and refine his strategies.

Recent successes, like the 4-1 T20 series win against England and a commanding 2-0 lead in the ongoing ODI series, have given Gambhir some breathing room. These victories have quieted critics for now, but the real test lies ahead, with the Champions Trophy looming large.

The ODI format, where India has seen solid results, is of particular importance as the team prepares for the upcoming Champions Trophy. Success in this format has proven vital, with players like Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill finding form, and Ravindra Jadeja's confidence surging after his stellar domestic performance. Gambhir's emphasis on a high-risk, high-reward approach in T20s seems to be slowly filtering into the ODI setup.

Despite the recent improvements, challenges persist. India's Test team still needs attention, especially with a five-Test series in England later this year. Gambhir will need to work on finding the right balance and ensuring that players like Virat Kohli return to form. The ongoing issue with KL Rahul's form and Jasprit Bumrah's fitness will also need careful consideration.

Ultimately, the only way to silence the critics is through consistent success, particularly in ICC tournaments. If Gambhir can lead India to an ICC title, even the harshest critics will be forced to acknowledge his efforts.

## How To Reproduce With Two Fathers - And No Biological Mother

In March 2023, Japanese researcher Katsumi Hayashi made a groundbreaking announcement at the Third International Summit on Human Genome Editing. Hayashi revealed that he had successfully reproduced mice using two male parents. This achievement was the result of his development of a complex method that transformed male pluripotent stem cells into female-like stem cells, enabling the production of eggs from male cells. His work was published in *Nature*, marking a significant milestone in genetic research.



field of genetics.

Almost two years later, a team of Chinese researchers led by Zhi-kun Li, Wei Li, and Qi Zhou of the Chinese Academy of Sciences built upon Hayashi's findings, but with a unique twist. Their procedure also produced a baby mouse from two males, but it eliminated the need for maternal biological involvement beyond gestation. Their work, published in *Cell Stem Cell*, has once again shaken the

The new procedure focuses on overcoming genetic imprinting, a mammalian control system that prevents the combination of two same-sex gametes (sperm or eggs) from resulting in a viable em-

bryo. In mammals, embryos must derive genetic material from both a male and a female to survive, as certain genes are only expressed when inherited from a specific parent. The Chinese team used CRISPR gene-editing tools to deactivate this imprinting barrier, allowing sperm cells to behave like egg cells, making it possible to combine two sperm to create a viable embryo. This embryo was then gestated by a female mouse, and the resulting mice were derived entirely from two male parents.

However, there are still significant challenges with this method. The mice produced through this process are infertile and can only reproduce via cloning. Furthermore, over half of the mice born to two fathers either fail to survive, die prematurely, or do not mature properly. Previous research from this team showed that mice born from two mothers had a higher survival rate, which suggests that the process is far from perfected.

## India's AI Moment: The Race To Catch Up With China And The US

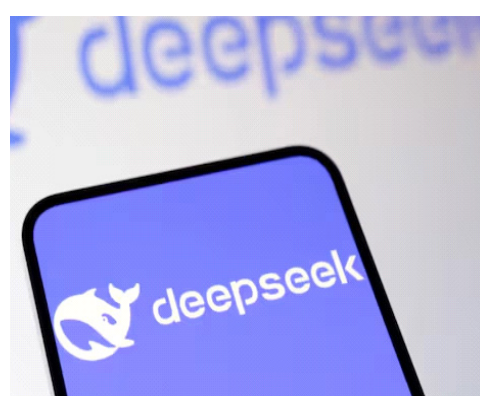
In 2023, OpenAI's CEO, Sam Altman, made a bold statement, claiming it was "totally hopeless to compete with us on training foundation models" for any small team with just \$10 million. However, just two years later, that assertion has been proven wrong. The rise of China's DeepSeek, which trained an open-source large language model (LLM) for just \$5.6 million, has shattered the notion that only deep-pocketed companies can develop cutting-edge AI models. This breakthrough came despite the U.S.'s stringent restrictions on chip exports, signaling that necessity and innovation can overcome even geopolitical obstacles.

