



Weather Forecast

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

Gandhi Nagar set for a high-stakes battle of Turncoats

GANDHI NAGAR CONSTITUENCY

- BJP fields ex-Congress leader Arvinder Singh Lovely.
- AAP's Naveen Chaudhary fights for a second chance.
- Congress bets on Kamal Arora, who returned after a stint in AAP.
- Traffic, poor water supply, and parking remain major issues.
- Redevelopment plan for Gandhi Nagar market yet to take off.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Once a Congress stronghold, the Gandhi Nagar assembly constituency has witnessed shifting political loyalties over the years. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which secured its second-ever victory here in 2020, is now aiming for a consecutive win. The contest this time is

a battle of turncoats, with BJP fielding Arvinder Singh Lovely, a former Delhi Congress head, against Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Naveen Chaudhary and Congress's Kamal Arora, both of whom have switched allegiances in the past.

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"She could hardly speak, poor thing" Remark Sparks Row

BJP Slams Sonia Gandhi's Comment on President



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
The Budget Session of Parliament began with controversy after Congress MP Sonia Gandhi's remarks on President Droupadi Murmu's address sparked outrage. Referring to the President's exhaustion after her speech, Mrs Gandhi said, "She could hardly speak, poor thing," a comment that the BJP has denounced as "derogatory" and demanded an apology for. Following President Murmu's address, reporters outside Parliament asked Mrs Gandhi for her reaction. Flanked by Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, she responded, "The President was getting very

tired by the end. She could hardly speak, poor thing." Rahul Gandhi was also heard prompting his mother with remarks about the speech being repetitive. The BJP strongly condemned Mrs Gandhi's comment, with party president JP Nadda calling it "deeply disrespectful" and reflective of the Congress party's "elitist and feudal mindset." He accused the opposition of mocking the empowerment of backward classes and women, particularly under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "The deliberate use of such words shows the Congress Party's

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VIKSIT BHARAT

Is Our Sole Resolution and Goal: President Murmu

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
President Droupadi Murmu emphasized that the government's sole resolution and goal is to make India a Viksit Bharat. Addressing a joint session of Parliament, she highlighted the transformative decade under the Modi government, which she said has infused new energy into the country's growth trajectory. "In the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat', there is the collective strength of public participation, a roadmap for economic progress, the power of technology in the form of a digital revolution, and

the foundation of modern infrastructure," President Murmu stated. She asserted that the government is steering India toward becoming the world's third-largest economy. She outlined four key principles at the core of governance—service, good governance, prosperity, and pride—stressing that these are guiding India's journey of reform, performance, and transformation. "The guiding mantra of my government is 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas', and its goal is a Viksit Bharat," she said.

Highlighting the importance of innovation, she said India's aspiration is to become a global research powerhouse. "The National Research Foundation, with an outlay of ₹50,000 crore, has been established to promote research in educational institutions," she noted. President Murmu concluded with a call for unity, urging the nation to carry forward the legacy of freedom fighters and national leaders. "With the strength of unity, we will fulfill the commitment of a Viksit Bharat," she affirmed.

7 AAP MLAs Resign Days Before Delhi Election

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

In a major setback to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) just five days before the Delhi elections, seven of its MLAs have resigned, citing disillusionment with party leadership and governance. None of them were given tickets to contest the upcoming election.

The MLAs who stepped down are Naresh Yadav (Mehrauli), Rohit Kumar Mehraulia (Trilokpuri), Rajesh Rishi (Janakpuri), Madan Lal (Kasturba Nagar), Pawan Sharma (Adarsh Nagar), Bhawna Goud (Palam), and BS Joon (Bijwasan).

Palam MLA Bhawna Goud directly addressed her disappointment in her resignation letter, stating, "I have lost faith in you," in reference to AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal. Naresh Yadav, who represented Mehrauli for a decade, resigned after being replaced by Mahender Chaudhary following his conviction in a Quran desecration case. In his resignation, Yadav alleged that AAP had abandoned its founding principle of "honest politics" and had become entangled in corruption, alluding to the Delhi liquor policy case that led to the jailing of



Kejriwal and his former deputy, Manish Sisodia. Trilokpuri MLA Rohit Kumar Mehraulia, in a post on X, expressed disappointment over AAP's failure to address issues concerning Dalit and Valmiki communities. He accused the party of neglecting its promises, including the regularization of contract-based workers. Janakpuri MLA Rajesh Rishi also criticized AAP's deviation from its anti-corruption stance, calling it a "cesspit of nepotism and corruption." He echoed concerns that the party had strayed from its original mission of transparency and clean governance.

Kash Patel and Tulsi Gabbard Poised for Top Roles in Trump Administration



G Avinash | TPN

Hyderabad, Feb 01: In a historic development, two Indian-origin figures—Kash Patel and Tulsi Gabbard—are set to take on key positions in Donald Trump's likely second administration. Patel is expected to be named the Director of the FBI, while Gabbard is being considered for the role of Director of National Intelligence (DNI). If confirmed, this would mark the highest positions ever held by Indian-origin individuals in U.S. history.

Both Patel and Gabbard faced rigorous questioning in their Senate con-

firmation hearings yesterday. Patel, a former National Security official known for his loyalty to Trump, was pressed on his views regarding the FBI's independence and past involvement in intelligence investigations. Democratic senators raised concerns over his role in the Russia probe and his strong criticism of the agency's handling of Trump-related cases. Gabbard, a former Democratic Congresswoman who later distanced herself from the party, was questioned about

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Trump Warns BRICS of 100% Tariffs Over De-Dollarization Efforts

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“Royal Family” of Congress Insulting a “Tribal Daughter”: PM Modi

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday strongly criticized Congress leader Sonia Gandhi over her remark referring to President Droupadi Murmu as a “poor thing.” He accused the “royal family” of the Congress of insulting a “tribal daughter” and demeaning the country’s tribal community. Addressing a political rally in Delhi, PM Modi highlighted that President Murmu, who hails from a tribal background and whose mother tongue is Odia, delivered an inspiring speech in Parliament. He condemned the Congress leadership for belittling her remarks. “Droupadi Murmu ji has come

from a tribal family. She inspired the Parliament today, but the royal family of Congress has started insulting her. A member of the royal family said the tribal daughter gave a boring speech. Another member went a step further and called the President a ‘poor thing.’ This is an insult to 10 crore tribal brothers and sisters of the country,” Modi said. He further accused Congress leaders of demeaning the country’s underprivileged and working against national interests. “This is an insult to every poor person in the country. They enjoy abusing people, defaming India abroad, and supporting urban Naxals. Delhi must remain cautious. Out of

fear of losing, these two egoists have joined hands,” he added, in an apparent reference to the Congress-AAP alliance.

Sonia Gandhi’s Controversial Remark

The controversy erupted after Sonia Gandhi, responding to President Murmu’s address in Parliament, remarked, “The President was getting very tired by the end... She could hardly speak, poor thing.” The BJP and its allies have since seized upon the remark, calling it disrespectful and an insult to the nation’s tribal community. Polling for the Delhi Assembly elections is set to take place on February 5, with counting on February 8.



‘Congrats Delhiites! Yamuna No Longer Poisonous’: Arvind Kejriwal

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has claimed that the toxicity of Yamuna water in Delhi has decreased due to protests by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and residents. He also alleged that the Election Commission had threatened to punish him for his stance on the Yamuna water issue ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections. Taking to X, Kejriwal stated that the contamination in the Yamuna had significantly reduced. “Many congratulations to the people of Delhi. Our struggle bore fruit. The poisonous water that was being sent to Delhi has now stopped. The amount of ammonia in the water coming to Delhi has decreased from 7 ppm to 2 ppm,” he wrote. He further asserted that had AAP not raised its voice, half



the population of Delhi would have been deprived of water. “We saved Delhi from a major water crisis. The Election Commission has issued a notice to me and threatened to punish me,” he added, sharing a picture of his response to the poll body. The Yamuna has emerged as a key election issue, with both AAP and the BJP trading accusations. While the BJP has criticized AAP for failing to clean the river despite its promises, AAP has accused the BJP-led Haryana government of attempting to create an artificial water crisis in the national capital just before the elections.

Delhi Court to Rule on Sajjan Kumar in 1984 Riots Case on Feb 7

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

A Delhi court will pronounce its verdict on February 7 in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots murder case against former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar. The case pertains to the alleged killings of two individuals in Saraswati Vihar during the riots that followed the assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja reserved the verdict after the prosecution completed its arguments. On December 21, the court allowed the prosecution to argue on specific points raised by the state, which were deemed essential for the case’s adjudication. The prosecution had sought permission to counter certain submissions made by the defense on January 8.

The case involves the murders of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh on November 1, 1984. Initially registered at the Punjabi Bagh police station, the case was later taken over by a Special Investigation Team (SIT). According to the prosecution, a violent mob, armed with deadly weapons, engaged in large-scale looting and arson targeting Sikhs. The mob allegedly attacked the complainant’s house, killing her husband and son before setting the property on fire. In December 2021, the court framed charges against Kumar, stating there was enough material to establish that he was not only part of the mob but had also led it. The court’s verdict will determine his fate in this long-pending case.

“My Mother Is 78”: Priyanka Gandhi Defends Sonia Gandhi

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi has defended her mother, Sonia Gandhi, after a controversy erupted over her remarks on President Droupadi Murmu’s speech in Parliament. She insisted that the comments were being misinterpreted and accused the BJP of twisting the issue. The controversy stems from a video where Sonia Gandhi, speaking informally with her children Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, commented on the President’s apparent exhaustion. “The poor lady, the President, was getting very tired by the end... she could hardly speak, poor thing,” Sonia Gandhi was heard saying. The BJP condemned the remark as derogatory and demanded an apology.

Responding to the backlash, Priyanka Gandhi said there was no disrespect intended.

“My mother is 78 years old. She simply said that the President read such a long speech and must have been tired, poor thing. She fully respects the President of India. It is unfortunate that this is being twisted. BJP should first apologise for

pushing into a gorge,” she said.

Rashtrapati Bhavan’s Response

The President’s office condemned the remarks, calling them “unacceptable” and stating that they “hurt the dignity of the high office.” “Nothing could be farther from the truth. The President was not tired at any point. Speaking up for marginalized communities, women, and farmers, as she did in her address, can never be tiring,” the statement read. The Rashtrapati Bhavan also suggested that Congress leaders might not be well-acquainted with Hindi idioms, leading to a misunderstanding. “In any case, such comments are in poor taste, unfortunate, and entirely avoidable,” it concluded.



Over 900 MCC Violation Cases Registered Ahead of Delhi Polls



TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

With just days left for the Delhi Assembly elections, authorities have registered over 900 cases of alleged violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) since it came into effect on January 7. Officials reported intensified vigilance and crackdowns on illegal activities across the capital. Between January 7 and January 30, Delhi Police recorded 916 cases of MCC violations. During this period, 29,172 people were arrested under various legal provisions, including the Excise Act. Law enforcement officials have also seized 426 illegal firearms, 487 cartridges, and arrested 439 individuals under the Arms Act. Additionally, authorities con-

fiscated 99,285 litres of illicit liquor and arrested 1,194 people in related cases. A significant amount of contraband, including 166.99 kg of drugs valued at over ₹75.4 crore and more than 1,200 banned injections, was seized, leading to 162 arrests. Financial monitoring teams have also recovered ₹10.10 crore in unaccounted cash and 37.39 kg of silver. Police checkpoints across the city have been reinforced to prevent the smuggling of arms, liquor, and narcotics ahead of polling day. The election for the 70-member Delhi Assembly is scheduled for February 5, with the results set to be declared on February 8.

Two Men Held by Delhi Police’s IGI Airport Unit for Visa Fraud

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

In a notable crackdown on visa fraud, the Delhi Police’s Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport unit has apprehended two individuals allegedly involved in arranging fake visas for travelers heading to Poland. The arrests follow the deportation of two men from Dubai who were caught utilizing forged documents. The suspects, identified as Udaypal Singh alias Raja and Tajinder Singh alias Lucky Singh, targeted unsuspecting travelers with promises of lucrative job opportunities abroad. Among their victims were two young men from Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh, Sarav Kumar Singh, 25, and Sumir Kumar, 27. The duo was detained at the Dubai airport after officials discovered they were attempting to travel on counterfeit visas.

Paramjeet Singh, a travel agent linked to this operation, played a pivotal role by assuring the victims that he could facilitate their journey to Poland via Dubai. For his services, he demanded a staggering ₹10 lakh, of which the victims managed to pay ₹1.28 lakh through a bank transaction, with the remainder in cash. Udaypal, whose residence housed the printing press responsible for producing these fraudulent visas, became a focal point in this investigation. Following the raid conducted by Chanakya police, the extent of this scam is becoming increasingly clear. Authorities are now working diligently to unravel the network behind such crimes, ensuring that justice is served and highlighting the importance of vigilance among travelers seeking overseas opportunities.

Kash Patel and Tulsi Gabbard Poised for Top Roles in Trump Administration

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her foreign policy stances, particularly her past comments on U.S. relations with Russia and Syria. Senators also debated her positions on surveillance and national security reforms. Some Republicans praised her bipartisan appeal, while critics expressed concerns over her unconventional views on intelligence operations. Despite the intense scrutiny, both Patel and Gabbard appear to have strong backing from Republican lawmakers. With the GOP holding a narrow Senate majority, their confirmation seems highly likely. Their appointments would not only be a significant milestone for Indian-origin representation in American politics but also signal a major shift in Trump’s approach to national security and intelligence. If confirmed, Patel and Gabbard will play pivotal roles in shaping U.S. intelligence and law enforcement policies under the Trump administration.

“She could hardly speak, poor thing” Remark Sparks Row

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anti-poor and anti-tribal nature,” Nadda asserted, demanding an unconditional apology. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju also criticized Mrs Gandhi’s statement, stating, “Our President, a tribal woman, is not weak. Droupadi Murmu has worked extensively for the country and society. They should apologize.” Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan called the remark an “unprecedented

insult” to the President, while BJP MP Sukanta Majumdar said the Congress’s “zamindaari mindset” could not accept an Adivasi woman holding the country’s highest constitutional office. The BJP has frequently accused the Congress of having a feudal outlook, with Prime Minister Modi in the past referencing a picture of Indira Gandhi during her Gujarat visit, holding a handkerchief near her nose due to foul smells, as an

example of elitism. During her address earlier in the day, President Murmu highlighted the government’s efforts in reviving the economy from “policy paralysis” despite global challenges. She praised initiatives in aviation, railways, and agriculture modernization and emphasized concerns over cybercrime and digital fraud, stressing the need for stronger national security measures.

Gandhi Nagar set for a high-stakes battle of Turncoats

Gandhi Nagar, home to one of India's largest readymade garment hubs, has a thriving business ecosystem with over 25,000 shops, showrooms, and manufacturing units, generating crores of rupees in daily turnover. The constituency has 172,322 registered voters—94,494 male, 77,818 female, and 10 third-gender voters. This marks a decline of 10,500 voters from 2020 when the total electorate stood at 182,831. The economy of the constituency largely depends on business, rental income, and daily wages.

The Candidates

BJP's Arvinder Singh Lovely, a prominent Sikh leader, is seen as a strong contender. However, his recent defection from Congress to BJP has led to trust issues among voters. Lovely previously served in the Sheila Dikshit-led Congress government and was elected as an MLA from Gandhi Nagar four consecutive times (1998, 2003, 2008, and 2013). He also contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections from East Delhi but lost to BJP's Gautam Gambhir by over 3.91 lakh votes. Last year, he quit as the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee chief and joined BJP within a week. He replaces sitting BJP MLA Anil Kumar Bajpai, who narrowly defeated AAP's Naveen Chaud-

hary in 2020 by 6,079 votes. AAP has again fielded Naveen Chaudhary, a social worker and activist, for the second time. A Congress member from 2015 to 2020, he started his political journey in the late 1990s and initially contested as an independent candidate in 1998.

Congress has chosen Kamal Arora, popularly known as "Dabbu." He started his political career with the Youth Congress in 1996 and remained with the party until 2011 before joining AAP. However, after being denied a ticket by AAP, he returned to Congress just days before being announced as its candidate.

The Electorate & Key Issues

Part of the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency, Gandhi Nagar is bound by Yamuna Pushta Road in the west, GT Road in the north, Swami Dayanand Marg in the east, and Vikas Marg in the south. The area has a diverse voter base, comprising Hindu, Punjabi, and Muslim communities. Muslims, forming about 25% of the electorate, are concentrated in Shastri Park, Seelampur, Kanti Nagar, and Kailash Nagar. Hindus, including traders and priests, are spread across Gandhi Nagar, Dharampura, Raghubarapur, Rajgarh Colony, Seelampur, Azad Nagar, and Shankar Nagar.

Due to the high density of businesses, the locality faces several civic challenges. Traffic congestion is a major issue, worsened by encroachments, narrow lanes, illegal parking, and a rise in e-rickshaws. The primary road from Pushta Road to the market remains severely clogged. Traders complain about poor traffic management and inadequate parking facilities. Drainage and sewerage problems, broken roads, and unreliable water supply add to the woes of residents, who often rely on bottled water or expensive purifiers due to contaminated tap water.

In 2023, the Delhi government announced a redevelopment plan for Gandhi Nagar market, including the construction of two multi-level parking lots, road and drainage improvements, enhanced fire safety measures, and the deployment of golf carts for better last-mile connectivity. However, the project remains stalled, leaving traders and residents frustrated.

As the constituency heads for elections, the battle among political turncoats is set to be closely watched, with issues of infrastructure, business growth, and public amenities at the forefront of voters' concerns.

"Kejriwal Trying to Commit Mass Genocide in Faridabad": Haryana CM



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has hit out at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, accusing him of making

baseless allegations to cover up his failures. He criticized Kejriwal for failing to clean the Yamuna River despite repeated promises and alleged that Delhi's contaminated water is

endangering public health. "Kejriwal had said he would clean the Yamuna, but instead of doing so, he has further polluted it. The people of Delhi are being forced to drink this dirty water. We are providing clean water, but Kejriwal has turned the river into a dumping ground," Saini said. The Haryana CM further claimed that Kejriwal's inaction is leading to a "mass genocide" in Faridabad due to the release of chemically contaminated water into the Yamuna. "Even after 10 years, he has not been able to clean the river. He should apologize to the people of Delhi and Haryana instead of blaming others," he added.

The remarks come amid escalating tensions between the two states over water supply issues, with Kejriwal previously alleging that Haryana was withholding Delhi's water share.

Kejriwal is a Modi Clone says Congress's Rahul Gandhi



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

In a recent political rally, Rahul Gandhi made headlines by asserting that Arvind Kejriwal is merely a "puppet" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, claiming that both leaders represent two sides of the same coin. This statement has sparked significant debate and backlash from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which quickly defended its position by suggesting that the Congress party and the BJP share a deeper understanding.

Gandhi's remarks came during an event held to support state Congress chief Devendra Yadav, where he emphasized that the upcoming elections will serve as a crucial battle of ideologies. He urged voters to recognize the differences between the parties and to choose wisely for the future of Delhi.

In response, AAP spokespersons have accused the Congress of attempting to divert attention from its own failures by targeting Kejriwal. They al-

leged that the Congress and BJP are aligned in their political strategies, especially since they seem to conspire against AAP whenever possible. The party emphasized that under what they call "false pretenses," Prime Minister Modi was responsible for the arrest of Kejriwal, further entrenching the idea of a shadowy alliance between the two larger parties. As the political environment heats up, it remains crucial for voters to sift through these claims and counterclaims. The interplay of accusations could shape the narrative leading into the election season, and how the public perceives these parties and their leaders will undoubtedly influence their decisions at the polls. With ideologies clashing and alliances under scrutiny, the forthcoming elections promise to be more than just a simple contest; they may reflect broader societal values and priorities.

Fadnavis Slams Kejriwal Over Yamuna Row, Calls Out Unfulfilled Promises

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis took a sharp dig at Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal, recalling his unfulfilled promise to clean the Yamuna River and take a dip in it with his cabinet. Addressing a campaign rally for BJP candidate Praveen Nimesh in Gokalpur, Fadnavis accused Kejriwal of failing to deliver on his commitments and leaving the river more polluted than before.

"Kejriwal had assured the people of Delhi that he would clean the Yamuna and take a dip in it, but today, the river is even dirtier than before," Fadnavis said. Taking a jibe, he added, "Now, he and his cabinet should take a dip in a handful of water and bid farewell to Delhi—this is what the people are saying."

The Maharashtra CM also asserted that Delhi voters, particularly women, would bring



the BJP to power under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. He further accused Kejriwal of betraying social activist Anna Hazare for political gains. "I frequently meet Anna Hazare, and he tells me that if there is anyone most dishonest in this country, it is Arvind Kejriwal," Fadnavis claimed.

The remarks come amid the ongoing controversy over Kejriwal's claim that the BJP-led Haryana government was "mixing poison" in the Yamuna, affecting Delhi's water

supply. The allegations triggered sharp reactions from BJP leaders and led Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini to file a complaint with the Election Commission.

In response to the poll body, Kejriwal defended his statements, arguing that they were not meant to disrupt public order but to highlight an urgent public health issue.

Delhi is set to vote on February 5, with the results scheduled for February 8.

Congress Kisan Morcha VP SP Bhardwaj Joins AAP



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

In a blow to the Congress ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, Kisan Morcha state Vice President S.P. Bhardwaj joined

the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday. Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh welcomed him into the party, stating that Bhardwaj has withdrawn his candidacy from Najafgarh and

extended support to AAP candidate Tarun Kumar.

Bhardwaj, who previously held positions in both Congress and BJP, said he was inspired by AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal's policies and governance. "It is a matter of great fortune for me to return to my family after 12 years. I will dedicate myself to the party and the welfare of the people," he said.

Sanjay Singh expressed confidence that Bhardwaj's entry would strengthen AAP's presence in Najafgarh and surrounding areas. The Delhi election is set for February 5, with counting on February 8.

Haryana Court Summons Arvind Kejriwal Over 'Poisoning' Yamuna Claims

TPN Correspondent | Haryana

A Haryana court has summoned Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal over his allegations that the Haryana government was "poisoning" the Yamuna's water to disrupt Delhi's water supply. The court has directed Kejriwal to appear before it by February 17, warning that action will be taken if he fails to comply.

The summons follows a statement from Haryana Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Vipul Goel, who announced that the state government would file a case against Kejriwal for his "irresponsible" remarks, which he claimed were intended to create panic ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections. He stated that the complaint would be filed in the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court in Sonapat under Sections 2(D) and 54 of the Disaster Management Act. Goel criticized Kejriwal, asserting that his claims were false and that Haryana officials had already verified the quality of water being supplied to Delhi. He accused the former Delhi Chief Minister of misleading the public for political gain.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also weighed in on the controversy, condemn-

ing Kejriwal's remarks as "disgusting" and questioning how the BJP-led Haryana government could poison the Yamuna's water when even the Prime Minister himself consumes the same supply. Modi said the accusations reflected AAP's desperation ahead of the elections. He pointed out that diplomats, judges, and all Delhi residents drink the same water coming from Haryana.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini also responded by visiting Palla Ghat in Delhi, drinking Yamuna water himself, and dismissing Kejriwal's claims as baseless fear-mongering. He accused the AAP leader of attempting to mislead people for political benefits.

Kejriwal had made the allegations in a post on X, claiming that the Haryana government was deliberately contaminating Delhi's water supply. He warned that the situation was dangerous, asserting that the pollution in the water was beyond the capacity of treatment plants to clean. He further accused the BJP of attempting "mass murder" by poisoning Delhi residents through the Yamuna's water supply.