**This raises an important question: if China can do it, why can't India? India's AI Awakening**

India, a nation that has long been a sleeping giant in AI, is now starting to awaken. The Indian government has recognized AI's strategic importance and launched the IndiaAI Mission in March 2024, with a budget of Rs 10,371 crore (\$1.2 billion). This initiative, coupled with significant increases in AI funding and the establishment of Centres of Excellence, underscores the government's commitment to AI development. In fact, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw recently announced that the government is collaborating with at least six developers to build India's first indigenous LLM.

However, while financial resources are on the rise, India faces a major challenge: a talent drain.

**The Talent Drain and Research Deficit**



India has the potential for a thriving AI ecosystem, but much of its talent is working abroad, particularly in Silicon Valley. With India investing just 0.64% of its GDP in research and development (R&D), compared to China's 2.41% and the U.S.'s 3.47%, India lags behind in fostering innovation domestically. This research deficit could hinder India's

ability to keep pace with global AI advancements.

**The Role of the Private Sector**

India's private sector is stepping up to bridge the gap. Leading conglomerates like Reliance Industries, Adani Group, and Nxta are investing heavily in AI infrastructure, including supercomputers and data centres. These investments, if executed well, will be critical for India's AI ambitions.

**US GPU Restrictions: A Major Hurdle**

Despite these advancements, India faces a major challenge: U.S. restrictions on high-end GPUs, essential for training AI models. However, the Indian government is exploring ways to bypass these restrictions by facilitating access to GPUs through partnerships and the

IndiaAI Mission.

**India's Strategic Leverage**

With the geopolitical landscape shifting, India has an opportunity to use its ties with the U.S. to influence key decisions. If India can push for an end to GPU export restrictions and secure a stake in initiatives like the U.S.'s StarGate AI project, it could solidify its position as a global AI leader.

**The Bigger Picture**

AI is not just a technological pursuit—it is a geopolitical one. Nations leading in AI will define global economic and security landscapes. India cannot afford to lag behind in this race. With strategic investments, collaboration, and diplomatic maneuvering, India has the potential to become a formidable AI player.



# Domestic stock markets are reeling under Donald Trump's blow

*They fell sharply for the second consecutive day.*



Negative sentiment prevailed after Trump said that he would impose 25% tariffs on aluminum and steel imports. In addition, equity shares crashed due to the sharp fall in the rupee, the rise in the value of the dollar, and the rise in bond yields. Mid and small cap indices fell by 2-3 percent. Investors lost wealth worth Rs 10 lakh crore as Nifty 350 and Sensex fell by 1100 points intraday.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 77,311 in the previous session, opened at 77,384 on Tuesday. It touched an intraday low at 76,030. It reached an intraday high at 77,387. It ended at 76,293, down 1,018 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,383, touched a low of 22,986 and a high of 23,390. It closed at 23,071, down 309 points. The Nifty Bank fell 577 points to settle at 49,403. Markets Plunge as Trump's Tariff Shock and Rupee Weak-

ness Trigger Heavy Sell-Off

Six companies gained and 44 lost in the Nifty50. Auto, Media, PSU Bank, Realty, Healthcare, Consumer Durables, Oil and Gas indices fell by 2-3%. Adani Enterprises, Grasim, Trent, Airtel, Britannia were the top gainers. Eicher, Apollo Hospitals, Shriram Fin, CoalIndia, BEL were the top losers.

Today, the market breadth in NSE has completely shifted in favor of sellers. Out of a total of 2918 shares traded, only 326 gained. 2532 lost. Shares of 18 companies reached 52-week highs. 407 shares reached 52-week lows.

Birla Soft's net profit in the third quarter fell 27% to Rs 116 crore from Rs 161 crore. IRCTC's net profit increased by 13.7% to Rs 341 crore from Rs 300 crore. Indo Count's net profit increased by 30%

to Rs 75.5 crore from Rs 58 crore. The rupee strengthened by 65 paise against the dollar and settled at Rs 86.83. Canara Bank reduced its one-month MCLR rate by 10 basis points. Morgan Stanley has given an overweight rating to Apollo Hospitals with a target price of Rs 8,159. Procter & Gamble's net profit rose 18% to Rs 364 crore from Rs 308 crore. Devyani International shares fell 5% on the decline in profit. BLS's net profit rose 43% to Rs 121 crore from Rs 84 crore. Campus Activewear's net profit rose 86% to Rs 46.5 crore from Rs 25 crore. Jefferies has given a buy rating to Grasim Industries with a target price of Rs 3150. Raymond Lifestyle MD and CEO Sunil Katharia has resigned. Bajaj Group shares rose today. Adani shares rose. IIFL Finance's Q3 profit fell 22.7%. HSBC has given a buy rating to Rainbow Medicare with a target price of Rs. 1720.

## Patanjali Foods See 71% Jump In Q3 Profit On Cooking Oil Boost



Indian consumer goods manufacturer Patanjali Foods posted a 71% increase in its third-quarter profit on Monday, bolstered by robust demand for its flagship cooking oils. The maker of Ruchi Gold oil reported a profit of 3.71 billion rupees (\$42.4 million) for the three months ending December 31, up from 2.17 billion rupees in the same period last year.

The demand for edible oils, an essential item in Indian households, has remained strong despite the broader challenges posed by inflation. Consumers, who have been avoiding branded goods due to price hikes, continued to purchase cooking oils, even as manufacturers raised prices to offset the rising cost of raw materials.

Patanjali's revenue from its edible oils segment, which accounts for almost three-fourths of the company's total revenue, saw a growth of 22.5% during the quarter. This

surge helped drive a 15% increase in overall revenue, which reached 91.03 billion rupees.

However, not all of Patanjali Foods' segments performed well. Revenue from its food and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) segment dropped 18%, reflecting weaker demand in the category. The company's expenses also rose by 13%, largely due to a hike in import taxes on crude and refined edible oils that came into effect in mid-September. This increase in input costs had a significant impact on the company's profitability.

Despite the challenges in certain sectors, Patanjali Foods' strong performance in the edible oils market highlights its resilience and the ongoing demand for essential consumer goods, particularly in a climate of inflation. The company's focus on this key segment has provided a solid foundation for growth during the quarter.

## India Launches EFTA Desk to Strengthen Economic Ties with Europe

India has launched a dedicated desk to foster deeper economic engagement between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, namely Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. The formal launch took place at Bharat Mandapam, with Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, representing India at the event.

The newly established EFTA Desk aims to assist businesses from the four EFTA countries in preparing for the opportunities created by the EFTA-India Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), signed on March 10, 2024. The desk will act as a central point of contact for EFTA businesses looking to expand into India, offering support and guidance on market entry, investment opportunities, and resolving potential issues.



While the TEPA is still in the process of being ratified, businesses across the EFTA nations are already exploring investment opportunities and strengthening their commercial ties with Indian partners. Over 100 EFTA businesses are visiting India this week to explore potential collaborations, an outcome of ongoing efforts by EFTA countries to raise awareness about the benefits of the agreement.

## Tea trade bodies push for minimum sustainable price and 100% auction of teas

In a significant development for the Indian tea industry, major tea trade bodies have announced plans to implement a minimum sustainable price for teas, alongside a proposal for 100 percent auction of all teas. This decision aims to ensure better profitability and sustainability for tea producers, especially small tea growers, across the country.

An interactive session was held today in Kolkata, bringing together stakeholders from the organized tea sector and small tea growers from both North and South India. The event provided a platform for dialogue on the challenges and opportunities within the tea industry, with a focus on sustainable growth strategies for the future. Key topics of discussion included improving quality control, optimizing production processes, and ensuring fair pricing mechanisms that benefit all players in the supply chain.

The proposal for a minimum sustainable price comes at a crucial time when the tea industry is grappling with fluctuating market prices, increased production costs, and competition from global markets. By establishing a baseline price, trade bodies hope to provide a more stable income for small tea growers, who often face financial instability due to market volatility.



The move is expected to help safeguard the livelihoods of farmers and ensure the continued production of high-quality tea.

Additionally, the push for 100 percent auctioning of teas aims to increase transparency and fairness in the trade process. Auction systems have long been seen as an effective way to determine market-driven prices, and this approach is intended to create a more competitive and equitable environment for all tea produc-

ers, big and small.