PM Modi: No Foreign Interference Before Budget Session for First Time Since 2014

Focus on Development, Women's Empowerment, and Economic Growth

- No external interference before the Budget Session for the first time since 2014
- Focus on innovation, inclusion, and investment in economic growth
- Session will strengthen 'Viksit Bharat' and future leadership

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a swipe at the Opposition while addressing the media ahead of the Budget Session of Parliament, stating that for the first time since 2014, no foreign forces have attempted to create disturbances before a session. He remarked that it had become a trend for external elements to "ignite a fire" before key parliamentary proceedings, often with support from within the country

"Since 2014, this is the first Parliament session where no 'videshi chingari' (foreign interference) has been seen," PM Modi said, alluding to past disruptions triggered by external reports and allegations, including the controversy surrounding the US-based short-seller Hindenburg. The remark also comes weeks after Hindenburg announced its closure

Budget Session Highlights

The Budget Session began today with President Droupadi Murmu addressing a joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to table the Economic



Survey today and present the Union Budget tomorrow

PM Modi outlined that this session would emphasize women's empowerment, economic reforms, and investments to drive India's growth forward. He underscored that historic bills and amendments would be discussed, advancing the 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) model

Empowering India's Youth

Emphasizing India's young demographic, PM Modi stated that citizens in the 20-25 age group will be the biggest beneficiaries of 'Viksit Bharat'. He noted that by the time they turn 50, they will be leading the country's policymaking efforts

"This session is a golden opportunity for young MPs, who will witness India's transformative journey. Our efforts today will be a gift for the future generation," he added, calling for collective action in shaping India's growth trajectory.



Shubhanshu Shukla: The Indian Astronaut Who Will Pilot Axiom-4 To Space

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

First Indian on a Private Space Mission – Shubhanshu Shukla will pilot Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4) to the ISS. Experienced Combat Pilot – Over 2,000 flight hours on multiple aircraft, including MiG-21 and Su-30 MKI. Training Across Continents – Trained in Russia, India, and selected for ISRO's Gaganyaan mission.

Indian Air Force (IAF) Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has been selected as the pilot for Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4), NASA announced on Thursday. With this, he will become the first Indian astronaut to travel to the International Space Station (ISS) on a private mission. The mission, a collaboration between NASA and ISRO, is scheduled for spring 2025 and will launch from Kennedy Space Center in Florida aboard a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft. The crew will spend up to 14 days in space, conducting scientific experiments, outreach programs, and commercial activities in microgravity

Who is Shubhanshu Shukla?

Born on October 10, 1985, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, Shubhanshu Shukla is a highly decorated pilot and one of India's most promising astronauts. He graduated from the National Defence Academy (NDA) in 2005 and was commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force in June 2006. Over the years, he has flown a variety of aircraft, including An-32, Jaguar, Hawk, MiG-21, MiG-29, and Su-30 MKI, accumulating over 2,000 hours of flying experience

In 2019, he was selected for the Indian astronaut program through the Institute of Aerospace Medicine (IAM), and in 2021, he completed basic spaceflight training at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Russia. Upon returning to India, he continued training at ISRO's Astronaut Training Facility in Bengaluru. He was promoted to group captain in 2024, just before being selected for Axiom Mission 4

Second Indian to Fly to Space

With this mission, Shubhanshu Shukla will become the second Indian to travel to space, following Rakesh Sharma, who flew aboard the Salyut 7 space station in 1984. His selection for Axiom Mission 4 is also seen as a major step toward his potential role in ISRO's Gaganyaan mission, which aims to send India's first astronauts into space aboard an indigenous spacecraft

Shukla is the youngest of three siblings and the first in his family to join the armed forces. He is married to Kamna Shubha Shukla, a dentist, and has remained committed to advancing India's space ambitions. His upcoming mission will be a landmark moment in Indian space history, paving the way for future astronaut collaborations between ISRO and global space agencies

"India's GDP Growth At 6.3-6.8%, Inflation To Stay Under Control"

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Indian economy is projected to expand at a growth rate of 6.3% to 6.8% in the financial year 2025-26 (FY26), according to the Economic Survey 2024-25 presented in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The survey, released ahead of the Union Budget, highlights strong domestic economic fundamentals, declining unemployment, and stable inflation as key factors underpinning this growth forecast.

The Economic Survey states that the domestic economy remains robust, supported by a strong external account, calibrated fiscal consolidation, and stable private consumption. These factors are expected to drive growth within the projected range, although the 6.3%-6.8% forecast marks the lowest growth rate since the COVID-19 pandemic year of 2020-21, when India experienced a negative growth of 5.8%. In contrast, India's GDP growth rates for 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 were 9.7%, 7%, and 8.2%, respectively.

The survey also points out that rupee depreciation in 2024 was largely driven by a strong US dollar amid geopolitical tensions and uncertainties surrounding the US election. Additionally, it warns that a significant market correction in 2025 could have adverse effects, particularly due to the increased participation of new retail investors.



Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union Budget 2025-26 on Saturday, and the survey has outlined several key highlights:

- Food inflation is expected to ease in Q4 FY25 due to the seasonal drop in vegetable prices and Kharif harvest arrivals.
- India's economic prospects for FY26 are balanced, with challenges arising from elevated geopolitical and trade uncertainties.
- Managing global challenges will require strategic policy management and strengthening of domestic fundamentals.
- To boost global competitiveness, India needs to implement grassroots-level structural reforms and deregulation.
- The risk of inflation from higher commodity prices is limited for FY26, but geopolitical tensions remain a concern.
- The survey also raises concerns about the potential misuse of AI technologies due to the lack of an appropriate governance framework.
- It highlights that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has been successful in encouraging early distress resolution.

Myanmar Military Extends State of Emergency Amid Ongoing Crisis



TPN Correspondent | Myanmar

Emergency Extended for Six More Months – Military junta justifies move citing the need for stability. Civil War Ongoing – The country remains embroiled in conflict since the 2021 coup. Election Plans Criticized – Critics label the military's election plans as a sham.

In a state media announcement made Friday, Myanmar's ruling military junta declared the extension of the state of emergency for another six months, just a day before the fourth anniversary of the 2021 coup that overthrew the elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. The extension comes amid the ongoing civil war and the junta's plan to hold elections this year, which critics argue are designed to entrench the military's power under the guise of democracy.

State-run Myanmar Digital News cited the need for "stability and peace" to ensure the success of the planned general election, claiming more tasks were required before the vote could be held fairly. However, the military's control over the country and the mounting violence have led many to believe that the planned election will be nothing more than a "sham", aimed at legitimizing the junta's rule and maintaining its grip on power

Looking For Justice, RG Kar Victim's Parents Call On West Bengal Governor

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

Victim's Parents Meet Governor – Request intervention from President Murmu and Home Minister Amit Shah. Supreme Court Plea Withdrawn – Parents granted liberty to file a fresh petition. Convict Sentenced to Life Imprisonment – Calls for the death penalty and reinvestigation intensify.

The parents of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital rape and murder

victim have approached West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose, urging him to take up their case with President Droupadi Murmu and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The family, still seeking justice, submitted a formal representation detailing their grievances. The Governor assured them of support, emphasizing that "humanity stands with them" and that justice shall prevail

Meanwhile, the victim's parents have

withdrawn their plea before the Supreme Court, which sought a fresh investigation into the case. The plea was initially filed as an Intervention Application (IA) in the suo motu case registered by the Supreme Court in August 2024, shortly after the tragic incident. However, during Thursday's hearing, a Bench of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar noted that a similar case was already before the Calcutta High Court.



India Sets Standards for HMPV Testing Amid Surge in Cases

CDSCO and ICMR Work to Establish Uniform Protocols for Diagnostic Kits

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India is taking steps to standardize Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) testing kits, as the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) work on quality and performance protocols following a surge in reported cases. The Union Health Ministry confirmed two HMPV cases in Karnataka earlier this month, but surveillance reports indicate at least 200 cases were detected across the country last year.

HMPV, a respiratory virus causing flu-like symptoms, gained global attention after a spike in cases in China. However, testing variations due to a lack of uniform evaluation have led Indian authorities to draft standardized guidelines to ensure consistency and reliability in diagnostic results.

Ensuring Accurate Testing and Industry Compliance

The draft guidelines focus on real-time PCR kits, which currently undergo testing at institutions like the National Institute of Virology (NIV).



- India moves to standardize Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) testing
- Over 200 cases detected by December 2024
- Feedback sought by March 15 before finalizing protocols

Officials emphasize that quality and accuracy are critical, as manufacturer claims do not always meet expected standards. The guidelines will require competency training for staff, covering everything from handling kits to ensuring privacy in test results.

With India's in-vitro diagnostic market projected to grow from \$1.69 billion in 2023 to \$2.56 billion by 2030, experts see this move as a necessary step in strengthening the country's diagnostic capabilities. The final guidelines will be formalized after industry input by March 15.

India Unveils Ambitious AI Plan to Compete with Global Models



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India has unveiled a significant plan to develop its own artificial intelligence (AI) foundational model, aiming to rival global giants like ChatGPT and DeepSeek R1. The government is setting up the "most affordable" common compute facility, powered by 18,693 graphics processing units (GPUs), to support startups and researchers in building AI tools. This initiative is part of India's broader AI mission, valued at Rs 10,370 crore.

IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw revealed that the government is in discussions with at least six developers to create the foundational model, expected to take between four to eight months. He emphasized the importance of accessibility, with

the common compute facility set to be available at a fraction of global cost benchmarks. The facility will offer GPUs at a rate significantly lower than the global average, with the government covering 40% of the cost, ensuring that it remains affordable to all.

In addition to the compute facility, the government has announced the establishment of an AI Safety Institute. This institute will focus on creating tools, frameworks, and processes to ensure AI safety, supporting the development of responsible AI technology. Furthermore, eight projects have already been launched under the "Indigenous Governance of AI" initiative to address the ethical and governance aspects of AI.

Shashi Tharoor Dismisses Trump's Tariff Threat Against India, Calls It 'Empty'

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

US President Donald Trump recently threatened to impose 100% tariffs on BRICS nations if the group attempted to move away from the US dollar in international trade. However, Indian Congress MP Shashi Tharoor dismissed the threat as an "empty" one, noting that no concrete plans were in place to replace the dollar with a new currency.

Speaking on the matter, Tharoor stated, "I don't think there is any particular plan whatsoever to do that. And therefore, the threats of the president seem a bit empty because it's only if there is an actual proposal that comes up and that countries like India are taking forward seriously. I don't see any support in the Indian government for such a proposal. So, until that happens, why should we worry?"



While there has been some limited discussion on alternatives to the dollar, including trade deals using national currencies like the Rupee-Ruble trade with Russia or the Rupee-Riyal trade with Iran, Tharoor emphasized that the dollar remains a practical convenience for most countries.

BRICS, a grouping of emerging economies, includes ten nations: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates. The group has explored alternatives to the US dollar in recent years, particularly by countries like Russia and China, which have suggested the creation of a new BRICS currency. However, India, according to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, is not supportive of such a move, with no official proposal on the table.

Can't Use Live Market Prices In Videos, SEBI Tells Finfluencers

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced a new regulation that bans financial influencers, also known as "finfluencers," from using real-time stock prices in their educational content. Under the new rule, these influencers are required to use stock prices from up to three months ago, rather than live market data, when discussing stock market trends and securities.



trading and towards a more knowledge-based approach. The goal is to protect investors from being swayed by short-term market fluctuations, which can be amplified by unregulated influencers. Under the new guidelines, anyone wishing to provide stock market advice must first register with SEBI.

This move is aimed at curbing the impact of influencers who offer stock tips and predictions without being officially registered as investment advisers. SEBI has expressed concerns that such influencers, who often base their advice on live stock prices, could mislead viewers into making impulsive or risky investment decisions. The regulator emphasized that influencers should not provide predictions or advice about future prices, as this could lead to market manipulation or misinformed trading decisions.