The event in Kolkata marked a critical step towards improving collaboration between different sectors of the tea industry. It highlighted the need for collective action to address issues such as price instability and access to markets, while also emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices in ensuring the long-term health of the tea industry in India.

## SEBI Bars LS Industries and Promoter for Stock Price Manipulation

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed a ban on LS Industries Ltd., its promoter Profound Finance, and four other entities from participating in the securities market, following an investigation into stock price manipulation. The regulator's attention was drawn by an article published on the NDTV Profit website on February 3, which highlighted the inexplicable valuation of LS Industries at Rs 5,500 crore despite having almost negligible revenue.

SEBI's investigation followed concerns regarding the company's inflated market value, raising ques-

tions about the authenticity of the stock's trading activity and the role of various entities involved in the manipulation. The regulator's actions aim to safeguard market integrity and protect investors from potentially harmful practices. The regulatory body's decision has sent a strong message to the market, reinforcing its commitment to ensuring transparency and fairness in trading practices. The case underscores the importance of scrutiny around corporate valuations and the need for regulatory oversight to prevent stock market manipulation.



## Jasprit Bumrah Ruled Out of ICC Champions Trophy 2025, Harshit Rana and Varun Chakravarthy Named as Replacements



Jasprit Bumrah has been officially ruled out of India's squad for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 due to a persistent lower back injury, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed late Tuesday. Following his exclusion, 23-year-old pacer Harshit Rana has been named as Bumrah's replacement in the final 15-man squad. In another significant change, mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy has been included in place of young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who was initially part of the provisional squad. India's revised squad for the tournament includes: Rohit Sharma (captain), Shubman Gill (vice-captain), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (WK), Rishabh Pant (WK), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Ravindra Jadeja, and Varun Chakravarthy. Non-traveling substitutes: Yashasvi Jaiswal, Mohammed Siraj, and Shivam Dube will travel to Dubai if required.



## Chelsea Owner Todd Boehly Acquires 49% Stake in Trent Rockets, Beats KKR and Amit Jain

Todd Boehly, co-owner of Chelsea Football Club, has acquired a 49% stake in the English cricket franchise Trent Rockets, beating Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Indian investor Amit Jain in the process. Boehly's real estate firm, Cain International, purchased the stake for approximately 39 million British Pounds (around Rs 420 crore), valuing the franchise at GBP 79 million. KKR, owned by Shah Rukh Khan's Red Chillies Entertainment, had been in the running to acquire the team, which would have expanded their global reach, already spanning Trinbago Knight Riders, LA Knight Riders, and Abu Dhabi Knight Riders. Boehly's acquisition further strengthens his sports portfolio, which includes ownership of Chelsea, French side RC Strasbourg, and MLB's Los Angeles Dodgers. The Trent Rockets, based in Nottingham, represent the counties of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire and won The Hundred tournament in 2022.

## Pankaj Advani Wins Indian Snooker Championship, Secures 36<sup>th</sup> National Gold

Pankaj Advani, India's most decorated snooker player, clinched his 36th overall national title and 10th men's snooker crown at the Yashwant Club. Advani demonstrated exceptional skill and determination throughout the tournament, overcoming an early setback to defeat Brijesh Damani in the final. Damani claimed the opening frame, but Advani bounced back to win the remaining frames, including a standout 84 break in the final frame to seal the championship. The tournament, which serves as the selection event for the Asian and World Championships, proved to be a turning point for Advani. After suffering a loss to Damani in the group stage, Advani's resilience was on full display as he made a stunning comeback in the round of 48, saving his tournament bid and setting the stage for his eventual victory. Advani now prepares for the Asian Snooker Championship starting February 15.



## India Chess Star Arjun Erigaisi Criticizes Ministry's Decision to Stop Cash Rewards for Grandmasters



Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi has slammed the Indian sports ministry's recent decision to end cash rewards for players achieving Grandmaster (GM) and International Master (IM) titles, a move that has sparked controversy within the chess community. Previously, players received Rs 4 lakh for a GM title and Rs 1.5 lakh for an IM or International Women Master (IWM) title. The ministry now offers rewards only for winning world-level competitions. Erigaisi, who recently achieved a 2800 ELO rating and won the men's Olympiad gold in 2024, expressed that the removal of these rewards would demotivate parents, who often face financial strain supporting their children's chess careers. "Such incentives encouraged parents to back their children's pursuits in chess," he said. While Erigaisi remains focused on his chess ambitions, including qualifying for the Candidates tournament, he acknowledged that the change could affect young players' motivation.