SEBI's new regulation focuses on shifting the emphasis in financial education away from real-time

This regulation builds on previous steps taken by SEBI, including a restriction in October that prevented registered entities, such as stock brokers and mutual fund distributors, from collaborating with unregistered individuals or groups. The circular issued by SEBI states that those engaged solely in educational content should refrain from using live market prices, displaying or referring to securities by their code names, or offering price predictions.

Delhi set to get its cultural fix at World Book Fair



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

This weekend, the Bharat Mandapam will be buzzing with excitement as it hosts the much-awaited World Book Fair, set to begin on February 1. Running until February 9, this year's event promises a rich blend of literary discussions, cultural performances, and educational programs, celebrating the 75th year of the Indian Constitution.

The fair, organized by the National Book Trust (NBT) under the Ministry of Education, will feature over 1,000 writers, authors, and speakers, with more than 600 literary events and 200 cultural programs. It is expected to attract participants from more than 50 countries, with Russia being a key focus. Indian President Droupadi Murmu will inaugurate the event.

The fair's theme, "We, The People of India," highlights the significance of the Constitution's 75th anniversary and emphasizes India's rich cultural heritage. Visitors can look forward to a wide range of activities, including documentaries, panel discussions, literary analysis, and roundtable sessions. A dedicated pavilion will showcase India's republican ideals and history, featuring installations,

books, and cultural programs. Notably, there will be a panel discussion on the contributions of women to the Indian Constitution scheduled for February 4.

In addition to the literary events, an international pavilion will spotlight Russian culture under the theme "Roos Se Aayi Kitabein (Books from Russia)." This section will feature Russian literature from iconic authors like Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, and Alexander Pushkin, with over 1,500 books on display. Alexei Varlamov, a prominent Russian author, will participate in roundtable discussions, seminars, and lectures focused on contemporary global literature.

The fair also includes interactive sessions with authors, panel discussions on various topics, and sessions aimed at addressing mental well-being, climate change, and more. New this year is the authors' lounge, a dedicated space for writers to relax and reflect. Additionally, "Kidz Kingdom" will offer children's activities like storytelling, painting workshops, and quizzes, integrating AI, e-books, and audiobooks into their learning experiences.

Delhi Election 2025: Why is Rahul Gandhi Attacking Arvind Kejriwal?

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a recent series of speeches, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi sharply criticized the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), bringing up controversial issues such as the 'Sheeshmahal' saga surrounding Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's bungalow. The remarks reflect the growing tensions between Congress and AAP as both parties gear up for the 2025 Vidhan Sabha elections.

Zeeshan Kaskar of The Wire spoke with Farhad Suri, the Congress candidate for Jangpura, to delve deeper into the party's strategy for Delhi's upcoming polls. Suri shared insights into how the Congress party is plan-

ning to regain its foothold in the city after years of domination by AAP.

Once the dominant political force in Delhi, Congress now finds itself struggling to maintain even a fraction of its former strongholds. The party, which had ruled Delhi for over a decade, has faced a significant decline in its influence in recent years, losing both voter base and political relevance. In an effort to rebuild its image, the Congress has decided to contest the 2025 elections independently, despite having formed an alliance with AAP during the 2019 Lok Sabha

elections. This decision has sparked a wave of discussions within political circles, with many wondering if the Congress can reclaim its position or if the party will continue to be sidelined in the shadow of AAP.



Farhad Suri expressed confidence in Congress's ability to win back the trust of Delhi's electorate, stating that the party is focusing on addressing the concerns of citizens who feel neglected by both AAP and BJP. Suri emphasized that Congress is banking on its past legacy of governance and its ability to deliver on promises to the people of Delhi.

However, the path ahead for Congress appears challenging. AAP has firmly established itself as a major political player in the city, and with Kejriwal continuing to hold significant

sway, Congress's efforts to reposition itself as a credible alternative may face significant hurdles. Rahul Gandhi's focus on issues like the 'Sheeshmahal' controversy is part of a broader attempt to discredit AAP's leadership and regain political ground.

As Delhi prepares for the 2025 elections, the battle between Congress and AAP promises to be an intense and pivotal contest. Whether Congress can revive its fortunes or whether AAP will continue to dominate remains to be seen.

White House Offers Buyouts to Federal Employees Opposed to In-Person Work

Trump Administration Moves to End COVID-19 Remote Work Policies

- Federal employees must return to in-person work
- Workers can resign with pay and benefits
- Deadline – Offer expires February 6, 2025

TPN Correspondent | Washington

In a sweeping move to eliminate COVID-19-era remote work policies, the White House has introduced a buyout offer for federal employees unwilling to return to office. The plan, part of President Donald Trump's directives, could lead to the departure of thousands of government workers, reshaping the federal workforce.

Currently, only 6% of the federal workforce—which includes over 2 million employees—works in-person full-time. The administration estimates that 5% to 10% of employees may take the buyout, impacting hundreds of thousands of positions.

How the Buyout Works

According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), employees who opt for the buyout will receive administrative leave



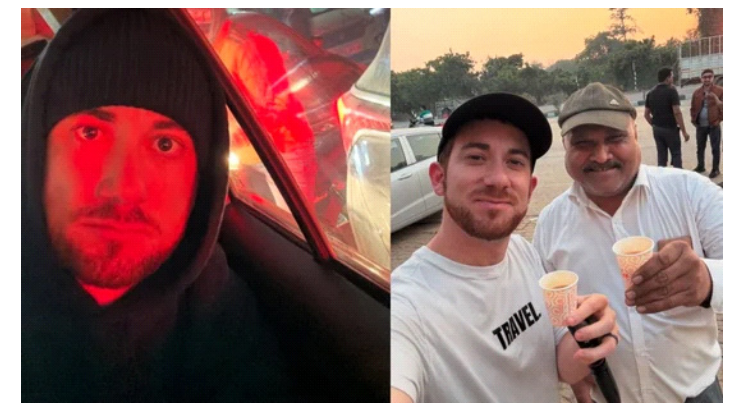
with pay and benefits. The resignation process is simple, requiring employees to reply to an official government email with the word "Resign" in the body of their message.

Certain groups, including military personnel, postal workers, immigration enforcement officials, and national security employees, are exempt from the program.

Trump's Workforce Overhaul

- This move aligns with President Trump's push for federal workforce reforms, including:
- Mandatory in-person work for government employees
- Greater accountability for senior officials
- A merit-based hiring process

With a February 6 deadline, the White House is signaling a rapid transition in federal employment policies, setting the stage for a reshaped post-pandemic government workforce.



Travel Vlogger Drew Binsky Misses Mahakumbh Mela After 19-Hour Traffic Ordeal

TPN Correspondent | Mahakumbh

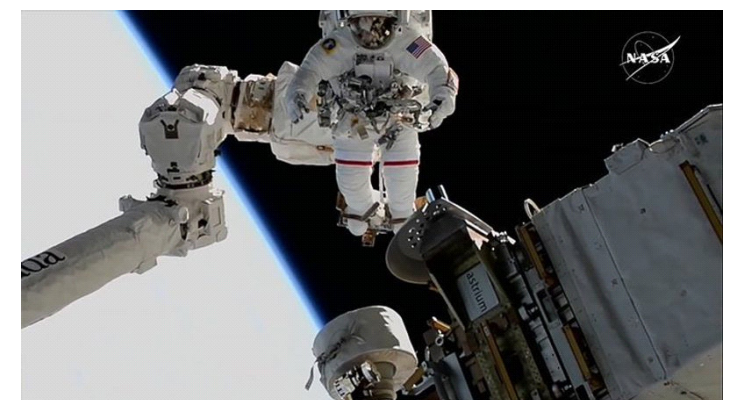
Trapped in Traffic – Binsky stuck 21 km from Mahakumbh, unable to attend. Exhausting Travel Experience – Police checkpoints, smog, and chaos hampered his journey. Missed Opportunity – Vlogger reflects on the once-in-a-lifetime event missed, with 144 years until the next.

US-based travel vlogger Drew Binsky recently shared his disappointment over missing the Mahakumbh Mela, one of the world's largest human gatherings, despite months of meticulous planning. In a heartfelt social media post, Binsky recounted his 19-hour ordeal stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic, just 21 kilometers away from the sacred event in Prayagraj.

Describing the situation as "complete chaos," Binsky explained the roadblocks, police checkpoints, and smog that made his journey almost impossible. He even contemplated walking the remaining distance but ultimately spent the night in his car, unable to reach the site.

This was a particularly frustrating experience for Binsky, as it was the first time since starting his travel vlogging journey in 2017 that he failed to capture a story. Reflecting on the rarity of the Mahakumbh Mela, which only takes place once every 12 years and will not occur again for another 144 years, Binsky expressed his disappointment.

Despite the setback, Binsky shared plans to head to Beirut, hoping to reflect on his travels and move forward from the experience.



Sunita Williams Breaks Spacewalking Record During 92nd US Spacewalk

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

Historic Spacewalk – Sunita Williams breaks total spacewalking time record. Spacewalk Duration – Expected to last about six and a half hours. Controversy Stirs – Elon Musk comments on delayed return of astronauts.

On January 30, 2025, NASA astronaut Sunita "Sunni" Williams set a new milestone in space exploration by breaking the total spacewalking time record previously held by Peggy Whitson. The achievement was announced during Expedition 72, as Williams spent several hours outside the International Space Station (ISS) to maintain hardware and collect surface samples for analysis. This spacewalk, which began at 8 am EST, was the 92nd US spacewalk. Williams, donning a red-striped space suit, was joined by Butch Wilmore on his fifth spacewalk. Despite the challenging nature of the spacewalk, it was a momentous occasion for Williams, who had already completed nine spacewalks. Controversy surrounding delayed astronaut returns emerged after Elon Musk made comments about the astronauts, including Williams and Wilmore, being "stranded" on the ISS due to delays in their Boeing Starliner capsule. Despite the confusion, the astronauts' safety was never in jeopardy, and their return to Earth was scheduled for March 2025.



Ukraine Receives Largest Swedish Defense Package Worth USD 1.23 Billion

TPN Correspondent | Kyiv

On January 31, 2025, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed his gratitude towards Sweden for providing the 18th and largest defense aid package to Ukraine. The Swedish defense package, totaling 13.5 billion SEK (approximately USD 1.23 billion), is set to significantly bolster Ukraine's military capabilities, particularly in strengthening its defense and long-range capabilities.

In a post shared on X, Zelenskyy thanked Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, the Swedish Government, and the Swedish people for their continued support. He emphasized that this substantial military aid would directly address Ukraine's urgent defense needs. The President stated, "We deeply appreciate that this military aid meets the urgent needs of the Ukrainian army and significantly contributes to strengthening our defense capabilities. Its reinforcement of our long-range capabilities and investments in weapons production in Ukraine are invaluable."

Zelenskyy also stressed the importance of collective strength in the face of ongoing threats, particularly from Russia. He noted that the support provided by Sweden helps solidify Ukraine's defenses, ensuring peace through strength. "We must all remember that threats like Russia's do not stop on their own; they advance only until the line where they are met with strength. That is why we must continue to strengthen this line together—from the Black Sea to the Baltic—to ensure peace and protect lives," Zelenskyy concluded.

Along with thanking Sweden for the defense package, Zelenskyy also shared updates on the tragic situation in Sumy, a city in north-eastern Ukraine. He reported that a residential building was destroyed following a Russian Shahed drone strike, resulting in the deaths of nine people and injuries to thirteen others, including a child. Zelenskyy extended his condolences to the victims' families and assured that those injured were receiving medical assistance.

Israeli Hostages Freed from Gaza: Netanyahu Welcomes Their Return



TPN Correspondent | Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has welcomed the safe return of three Israeli citizens who were released from captivity in Gaza on Thursday. The hostages—Agam Berger (19), Arbel Yehud (29), and Gadi Moses (80)—were freed after lengthy negotiations with Hamas. Netanyahu, expressing relief and gratitude, said, "Agam, Arbel, Gadi — welcome home. The entire State of Israel embraces you, as do my wife Sara and I."

Netanyahu credited the success of the release to the "heroic soldiers" of Israel and the country's determined stance during the negotiations. He emphasized the significance of Israel's position in ensuring the safe return of its citizens. "This release was achieved, first of all, thanks to our heroic soldiers, and it was also achieved thanks to the steadfast and determined stand that we took during the negotiations," he added.

Despite the relief surrounding their return, Netanyahu was vocal in his criticism of how Hamas conducted the release. He condemned the chaotic scenes witnessed during the handover process, which he described as shocking.

Imran Khan Writes Letter to Pakistan's Chief Justice on Electoral & Human Rights Violations



TPN Correspondent | Islamabad

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has written a 349-page letter to Pakistan's Chief Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Aminuddin, addressing serious concerns over electoral fraud, human rights violations, and the arrests of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members. The letter includes reports of alleged election rigging, the detention of PTI workers, and widespread human rights abuses, particularly around November 26, 2024.

In his letter, Khan claims that numerous PTI workers were arrested between November 24 and 27 of last year, with some hospital records being sealed and altered to cover up the facts. He also accused the judiciary of failing to deliver justice, despite multiple petitions highlighting electoral malpractice and human rights violations over the past 18 months. Khan asserted that PTI members have faced extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances under the current regime.

Khan criticized the government for coming to power through "electoral fraud and historic rigging," while accusing them of severe oppression against PTI, including demolishing party offices and subjecting leaders to brutal torture. He also recounted his own arrest on May 9, 2023, which he described as unlawful, and claimed the authorities deliberately aired the event to incite public outrage.

PTI Rejects PM Sharif's Offer for Talks Amid Political Tensions



TPN Correspondent | Pakistan

Pakistan's opposition party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has rejected an offer from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to resume talks and form a parliamentary committee to address the political conflict between the two sides. In an interview on Geo News' Capital Talk, Omar Ayub, a senior PTI leader, emphasized that the party's demands for the release of "political prisoners" remained firm, and it would not

engage in further discussions without addressing these key issues.

Meanwhile, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, a spokesperson for the government's committee, criticized PTI's refusal to engage, accusing them of adopting a "non-democratic" approach. He argued that the PTI had lost a significant opportunity to resolve its grievances through dialogue.

Earlier, PM Sharif had expressed

willingness to resume talks with PTI, recalling previous efforts to address election-related concerns, particularly regarding the elections of 2018 and 2024. However, PTI had cancelled a scheduled meeting in late January, leaving the negotiation process in limbo.

As tensions remain high, the political impasse in Pakistan continues, with PTI's refusal to re-engage further complicating the national dialogue.

India Tops Global Domestic Air Travel Rankings in 2024

Passenger Load Factor Surpasses US and China, Reflecting Rapid Growth



TPN Correspondent | Delhi
India has emerged as the leader in domestic air travel with a passenger load factor of 86.4% in 2024, surpassing the US and China, according to the latest report from the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The country transported 16.3 crore passengers on domestic flights, as per data compiled by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)

The US secured the second spot with a passenger load factor of 84.1%, followed by China at 83.2%. Brazil ranked fourth with 81.9%, while Australia (81.8%) and Japan (78%) followed closely

IATA's report revealed that total air traffic, measured in revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs), grew by 10.4% compared to 2023, exceeding pre-pandemic (2019) levels

by 3.8%. Capacity, measured in available seat kilometers (ASK), also increased by 8.7% in 2024, leading to a record-high global load factor of 83.5%

IATA Director General Willie Walsh emphasized that the aviation sector's growth is a clear indication of people's strong desire to travel. He noted that airlines have achieved record efficiency, filling 83.5% of all available seats

Looking ahead, IATA projects continued growth in air travel, estimating an 8% increase in 2025, which aligns with historical trends. However, Walsh also acknowledged ongoing challenges, particularly in ensuring aviation safety, following a tragic accident in Washington. He reiterated that safety remains the industry's top priority

Two Terrorists Killed In J&K's Poonch After Army Detects Movement Along LoC

TPN Correspondent | Jammu
The Indian Army successfully foiled an infiltration attempt along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, neutralizing two terrorists. The White Knight Corps detected the movement of armed militants on Thursday night and swiftly engaged them, leading to a heavy firefight. Following the encounter, a search operation was launched, uncovering weapons and other war-like stores

social media platform X, the White Knight Corps said, "Alert troops swiftly engaged the infiltrating terrorists, triggering an intense firefight. The search has resulted in the recovery of weapons and war-like stores



The crackdown comes in response to a series of attacks

carried out by terrorists in the last quarter of 2024. On October 20, two armed militants stormed a workers' camp in Ganderbal's Gagangir district, killing seven civilians, including six non-local laborers and a local doctor. Less than two weeks later, on November 2, terrorists hurled a grenade at a crowded Sunday market, killing a 42-year-old mother of three and injuring 11 others

With aggressive counter-terrorism operations underway, security forces are maintaining heightened vigilance along the LoC and key civilian areas to prevent further attacks.

Centre, Manipur Government, and UNC Hold Key Talks on District Rollback Demand

TPN Correspondent | Imphal/Guwahati
A crucial tripartite meeting took place on Thursday between the Centre, the Manipur government, and the United Naga Council (UNC) to discuss the Naga body's long-standing demand for the rollback of seven "arbitrarily created" districts in Manipur. After an in-depth discussion, it was mutually agreed that the state government would present a formal proposal in the next round of meetings scheduled for April.

Secretary Prashant Kumar Singh, Home Commissioner N Ashok Kumar, and UNC leaders, including chief NG Lorho and general secretary Vareiyi Shatsang**. The discussions aimed to find a resolution to the contentious district reorganization that took place in **December 2016** under the then **Congress government led by O Ibobi Singh. Manipur government to submit a formal proposal in the next meeting. UNC reiterates its demand for the rollback of the seven districts. Meeting follows an unsuccessful round of talks held on November 29, 2024. The creation of the seven districts in 2016 was met with strong opposition from the United Naga



Council (UNC), which alleged that the new administrative units encroached upon the ancestral lands of the Naga tribes. This issue has remained a point of contention between the Naga groups and successive state governments. Adding to the complexities, during Ibobi Singh's tenure in 2003, the Any Kuki Tribes (AKT) were included under the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category, a decision that has since been questioned by various communities in the state



- Trump warns BRICS, against replacing the US dollar.
- Threatens 100% tariffs on countries backing a BRICS currency.
- India remains cautious on de-dollarization efforts.
- Russia warns US actions may backfire.

SFJ Accused Secessionist Movements Across India, Planning Terror Attacks

TPN Correspondent | Delhi
A banned Khalistani organization led by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, designated as a terrorist by India in July 2020, has been accused of inciting Muslims, Tamils, and Christians in Manipur to secede from India. This claim is part of a background note from intelligence agencies included in a Home Ministry tribunal order extending the ban on Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) for another five years



The intelligence report states that SFJ has actively sought to divide communities along religious and ethnic lines to push its anti-India agenda. The group is allegedly encouraging the Christian community in Manipur to advocate for a "separate country," urging Tamils to raise flags for Dravidstan, and stoking Muslim sentiments by claiming persecution, calling for a separate Urduistan

Targeting Minority Communities - SFJ has allegedly been provoking Christians, Tamils, and Muslims to demand separate nations

Threats to National Leaders -

The organization is accused of plotting terror activities, including threats against PM Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and NSA Ajit Doval
Provocation of Farmers and Dalits- Intelligence reports suggest SFJ tried to incite Punjab and Haryana farmers over farm bills and urged Dalits to support its secessionist cause

The Meitei-Kuki conflict in Manipur has added another dimension to this issue. Since May 2023, tensions have escalated between the predominantly Hindu Meitei community and the Christian Kuki tribes over land rights and political representation. Meanwhile, other major tribes such

as the Nagas, who are also Christians, have been engaged in prolonged negotiations with the Indian government through the NSCN(IM) insurgent group

The intelligence note also highlights that among the 39 terrorist organizations banned by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), eight are Meitei outfits from Manipur, including the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup (KYKL)

The report's revelation that SFJ has been inciting Christians in Manipur for a separate country introduces a new perspective on the region's already volatile situation

Indian Navy Women Officers Cross Point Nemo, Earth's Most Remote Location



TPN Correspondent | Delhi
Two female officers from the Indian Navy, Lieutenant Commander Dilna K and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A, achieved a remarkable feat as they crossed Point Nemo—the most remote location on Earth aboard the Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini. The officers reached this isolated location at 12:30 am IST on Thursday during the third leg of their circumnavigation journey from Lyttelton, New Zealand, to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands

Point Nemo, located in the South Pacific Ocean, is known as the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility and is situated approximately 2,688 kilometers from the nearest landmass. It is

considered the farthest point from any human habitation, making this achievement a significant milestone in India's naval exploration efforts. The mission is part of Navika Sagar Parikrama II, an initiative aimed at furthering maritime exploration and scientific research. Crossing achieved solely under sail, marking a notable maritime navigation accomplishment. Water samples collected for research by the National Institute of Oceanography. Part of India's larger mission to support scientific exploration and collaboration

As part of their passage through this isolated region, the officers collected water samples, which will be ana-

lyzed for marine biodiversity and chemical composition. This data will contribute to ongoing oceanographic research, the Indian Navy said in a statement. Their mission, **Navika Sagar Parikrama II**, represents India's continued commitment to global scientific cooperation and maritime advancements

The officers began their circumnavigation journey from Goa on October 2, 2024, aboard INSV Tarini. They successfully reached Lyttelton Port, New Zealand, on December 22 completing the second leg of the voyage before setting sail for Port Stanley, Falkland Islands stretch spanning approximately 5,600 nautical miles. INSV Tarini's passage through Point such remote waters.

Due to its extreme isolation, Point Nemo is also designated as a "spacecraft cemetery," where decommissioned satellites and space stations are directed to crash safely into the ocean, far from populated areas. This unique location adds to the prestige of the mission undertaken by the Indian Navy officers, as they continue their groundbreaking journey toward their next milestone.

Trump Warns BRICS of 100% Tariffs Over De-Dollarization Efforts

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Former US President Donald Trump has reiterated his warning to BRICS nations, including India, against attempts to reduce reliance on the US dollar in global trade. He threatened 100% tariffs on countries that support a BRICS currency or any alternative to the dollar. Trump, in a statement on Truth Social, declared, "We are going to require a commitment from these seemingly hostile countries that they will nei-

ther create a new BRICS currency nor back any other currency to replace the mighty US dollar, or they will face 100% tariffs." His remarks come ahead of the February 1 deadline for deciding on tariffs against Canada and Mexico. The BRICS bloc—comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—has been exploring ways to reduce dependence on the dollar, particularly after the US removed Russia from SWIFT. Russian President Vladimir Putin has previously advocated for increased trade in

national currencies within BRICS. However, India has maintained a cautious approach, focusing on gradual financial diversification rather than outright dollar replacement. Russia has warned that US attempts to enforce dollar dominance could backfire. Meanwhile, Trump's comments coincide with rising concerns in India over potential economic impacts. His administration has already used tariff threats to pressure nations on trade and geopolitical issues, raising fears of disruption in Indo-US trade relations.



Why the Union Budget Should Prioritize Aerospace for India's Growth

India's economy has made significant strides in the last decade, moving from the 10th-largest by GDP in 2014 to the fifth-largest today. Much of this success can be attributed to the country's infrastructure development, job creation, and the growing middle class. The aviation and aerospace sectors have played a pivotal role in this transformation, contributing to an increase in GDP from 3% in 2014 to 7% in 2024. This growth can be credited to factors like a rise in operational airports, a booming domestic passenger base, and the successful privatisation of Air India.

Looking ahead, India aims to become the world's third-largest economy, overtaking Japan and Germany in the next few years. To reach this goal, the aviation and aerospace sectors could provide a critical boost—potentially accelerating the timeline to fiscal 2027. This is a sector that can revolutionize both airline travel and aerospace manufacturing, maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO), and the time to double down on these areas is now.