## India to Play International Football Matches in Shillong Ahead of AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has announced that India will play two international matches in Shillong's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium during the FIFA international window in March. This will be the first time the stadium hosts senior men's international matches since its refurbishment last year. India will face Maldives in a friendly on March 19, as part of their preparation for the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round. The second match will be against Bangladesh on March 25, marking India's first game in the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers. The 15,100-seat stadium, which has hosted several domestic events like the Durand Cup and Indian Super League matches, is now set to stage international fixtures. India is placed in Group C for the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers, alongside Hong Kong, Singapore, and Bangladesh.



## Pakistan Finalize 15-Man Squad for Champions Trophy 2025, Haris Rauf Cleared for Fitness

Pakistan has confirmed its 15-man squad for the 2025 Champions Trophy, making no last-minute changes despite widespread criticism. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) reviewed the selection after concerns about the inclusion of batter Khushdil Shah and all-rounder Faheem Ashraf. However, there will be no alterations, and the same players will represent Pakistan in the tournament. The squad faced scrutiny for having only one specialist opener and a lone specialist spinner, Abrar Ahmed. However, captain Muhammad Rizwan defended the team, stating the emphasis would be on pace bowlers. Haris Rauf, who suffered a muscle injury in the tri-series, is expected to recover in time for the Champions Trophy opener on February 19. The final squad for the tournament includes Mohammad Rizwan (c), Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, and Shaheen Shah Afridi, among others.



## Cristiano Ronaldo Agrees to Extend Contract with Al Nassr Until 2026



Cristiano Ronaldo has reached an agreement with Saudi Arabian football club Al Nassr to extend his contract until June 2026. The Portuguese star's current contract was set to end in June 2025, but the extension, though not yet signed, has been agreed upon by both parties, with an official announcement expected soon. Ronaldo, who turned 40 last week, joined Al Nassr in January 2023 and has scored 82 goals in 90 appearances since. In August, Ronaldo had expressed his intention to likely end his career with Al Nassr, where he feels happy and comfortable. Despite joining for a high-paying deal that initially raised eyebrows, Ronaldo's influence has helped attract other aging stars to the Saudi Pro League. Though he has not won a major trophy with Al Nassr yet, his performances continue to push him toward the milestone of 1,000 career goals.

## When It Rained Meat: The Bizarre Kentucky Meat Shower Of 1876



Imagine taking a peaceful stroll one morning, only for chunks of meat to suddenly rain down from the sky. This bizarre occurrence took place on March 3, 1876, in Bath County, Kentucky, leaving residents utterly confused and intrigued. Known as the Kentucky Meat Shower, this strange phenomenon has puzzled historians and scientists for generations, sparking numerous theories about its origins. The event unfolded between 11 am and afternoon when local resident Mary Crouch was outside making soap near Olympia Springs. She was stunned to witness what can only be described as a “meat storm,” with pieces of meat falling over an area roughly 100 by 50 yards.

The meat varied in size, with some chunks measuring 5 cm<sup>2</sup> and others up to 10 cm<sup>2</sup>. Locals quickly gathered to inspect the mysterious shower. Among them was Harrison Gill, who noted that the meat had landed on fences and the ground, appearing fresh enough to spark curiosity. In a remarkable display of frontier daring, some brave individuals even sampled the strange meat, with reports describing it as tasting like venison or mutton. As the unusual event made its way into the news, various theories were proposed about the meat's origin. Some suggested it was noster, a gelatinous substance produced by cyanobacteria that can resemble meat during rainfall.

Others ventured more outlandish theories, even invoking divine intervention. However, the most plausible explanation came from LD Kastenbine, who theorized that vultures, known for their habit of vomiting their meals when startled, might have been the source. As the birds flew overhead, they could have ejected their partially-digested meal, which fell to the ground below. Despite some confusion, a piece of the “meat” is preserved at Transylvania University in Lexington, adding to the mystery. Though the exact nature of the Kentucky Meat Shower remains unclear, it stands as a strange reminder of the unexpected wonders and oddities nature can throw our way.