The Economic Potential of Aerospace

The aerospace sector offers high multiplier effects on GDP. Industry research indicates that investments in aviation and aerospace generate a return of over Rs 3,100 crore for every Rs 1,000 crore invested. This growth leads to an increase in both direct and indirect employment opportunities, with a job multiplier of six. Looking at China's success story—where the

number of civilian aircraft grew from 850 to 8,000 over the past 30 years—India's aerospace sector is poised for similar growth. Currently, India has around 800 planes with over 1,700 more on order by 2028. By 2027, India's GDP will grow by \$1 trillion, and aviation infrastructure will be crucial to harness this growth.

Policy Reforms and Investment

The Indian government can further unlock the sector's potential with policy changes, such as introducing government-backed credit guarantee schemes to help regional airlines reduce leasing costs. The focus should be on making airlines a more affordable option for millions of Indians, directly competing with rail and road travel. The number of civilian aircraft in India has doubled in the past decade, and with continued growth, India will soon extend its aviation network to 220 airports, reinforcing its position as the third-largest air passenger market globally.

Making India a Global Aerospace Hub

India has seen notable progress in aerospace manufacturing, with global companies like GE Aerospace investing in facilities that supply parts for major aircraft engines. However, India needs to climb higher in the aerospace manufacturing value chain. Revisiting performance-linked incentives (PLIs), similar to those in the drone manufacturing sector, could attract aircraft manufacturers to set up facto-

ries in India, fulfilling Prime Minister Modi's vision for a self-reliant aerospace sector.

MRO Sector Growth

The MRO (maintenance, repair, and overhaul) sector, the second-highest cost for airlines after fuel, offers another massive opportunity for India. Currently, most MRO work is done in countries like Singapore and Malaysia. However, the government has made strides to boost domestic MRO capabilities, with tax incentives and the establishment of MRO hubs. By 2028, India aims to meet 90% of its domestic MRO needs, positioning itself as a key player in this lucrative industry.

Skilling the Workforce

To support this aerospace boom, India needs a skilled workforce. As demand grows, the government must focus on large-scale training initiatives for engineers and workers to meet the demands of the aerospace sector. For example, GE Aerospace has trained over 5,000 people in precision manufacturing in Pune over the last decade.

In conclusion, the Union Budget should seize this golden opportunity to invest in the aerospace sector, which promises significant economic and job growth while positioning India as a global player in both services and manufacturing. The time is ripe for India to bet on aerospace as a transformative driver of its economic future.



Economic Survey 2024-25: Growth Strong, But Wage and Employment Gap Remains a Concern

The Economic Survey 2024-25 highlights a strong economic growth trajectory, projecting a real GDP growth of 7% for FY25. However, the Survey also underscores the widening gap between corporate earnings, job creation, and wage growth, posing a potential threat to long-term economic sustainability.

While corporate profits have surged by 22.3% in FY24, employment in these firms increased by a mere 1.5%. Employee expenses only rose by 13%, a slowdown compared to 17% in FY23. This indicates that companies are more focused on cost-cutting rather than expanding their workforce, which is a key issue for the broader economy. Despite this, private investment activity has shown positive signs, with resource mobilization from primary markets reaching Rs 11.1 lakh crore between April and December 2024, marking a 5% increase from the previous year. The number of IPOs surged 32.1%, with capital raised almost tripling from Rs 53,023 crore in 2023 to Rs 1,53,987 crore in 2024. However, India's corporate bond market remains underdeveloped compared to global standards, accounting for only 18% of GDP, which is far behind South Korea's 80% and China's 36%.

While the Economic Survey 2024-25 acknowledges private capital revival, it highlights the persistent wage stagnation problem. Nominal wages have risen by around 5-7% annually in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, but inflation-adjusted wage growth has remained below 2%. This stagnant wage growth, combined with limited employment expansion, results in sluggish demand growth, as workers' purchasing power remains constrained. Despite rising corporate profits, real wage growth remains stagnant, contributing to a growing disconnect between economic growth and living standards.

The Survey also discusses the concept of "enlightened self-interest" for businesses, encouraging them to raise wages to boost consumption and support corporate revenues.

The Maha Kumbh Tragedy: A Fatal Glimpse into the Dark Side of Blind Faith and Governance



On the occasion of Mauni Amavasya, thirty pilgrims tragically lost their lives during the Maha Kumbh, as they were crushed in a stampede. This calamity occurred just days after the Union Home Minister, accompanied by Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister and Baba Ramdev, participated in the grand Kumbh rituals, showcasing the event for political and religious purposes. However, this tragedy quickly punctured the BJP-led government's self-congratulatory narrative, revealing the flaws in managing such large gatherings and exposing the dangerous intersection of faith, politics, and governance.

Despite the tragic loss of life, the Ut-

tar Pradesh government attempted to downplay the incident, framing it as an unfortunate but inevitable consequence of large-scale religious gatherings. A judicial inquiry was promptly announced, but the tragedy was glossed over with no significant accountability. This attempt to sidestep responsibility is hardly surprising, as it fits a pattern of evading blame and shifting focus to avoid addressing systemic failures.

Perhaps more troubling is the argument propagated by a section of the saffron ecosystem, which tries to divert attention from the tragedy by emphasizing the triumph of faith. According to this view, the Kumbh must be celebrated, not

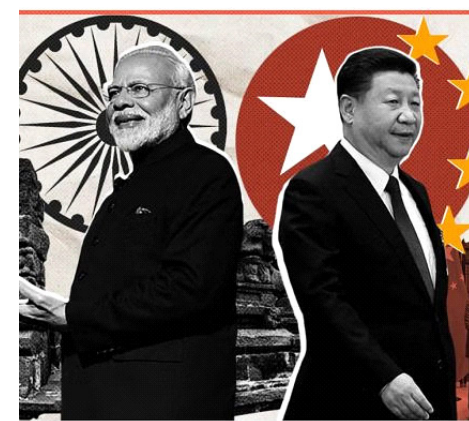
overshadowed by the death of a few pilgrims. This perspective echoes a dangerous regressive mindset, reminiscent of a bygone era of fatalism, where faith was placed above all else, and inaction was justified by divine will.

The excessive glorification of "faith" has been manipulated for political gain, distracting the public from pressing issues such as inequality, corruption, and governance failures. This argument, which seeks to justify the loss of life in the name of religious celebration, diminishes the importance of political accountability. Such rhetoric diminishes the sanctity of human life, fostering a dangerous national insensitivity.

The Growing Disenchantment of India's Middle Class with the Government

For months now, I have been observing a growing sense of disenchantment within India's middle class, the very demographic that propelled Narendra Modi and the BJP to power. While the middle class lacks the electoral weight to swing outcomes on its own, it was once Modi's core constituency. Despite unmet promises over the past two terms, this group held firm in its support. However, that may now be changing.

In recent weeks, I have sensed a deeper shift, one that goes beyond frustration over inflation or high taxation. There's an underlying concern that the government is failing to deliver on the broader promise of India's global ascent. When the BJP first came to power a decade ago, many educated Indians believed the country was on the cusp of greatness. The idea of the "Indian century" was alive; we were poised to be a dominant global power, both politically and economically. There were high hopes that foreign investment would flood into India, the rupee would stabilize, and the world would respect the Indian passport.



Yet, nearly all of these expectations have been shattered. The rupee has not strengthened but has weakened considerably. From a value of Rs 59 to the dollar under the UPA government, it now hovers around Rs 86-87. The Indian passport, once a symbol of rising global stature, has fallen in rank, and it's more difficult than ever for Indians to secure visas to Schengen countries or the United States. Instead of becoming a trusted partner to the US, India now finds itself at odds with Washington, as President Trump has expressed dissatisfaction with India's tariffs and warned of retaliatory measures.

Stock Markets End Volatile Session with Modest Gains Amid Budget Session & Profit Booking



Domestic stock markets witnessed huge volatility today. Mixed signals from international markets, the start of the Budget session and profit-taking are the reasons for this. The indices, which started flat in the morning, swung to huge gains in the afternoon. They fell into losses again as investors took profit-taking at daily highs. They recovered somewhat in the end as buying resumed. Realty, energy and pharma shares were the main drivers of this. Overall, the Sensex gained 226 points and the Nifty gained 86 points. The Nifty has a strong resistance at 23300. If it is broken, the index may recover a little more.



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The BSE Sensex, which closed at 76,532 in the previous session, opened at 76,598 today. It touched an intraday low of 76,401. It reached an intraday high of 76,962. It finally closed at 76,759, up 226 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,249 on Thursday, touched a low of 23,139 and a high of 23,322. It closed at 23,249, gaining 86 points. The Nifty Bank rose 146 points to settle at 49,311.

In the Nifty50, 35 companies gained and 15 lost. BEL, Power Grid, Hero Moto, Bharti Airtel, Cipla were the top gainers. Tata Motors, ITC Hotels, Adani Enterprises, Shriram Finance, Bajaj Finserv were the biggest losers. Auto, IT, Media, Consumer Durables,

Oil & Gas indices rose today. Bank, Finance, FMCG, Pharma, Healthcare, Oil & Gas indices were in the red.

Market breadth on NSE today slightly shifted in favour of buyers. Out of 2091 stocks traded, 1549 gained and 1256 lost. Shares of 18 companies reached 52-week highs while 64 reached 52-week lows.

The rupee weakened slightly against the dollar and settled at 86.62. Wari Energies' net profit in the third quarter rose 36.2% to Rs 492 crore from Rs 361 crore. Coromandel International's net profit rose to Rs 511 crore from Rs 231 crore. HSBC has maintained a buy rating on Bajaj Finance with a target price of Rs 8900. It is noteworthy that Nomura has given a reduce rating to JSW Infra. Dabur India's net profit was recorded at Rs 516 crore. Max Healthcare's revenue grew by 35% to Rs 2281 crore from Rs 1689 crore. Welspun Living's net profit fell by 31.7% to Rs 120 crore from Rs 176 crore. GAIL India's net profit was recorded at Rs 3870 crore with a growth rate of 36%. Revenue was recorded at Rs 34,960 crore. It declared a dividend of Rs 6.5 per share. Adani Enterprises' net profit fell by 97% to Rs 57 crore. Despite an increase in mining and airport revenue, foreign exchange losses of Rs 296 crore were a drag. Bharat Electronics' profit rose 47% to Rs 1316 crore from Rs 893 crore.

India's GDP Growth Projected Between 6.3% and 6.8% in FY26

India's GDP growth is projected to range between 6.3% and 6.8% for the financial year 2026, as per the Economic Survey 2025 presented in Parliament on Friday. This marks the second consecutive year of sub-7% growth for the country. According to the first advance estimates released by the Central Statistics Office ahead of the Union Budget 2025, India's GDP and Gross Value Added (GVA) are expected to grow by 6.4% in FY25.

While these projections reflect a steady pace of growth, the country faces challenges in sustaining high economic momentum amid global uncertainties, domestic demand pressures, and inflationary concerns. The subdued growth estimates signal that India may be transitioning to a phase of more moderate expansion after the post-pandemic recovery years.



The projected growth for FY26 reflects continued resilience in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. However, the survey highlights concerns about the slowdown in private investments, rising input costs, and sluggish wage growth, all of which could limit the growth potential. Despite these challenges, there is optimism regarding the government's fiscal stimulus measures, infrastructure spending, and policy reforms,

which are expected to support economic activities.

The government is also focusing on revitalizing key sectors like MSMEs, infrastructure, and manufacturing to boost employment and consumption. However, sustaining economic expansion will depend on the resolution of several underlying structural issues, including wage stagnation, the quality of job creation, and improving the ease of doing business.

In conclusion, while India's economic outlook for FY25 and FY26 remains positive, there are risks that could temper growth. Policymakers are likely to continue pushing for reforms and investments to address these challenges and boost the country's long-term growth trajectory.