## “Kurchi Madathapetti” Conquers Global Music Charts



Apple has rolled out an urgent security update, iOS 18.3.1, just one week after the release of the major iOS 18.3 update. The new patch addresses critical security vulnerabilities found in Apple iPhones, highlighting the company's ongoing efforts to keep devices secure and protect user privacy. For users already running iOS 18.3, the iOS 18.3.1 update is about 450 MB in size. It specifically targets a newly discovered zero-day exploit, which could have allowed unauthorized access to iPhones, including potentially enabling law enforcement to unlock devices. This vulnerability posed a significant security risk, as it could have allowed unauthorized parties to bypass iPhone security measures, jeopardizing user data and privacy. Apple has emphasized the importance of installing this update as soon as possible to mitigate the risks associated with these vulnerabilities. As part of its commitment to security,

Apple regularly releases patches like iOS 18.3.1 to address newly discovered threats and bolster device protection. Users are encouraged to download and install the update promptly by going to **\*\*Settings > General > Software Update\*\***. Those who haven't yet updated to iOS 18.3 can apply this critical update directly, which will include all the security fixes in the previous update as well. While Apple doesn't typically release details about specific vulnerabilities, the rapid rollout of iOS 18.3.1 underscores the severity of this security concern. With the growing sophistication of cyberattacks and exploits, keeping software up-to-date is essential to maintaining the security and integrity of devices. By quickly addressing vulnerabilities like the one patched in iOS 18.3.1, Apple continues to reinforce its commitment to user safety, ensuring that iPhones remain protected from emerging threats.

## : Elephant Family Gives 'Z Class Security' To Calf In Anamalai Tiger Reserve



Supriya Sahu, the Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Tamil Nadu, recently shared a touching moment from the Anamalai Tiger Reserve. In a post that has since captured the hearts of many, she observed a peaceful elephant family and highlighted their protective nature towards their baby elephant, drawing an endearing comparison to 'Class Z' security. Sahu, who heads the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests, noted how the elephant family slept peacefully in the deep jungles of the reserve. “Observe how the baby elephant is given Z class security by the family,” she remarked, pointing out how the young elephant sought reassurance from its family members. Her post reflected the similar dynamics often seen in human families, where the young find comfort and safety in the presence of loved ones. The touching scene was captured by wildlife photographer Dhanu Paran in a brief 15-second video,

which shows the bond within the elephant family. The video features a parent elephant, a young one, and three calves, including a newborn, peacefully resting together. Supriya Sahu's post, along with the video, quickly garnered attention on social media, with many users expressing their admiration for the beauty of the moment. One user wrote, “Wonderful and rare sight to see such beautiful things. Amazing..Thanks for showing us while another commented, “Love is the binding force amongst all beings in the world, which humans are moving away from!” The video not only highlighted the loving family dynamics of elephants but also sparked reflections on the importance of preserving such moments of peace in nature. This heartwarming display from the Anamalai Tiger Reserve serves as a reminder of the deep emotional bonds that animals, too, share within their families, resonating with people on a universal level.

## Cobra In Amazon Package: Bengaluru Couple Shocked To Find Venomous Snake In Parcel

In an unexpected and alarming turn of events, a Bengaluru couple received a shocking surprise with their latest Amazon delivery. What was meant to be a simple package containing an Xbox controller turned out to have an entirely different kind of guest—a dangerous spectacled cobra. The family, residing on Sarjapur Road, eagerly awaited their package, expecting to find their gaming accessory inside. However, their excitement quickly transformed into fear when they opened the package and noticed a venomous snake attached to the packaging tape. The spectacled cobra, also known as the Indian cobra (*Naja naja*), is a highly venomous species commonly found across the Indian subcontinent. Its venom is a powerful neurotoxin that can cause severe respiratory paralysis, potentially leading to death if not treated immediately. This species is known for its iconic hood and is a symbol of cultural importance in Hindu mythology, often depicted in religious art and folklore. While once used by snake charmers, this practice is now illegal in India due to concerns about animal welfare. Fortunately, the family remained unharmed, but the discovery highlights the unpredictable nature of deliveries and the potential risks associated with them. It's unclear how the snake made its way into the package, but experts suggest that it may have entered the parcel while it was in transit or during the packaging process. This incident serves as a stark reminder of the unusual oc-



currences that can sometimes accompany online shopping. While it's highly unlikely to encounter such a scenario regularly, it's always important for consumers to carefully inspect their deliveries upon receipt.

## Japanese Influencer After Eating 600 Fried Chickens And 100 Burgers In One Go

Yuka Kinoshita, Japan's reigning mukbang queen, has announced her retirement from competitive eating, leaving a significant void in the world of food consumption videos. Known for her ability to devour massive quantities of food, Kinoshita has garnered a dedicated following of 5.2 million subscribers on YouTube. However, after years of entertaining fans with her food challenges, she revealed that health concerns and the toll of constant eating have led her to step away from the spotlight. In a heartfelt video, Kinoshita explained the decision, citing both her health and age as major factors. “Well, I am retiring from eating a lot,” she said in the video, which was shared with her followers in both Japanese and English translations. “I will turn 40 on February 4 and I have been feeling tired from eating a lot. It's hard for me to continue working as a big eater. My health has deteriorated over the years, and I now



find it difficult to continue at the pace I once did.” Kinoshita further elaborated on how she no longer felt capable of eating at the same extreme levels, revealing that even when she wasn't full, the act of eating left her exhausted. “It is no problem to eat like a normal person, but I will feel tired even when I am not full,” she shared. The announcement follows a seven-month hiatus she had taken from content creation due to a bipolar affective disorder,

highlighting the significant physical and mental toll that her eating challenges had taken on her. Her fans have flooded social media with messages of support, expressing their sadness at her departure while also thanking her for the years of entertainment she provided. Kinoshita's decision to retire marks the end of an era in the mukbang community, but she remains an iconic figure for those who enjoyed her entertaining feats of food consumption.



## Surya Son of Krishnan to Re-release on Valentine's Day



The Tamil film *Surya Son of Krishnan*, starring Surya in a dual role alongside Simran, Sameera Reddy, and Ramya, will be re-released in Telugu on February 14, coinciding with Valentine's Day. Directed by Gautam Vasudev Menon, the film was initially released in Tamil as *Varanam Aayiram* and later dubbed into Telugu. Released in 2008, the film became a major success, particularly in Telugu-speaking regions. CLN Media Production House, the team behind the Telugu release, expressed their excitement about bringing the film back to the-

aters. They highlighted Surya's remarkable performance, Gautam Vasudev Menon's direction, and Harris Jayaraj's timeless music as the movie's key strengths. The re-release will feature over 300 shows across Telugu-speaking regions, including Karnataka and overseas, with special screenings on February 12 and 13. PVR Theatres is also hosting a "Lovers' Day Week" event. The film's enduring popularity and iconic songs continue to resonate with youth, and the production team is confident that this re-release will be a hit.

## How and Where to Buy IIFA 2025 Tickets Hosted by Shah Rukh Khan

The International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards 2025 is set to be an unforgettable event, and you can be part of the action! Scheduled for March 8th and 9th, 2025, the iconic Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC) in Rajasthan will host this glamorous occasion, which marks the 25th edition of the prestigious awards.

**Ticket Prices for IIFA 2025:** Ticket prices for the IIFA 2025 event range from Rs 3,000 to Rs 1.5 lakh, offering different levels of access to the star-studded event. While some categories are already sold out, there are still a few seats left, so don't miss out!

**How to Book Your Tickets:** Booking tickets is a breeze! You can head to District by Zomato's official website or visit the official IIFA website. Once there, click on the "Buy Tickets" option, which will direct you to the IIFA 2025 Jaipur ticket section. Choose your preferred seats, complete the payment, and secure your place at Bollywood's most glamorous event!

**Event Highlights:** For the first time ever, Shah Rukh Khan will co-host the event with Kartik Aaryan, alongside the charismatic Karan Johar. Get ready for electrifying performances



from Bollywood's brightest stars like Kareena Kapoor, Shahid Kapoor, Nora Fatehi, and Madhuri Dixit.