India's Global Manufacturing Share Rises, Still Far Behind China: Economic Survey 2024-25

India's share of global manufacturing stands at 2.8%, significantly lower than China's 28.8%, according to the Economic Survey 2024-25. Despite this disparity, the survey notes that India's manufacturing contribution to the global economy is gradually expanding, offering substantial potential for further growth. This presents a unique opportunity for India to enhance the role of the industrial sector in its overall economic development.

The survey highlights that while India's manufacturing sector is growing, it still lags far behind China, which dominates the global manufacturing landscape. This gap indicates room for India to ramp up its industrial output, potentially improving its share in global

manufacturing and boosting its GDP contribution in comparison to other countries.

India's manufacturing growth has been supported by initiatives like "Make in India," aimed at fostering domestic manufacturing and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). However, despite these efforts, India faces challenges such as infrastructure deficits, bureaucratic hurdles, and high labor costs that hinder its competitiveness on the global stage.

The Economic Survey emphasizes the importance of addressing these issues to realize the full potential of India's manufacturing sector. Enhancing the ease of doing business, improving infrastructure, and focus-



ing on skill development could drive further industrial expansion and increase India's global market share.

The survey also points out that India has made strides in sectors like electronics, textiles, and automotive manufacturing. Nevertheless, it is still far from achieving a manufacturing ecosystem comparable to China's, which benefits from economies of scale, established supply chains, and advanced technological

capabilities.

In conclusion, while India's manufacturing sector shows promise and is poised for growth, it needs sustained policy support, infrastructure improvement, and strategic investments to significantly increase its global share. This would not only boost India's economic stature but also provide the necessary push for more robust industrial growth in the coming years.

Key Highlights from India's Economic Survey 2024-25: Growth Prospects and Emerging Trends

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Economic Survey 2024-25 in Parliament on January 31, 2025, offering an in-depth analysis of India's economic performance and projections for the coming fiscal year. The survey outlines several macroeconomic trends, providing valuable insights into key sectors and offering a glimpse of the government's economic agenda ahead of the Union Budget 2025.



ecosystem. India accounts for 28% of the world's STEM workforce, further bolstering its reputation as a talent powerhouse.

Self-Employment on the Rise: A Shift Toward Entrepreneurship

A significant trend highlighted in the survey is the rise of self-employment in India's workforce. The proportion of self-employed individuals increased from 52.2% in 2017-18 to 58.4% in 2023-24, reflecting growing entrepreneurial activity and a preference for flexible work arrangements. This shift is especially noticeable among rural women, where the percentage of 'own account workers/employers' has risen sharply, indicating a shift towards independence and entrepreneurship.

Climate Action Challenges: Funding Shortfalls and Revised Targets

The survey also underscores concerns about climate action, particularly the lack of adequate funding from developed countries. With the new financial package from COP29 failing to inspire optimism, India may need to rework its climate targets. The report stresses

the importance of domestic resources in addressing climate change, which could impact the country's sustainable development goals.

Economic Outlook for Investors

For investors, the Economic Survey offers valuable guidance. The forecast for steady GDP growth, coupled with a focus on manufacturing, infrastructure, and digital transformation (particularly AI and SME growth), presents long-term opportunities. The survey's emphasis on these sectors will help wealth managers develop long-duration investment strategies targeting emerging trends in innovation and infrastructure, while maintaining a balanced view of risks and rewards. In conclusion, the Economic Survey provides a comprehensive look at India's evolving economic landscape, highlighting growth opportunities and potential challenges. As the country prepares for the Union Budget 2025, the insights provided by the survey are critical for understanding the government's fiscal approach in the year ahead.

FM Sitharaman Set to Present Record-Eighth Consecutive Budget Amid Slowing Economy



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to make history by presenting her eighth consecutive Union Budget for the fiscal year 2025-26 on Saturday. This landmark moment comes at a crucial time as India faces an economic slowdown, making the upcoming budget a significant focus for both the government and the public.

Expected to introduce measures aimed at boosting consumption and promoting growth, the budget is likely to include relief in the form of income tax relaxation for the middle class. These provisions could help revitalize spending and provide much-needed support to households grappling with inflation and economic uncertainty. With the Indian economy showing signs of slowing down, the government is keen to implement strategies that stimulate demand and foster growth across sectors. Analysts predict that the

budget will prioritize sectors such as manufacturing, infrastructure, and technology, with a special focus on creating jobs and addressing fiscal challenges.

For those interested in following the presentation of the budget live, there will be options for streaming, allowing citizens to tune in and understand how the government's plans will shape the nation's economic landscape for the coming year.

As Finance Minister Sitharaman prepares to present the budget, her speech will be closely watched for any significant changes in fiscal policy, tax reforms, and measures aimed at alleviating the economic stress experienced by the middle class. The government's strategy to address these challenges will play a vital role in determining the economic trajectory for India in 2025 and beyond.

Apple Shares Surge After Positive Sales Outlook for Next Quarter

Apple's stock saw a notable increase in after-market trading on Thursday following the company's optimistic forecast for the upcoming quarter. Executives at the tech giant projected higher sales than analysts had anticipated, hinting at a potential recovery in iPhone sales, fueled by the introduction of new artificial intelligence features.

During their earnings call, Apple executives revealed they expect sales for the next quarter to grow in the low- to mid-single digits. When adjusted for the anticipated 2.5 percentage point impact of foreign exchange fluctuations, this forecast suggests a growth rate that exceeds Wall Street's projections. Analysts had predicted a 5% rise, estimating a total of \$95.3 billion in sales for the quarter ending in March. The company's forecast appears poised to surpass these expectations, providing a positive outlook for the tech sector as a whole.

Apple's ability to incorporate artificial intelligence features into its devices has garnered attention as a key factor in boosting demand, particularly for the iPhone. As the company continues to expand its AI-driven capabilities, investors are hopeful that these innovations will stimulate sales growth despite broader economic challenges. This positive sentiment is reflected in the market response, as Apple's



shares rose in after-hours trading, signaling confidence in the company's future prospects.

The forecasted growth, coupled with the potential for a rebound in iPhone sales, points to a more resilient Apple heading into the spring. With AI at the forefront of its strategy, Apple is positioning itself to capture consumer interest and maintain its leadership in the tech industry. Analysts and investors will be closely monitoring the company's performance in the coming months to gauge the success of its AI initiatives and the impact on its sales trajectory.

Need A \$1 Massage In China? Better Own An iPhone, Porsche Or Luxury Bags

A massage parlour in Shenzhen, China, has caused a stir with a unique promotional offer: an 80-minute full-body detox treatment for just 9 yuan, or \$1. While the deal seems too good to pass up, there's a catch—only women who meet specific, high-end criteria are eligible for the offer.

According to a report by the South China Morning Post, the parlour's promotion is limited to women who meet at least one of 27 conditions, including owning luxury property, driving high-end cars like Audi or Porsche, or working for major tech companies such as Tencent or Huawei. Other criteria include carrying designer luggage, having residency in Hong Kong or Macau, or having traveled to Europe or the United States. The parlour also targets social media influencers with over 500,000 followers, as well as professionals like doctors and bankers.

In a message shared by the parlour, it stated, "If you do not meet the conditions, keep working hard in 2025!" The business defended its controversial offer, claiming it was meant to inspire self-improvement and not merely provide personal gratification.



Despite the exclusivity, the parlour has already received over 100 orders through its app, although one anonymous customer reported that the detox service itself felt no different from a typical massage. This has led to mixed reactions from the public, with some questioning the discriminatory nature of the promotion.

The parlour's selective approach has sparked concerns that it may be violating China's Consumer Rights Protection Law, which ensures fair trade practices for all

consumers. Critics have also pointed out that those meeting the lavish criteria are unlikely to be motivated by the low price, raising doubts about the sincerity of the offer.

This isn't the first instance of exclusivity in China drawing criticism. In August 2024, a swimming club in Jiangsu province only allowed women under 45 with high IQs and specific personal qualities to join, further fueling debates about discrimination and the societal implications of such policies.



The Hidden Dangers of Microplastics: How They Impact Our Health

Microplastics are tiny plastic particles less than 5 millimeters in size, created by the breakdown of larger plastic items, synthetic fibers, and industrial processes. These particles are now pervasive in our environment, contaminating water, food, and even the air we breathe. Due to their small size, microplastics can easily enter the human body through ingestion, inhalation, or skin contact. Recent research indicates that microplastics may carry toxic chemicals, heavy metals, and harmful pathogens, posing significant health risks. Here's a look at how microplastics can affect the human body.

1. Digestive System Damage

Microplastics consumed through food and water can accumulate in the digestive system, causing inflammation, disrupting the gut microbiome, and impairing nutrient absorption. Over time, this can lead to digestive issues and metabolic problems.

2. Toxic Chemical Exposure

Microplastics often contain harmful additives such as bisphenol A (BPA), phthalates, and flame retardants, which are known endocrine disruptors. These chemicals can interfere with hormone regulation, potentially leading to reproductive issues, developmental disorders, and metabolic imbalances.

3. Cellular Damage and DNA Alteration

Studies show that microplastics can penetrate cells and induce oxidative stress, damaging cell membranes and DNA. This damage increases the risk of chronic diseases like cancer, neurodegenerative disorders, and accelerated aging.

4. Respiratory Issues

Inhaled microplastics can cause respiratory irritation and inflammation. Prolonged exposure may lead to asthma, lung fibrosis, and even a higher risk of lung cancer due to plastic particles accumulating in lung tissue.

5. Brain and Nervous System Effects

Some studies suggest that microplastics may cross the blood-brain barrier, leading to cognitive decline, memory loss, and an increased risk of neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

6. Immune System Disruption

Microplastic exposure can lead to chronic inflammation and weaken the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to infections, autoimmune diseases, and allergic reactions.

7. Reproductive Health Problems

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals in microplastics may affect reproductive hormones, causing fertility issues, menstrual irregularities, and developmental problems in unborn children.

8. Cardiovascular Risks

Microplastics in the bloodstream could increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases, promoting inflammation and oxidative stress in blood vessels, potentially leading to hypertension and heart disease.

Given the potential risks, minimizing plastic use, filtering water, and choosing natural materials over synthetics are steps we can take to reduce exposure and protect our health.

FDA Classifies Lay's Classic Potato Chips Recall as Highest Risk Level

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has classified the recall of Lay's Classic Potato Chips as a Class 1 recall, the highest level of health hazard. This decision follows concerns about "undeclared milk" in certain bags of chips, which can pose serious health risks to individuals with milk allergies or severe milk sensitivities. Frito-Lay, the manufacturer, announced the voluntary recall in December, affecting approximately 6,000 bags of 13 oz. Lay's Classic Potato Chips.

The affected chips, labeled with a "guaranteed fresh" date of February 11, 2025, were sold in select retail stores and e-commerce platforms in Oregon and Washington. Consumers may have purchased these products as early as November 3, 2024. Frito-Lay stated that the recall was initiated after a consumer contact-



removed from store shelves and the marketplace.

The FDA's decision to categorize the recall as a Class 1 reflects the significant health risk associated with the product. A Class 1 recall is issued when there is a reasonable probability that exposure to the violative product could cause serious adverse health consequences or even death. In this case, the undeclared milk poses a critical danger to consumers with milk allergies.

ed the company to report the issue. The company stressed that the presence of undeclared milk could lead to severe or life-threatening allergic reactions for those sensitive to milk.

Frito-Lay also clarified that no other flavors, sizes, or products in the Lay's line are part of this recall, and as of now, no allergic reactions have been reported. The company assured that the recalled bags have already been

Frito-Lay emphasized that the recall, which was fully coordinated with the FDA, was limited to just two states, Oregon and Washington. The company continues to work with the FDA to ensure consumer safety and proper disposal of the affected product.



Mount Taranaki Maunga In New Zealand Is Now A Living Entity

In a groundbreaking move, the New Zealand government has granted Mount Taranaki, now officially known as Taranaki Maunga, the legal rights of a human being. This historic decision aligns with a growing global movement that seeks to honor the cultural and spiritual significance of natural landmarks, particularly within indigenous communities. Under this new legal status, Taranaki Maunga is considered a living entity, a concept rooted deeply in Māori beliefs, where all elements of nature—humans, animals, plants, and even mountains—are interconnected.