So, are you ready for an evening filled with glitz, glamour, and unforgettable memories? Book your tickets now and be part of the biggest celebration in Bollywood!

## NIFFA 2025 Line-Up: Superboys of Malegaon to Open the Festival, Rome Roam Mein as Closing Night Film

The National Indian Film Festival of Australia (NIFFA) has announced an exciting lineup for its 2025 edition, set to be the biggest celebration of Indian cinema in Australia. The festival, which will run from 13 February 2025, will feature 36 Australian premieres, three world premieres, and films in various languages, many never seen in Australian theatres before.

The festival will open with the highly anticipated *Superboys of Malegaon*, a film that garnered acclaim at TIFF and BFI London. It will have its Australian premiere at the red carpet gala in Sydney, followed by events in Canberra, Gold Coast, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, and Melbourne. The film will be released nationwide by Forum Films on 27 February 2025. The closing night film will be Tannishtha Chatterjee's directorial debut, *Rome Roam*



Mein, which has already received critical acclaim.

Other notable films include *Wingman* by Anuj Gulati, *Parikrama* by Goutam Ghose, and the world premiere of *The Man Who Hurls News* by Ananth Mahadevan. The festival promises a diverse and engaging selection of films, marking a historic moment for Indian cinema in Australia.

## Deepika Padukone Opens Up About Her Student Life on 'Pariksha Pe Charcha'

Actor Deepika Padukone reflected on her school days during an episode of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's *Pariksha Pe Charcha* (PPC) programme. She recalled being a mischievous child, often jumping from one sofa to another. Deepika also candidly shared her struggles with mathematics, admitting that she was weak in the subject and still is.

In a clip shared by PM Modi on his official X page, Deepika highlighted the importance of mental health and well-being, which is a focal point of this year's *Pariksha Pe Charcha*. The actress, who has been vocal about her battle with clinical depression, emphasized the need for students to focus on mental wellness, especially during exams. The full episode, which features discussions on overcoming exam stress and other relevant topics, will be broadcast on February 12 at 10 am. Deepika's participation in this session aligns with her commitment to spreading awareness about mental health.



## Makers of 'Sanam Teri Kasam' Celebrate Film's Historic Box Office Return

The 2016 romantic drama *Sanam Teri Kasam*, starring Harshvardhan Rane and Mawra Hocane, has made an incredible return to the box office, emerging as the highest-earning film this past weekend. Directors Vinay Sapru and Radhika Rao have expressed immense pride and satisfaction with the film's renewed success, believing it has finally received the recognition it truly deserves.

The film was re-released on February 7, 2025, and its performance has exceeded expectations. The opening day saw earnings of Rs 4.25 crore, followed by Rs 5.25 crore on Saturday and Rs 6 crore on Sunday, bringing its opening weekend total to Rs 15.75 crore — over 170% higher than its original lifetime earnings. This remarkable box office return highlights the enduring emotional connection the film has with its audience.

Harshvardhan Rane, reflecting on his journey with the film, shared an interesting story about his casting. Despite being four months late for the auditions, he passionately begged the makers for an opportunity to audition, even offering to per-

form just for the sake of it. His persistence paid off, eventually landing him the role that would become a turning point in his career.

*Sanam Teri Kasam's* success at the box office marks an extraordinary chapter in the film's journey, proving that its emotional story and performances have found a lasting place in the hearts of viewers.



## Renu Desai Criticizes Ranveer Allahbadia Over Controversial Comments



Renu Desai recently expressed her strong disapproval of social media influencer Ranveer Allahbadia's inappropriate remarks made during an episode of *India's Got Talent*. In the episode, Ranveer posed a highly offensive question to a female contestant, asking whether she would ever witness her parents' intimate moments or participate in such acts herself. His comments were met with shock and outrage from the show's participants and viewers alike. Although Ranveer lat-

er issued an apology, the backlash continued. Renu Desai took to Instagram to criticize his behavior, warning parents to keep their children away from such influencers. She emphasized the importance of raising children responsibly and highlighted how vulgarity, disguised as "freedom of speech," is being accepted by today's youth. Her post quickly went viral, with many agreeing that her message was spot on, urging accountability from influencers and their content.