Taranaki Maunga joins a select group of natural features in New Zealand to be granted individual status, including the Whanganui River and Te

Urewera National Park. This recognition elevates Taranaki Maunga from a geological feature to a cultural entity that deserves both respect and legal protection. The decision is part of an ongoing effort to acknowledge and respect indigenous traditions, while also fostering environmental conservation.

Māori people view Taranaki Maunga as an ancestral and spiritual entity. The granting of legal personhood allows the mountain to be defended and nurtured, with Māori iwi (tribes) and the New Zealand government working together to ensure its well-being. This agreement also includes reparations for the Māori communities in the Taranaki region, acknowledging the historical injustices they faced during colonization,

including the extensive confiscation of their ancestral lands.

Minister Paul Goldsmith emphasized the importance of recognizing past wrongs to foster a brighter future for the iwi and their aspirations. In a related move, the government also renamed the mountain from its colonial name, Mt. Egerton, back to its Māori title, *Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki*, meaning "the highly regarded and treasured land of Taranaki." The new law now refers to the mountain as *Te Kahui Tupua*, recognizing it as an indivisible whole.

Taranaki, New Zealand's second-highest mountain, is a dormant stratovolcano and a popular tourist destination known for snow activities and hiking.

Sachin Tendulkar to Receive BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award



Mumbai, Jan 30: Indian cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar will be honored with the BCCI's Lifetime Achievement Award at the Board's annual gala on Saturday. The award, instituted in 1994 in honor of India's first Test captain, Col. C.K. Nayudu, recognizes outstanding contributions to Indian cricket. Tendulkar will be the 31st recipient of this prestigious honor. A record-holder across formats, Tendulkar played 664 international matches, including 200 Tests and 463 ODIs, the highest by any player in cricket history. He remains the leading run-scorer in both formats, amassing 15,921 Test runs and 18,426 ODI runs. His one and only T20I appearance remains a unique trivia in his illustrious career. Tendulkar was a key part of India's historic 2011 World Cup-winning team, featuring in six World Cups. His career spanned

over two decades, debuting as a 16-year-old in 1989 against Pakistan and retiring in 2013 after an emotional farewell at the Wankhede Stadium. His batting genius inspired generations—from his maiden Test hundred at Perth (1992) to the 'Desert Storm' century in Sharjah (1998) and his near-match-winning effort against Pakistan in Chennai (1999). His tears of joy after India's 2011 World Cup victory were shared by a billion fans. Considered the greatest batter of his era, Tendulkar's impact transcended cricket, making him a symbol of Indian excellence. While Indian cricket has seen many stars, none have commanded the same unadulterated love and respect as the 'Master Blaster'. As he receives this prestigious honor, it is Indian cricket that remains indebted to him for his 24 years of unparalleled service.

India Clinch T20I Series with 15-Run Victory Over England



India defeated England by 15 runs in the fourth T20I on Friday, sealing the five-match series with an unassailable 3-1 lead. The match saw a stunning comeback from the hosts, led by Hardik Pandya (53) and Shivam Dube (53), who powered India to a competitive total of 181/9 after an early collapse. Invited to bat first, India struggled at 12/3, but an 87-run partnership between Pandya (53 off 30 balls) and Dube (53 off 34 balls) rescued the innings. Saqib Mahmood (3/35) was England's standout bowler, while India's lower order contributed crucial runs to push the score past 180. **Bowlers Seal Victory for India** Defending 181, India's spin attack took charge as Ravi Bishnoi (3/28) and Varun Chakravarthy (2/28) troubled England's middle order. Concussion substitute Harshit Rana (3/33) also made an impact,

restricting the visitors to 166 all out in 19.4 overs. Despite Harry Brook's fighting 51 and Ben Duckett's 39, England fell short as wickets tumbled under pressure. **Series Decider Not Needed** With India now leading 3-1, the fifth T20I will be a mere formality. This win solidifies India's dominance, with key performances from both the batting and bowling units. **Brief Scores:**

- India:** 181/9 in 20 overs (Hardik Pandya 53, Shivam Dube 53; Saqib Mahmood 3/35)
- England:** 166 all out in 19.4 overs (Harry Brook 51, Ben Duckett 39; Ravi Bishnoi 3/28, Harshit Rana 3/33)

With this series victory, India continues its strong form in the shortest format, building momentum ahead of future tournaments.

ICC Unveils Champions Trophy 2025 Campaign Featuring MS Dhoni

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has launched the official campaign for the Men's Champions Trophy 2025, emphasizing the 'all or nothing' format, where every match is a must-win encounter. With the world's top-eight teams competing, the stakes are at their highest, making every game crucial for qualification. The campaign film, produced by Star Sports Network, features MS Dhoni, India's 2013 Champions Trophy-winning captain, in an uncharacteristically intense avatar. The promo showcases Dhoni sitting in a bathtub filled with ice, sweating under immense pressure, symbolizing the tournament's high stakes. Dhoni, known for his cool demeanor, delivers the impactful line: "Ek bhi match mein phisle, samjho tournament se nikle." (Slip in even one match, and

you're out of the tournament.) Speaking about the tournament, Dhoni expressed his excitement: "The Champions Trophy has always been special to me. It's where the best go head-to-head in high-pressure games. While players handle pressure on the field, fans experience an entirely different level of excitement." India's fixtures in Champions Trophy 2025 Team India, led by Rohit Sharma, will begin their campaign against Bangladesh in Dubai on February 20. The group stage includes a blockbuster clash against Pakistan on February 23 and a match against New Zealand on March 2. The Champions Trophy 2025 kicks off on February 19, with the final scheduled for March 9. Fans are set for an electrifying tournament where every match is a do-or-die battle.



Manchester City to Face Real Madrid in Champions League Play-Off Round



Defending champions Real Madrid will take on 2023 winners Manchester City in the highlight fixture of the Champions League play-off round, following the draw held on Friday. This marks the fourth consecutive season that the two European powerhouses have clashed in the knockout rounds. Last season, Real Madrid emerged victorious in a penalty shootout in the quarter-finals, while City had beaten them in the 2023 semi-finals en route to their first Champions League title. Real had also won a thrilling semi-final tie in 2022, making this fixture a true European rivalry. Pep Guardiola's side will host the first leg at the Etihad Stadium before traveling to Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu for the decisive second leg. "It feels like a derby already," Guardiola remarked. "Four years in a row facing Real Madrid. Hopefully, we arrive at our best for both legs." Real Madrid legend Emilio Butragueño acknowledged the challenge but emphasized the club's historic success in the competition: "They are a great team, experienced in these games. But the Champions

League is special for us, and we will have the second leg at home."

Other Play-Off Fixtures

- Bayern Munich vs Celtic – The Scottish champions return to the knockouts after 12 years.
- PSG vs Brest – An all-French battle.
- Juventus vs PSV Eindhoven – A clash between two former European champions.
- Feyenoord vs AC Milan – A meeting of two past winners.
- Atalanta vs Club Brugge – Last season's Europa League winners face Belgian opposition.
- Sporting CP vs Borussia Dortmund – A tricky contest for the German runners-up.
- Monaco vs Benfica – A rematch from the league phase.

Teams Already in the Last 16 Liverpool, Barcelona, Arsenal, Inter Milan, Atletico Madrid, Bayer Leverkusen, Lille, and Aston Villa have automatically qualified for the next round after finishing in the top eight of the league phase. The Champions League final will take place at Allianz Arena, Munich, on May 31.

Annabel Sutherland Makes History with Century as Australia Dominate England in Ashes Test



Annabel Sutherland created history on Day 2 of the Women's Ashes Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), becoming the first woman to score a Test century at the iconic venue. The young all-rounder smashed 163 off 258 balls, leading Australia to a commanding 422-5 at stumps, securing a 252-run lead over England. Starting the day on 24 not out, Sutherland played with elegance and resilience, hitting 14 boundaries. She reached her century with a well-placed cut shot, describing the moment as a dream come true. "It's a pretty special place, especially as a Victorian. Growing up, there was no better place to be than the 'G,'" Sutherland told Fox Cricket. She shared a 154-run partnership with Beth Mooney, who remained unbeaten on 98 and became Australia's fourth-highest female international run-scorer. England's fielding struggles were evident, as they dropped nine catches and missed a crucial stumping, allowing Sutherland and Mooney to capitalize. Former England captain Alex Hartley criticized their lackluster performance, calling it their worst fielding display of the Ashes series. Australian skipper Alyssa Healy (34) fell LBW in a controversial decision, while Ellyse Perry's availability remains uncertain due to a hip injury. With Australia firmly in control, the focus shifts to when Healy will declare and put England under pressure with the ball as they push for an early breakthrough.

Pakistan Announces Champions Trophy Squad: Mohammad Rizwan to Lead, Four Players Make Comeback

Pakistan selectors have announced a 15-member squad for the upcoming Champions Trophy, with Mohammad Rizwan named as captain. The squad includes four changes from the team that last played an ODI series in South Africa, with Fakhar Zaman, Khushdil Shah, Faheem Ashraf, and Saud Shakeel making their comeback. A major surprise in the selection is the inclusion of just one specialist spinner, Abrar Ahmed, who has played four ODIs and taken 10 wickets. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) stated that the squad can be modified until February 11, as per ICC regulations. **Key Squad Changes:**

- In:** Fakhar Zaman, Khushdil Shah, Faheem Ashraf, Saud Shakeel
- Out:** Saim Ayub (injury), Abdullah Shafique, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Sufyan Moqim

Selector Asad Shafiq emphasized that domestic performances played a key role in selection. "We have picked players who have consistently performed in



domestic competitions under similar conditions," he said. Pakistan's squad features four fast bowlers – Shaheen Afridi, Haris Rauf, Naseem Shah, and Mohammad Hasnain. The

selectors are considering either Babar Azam or Saud Shakeel to open alongside Fakhar Zaman. Before the Champions Trophy, Pakistan will play a Tri-series against South Africa and New Zealand from February 8-14 in Karachi and Lahore. **Pakistan Squad for Champions Trophy 2025:**

- Captain:** Mohammad Rizwan
- Vice-Captain:** Salman Ali Agha
- Batters:** Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Saud Shakeel, Kamran Ghulam, Tayyab Tahir, Usman Khan
- All-rounders:** Khushdil Shah, Faheem Ashraf
- Bowlers:** Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Hasnain, Abrar Ahmed

The Champions Trophy begins on February 19 at the National Stadium, Karachi, with Pakistan aiming for a strong performance.



Anshu Returns to Tollywood with 'Mazaka,' Teases Fans with Stunning Bridal Look

Actress Anshu, who regained widespread fame for her role in Manmadhudu alongside Akkineni Nagarjuna, is making her comeback to Telugu cinema after a long hiatus. She will play a significant role in the upcoming film Mazaka, directed by Trinadharao Nakkina of Dhamaka fame.

In Mazaka, Anshu is set to share the screen with Tollywood actor Sundeep Kishan and actress Ritu Varma. Rao Ramesh will also appear in a key role. The filmmakers recently released a special look of Anshu in a bridal outfit to celebrate her birthday, which has quickly gone viral on social media. In the image, Anshu sports a glamorous bridal attire, paired with stylish sunglasses, adding to the excitement surrounding the film.

Mazaka is a mass entertainer, scheduled for release on February 21. The film is being produced by AK Entertainments, Hasya Movies, and Zee Studios. The title and the first look of the movie have already garnered attention, with Sundeep Kishan presenting a fresh look that has increased anticipation among fans.

The film's recently released song, "Bachelor's Anthem," has also been receiving positive feedback, giving audiences a glimpse of the fun-filled vibe of the



movie. The teaser features light-hearted banter between the hero and heroine at a station, where Sundeep Kishan humorously asks whether beer or whiskey is better. Ritu Varma responds with playful dialogue, teasing the audience further and promising a film full of entertaining moments.

With Anshu's return to the spotlight, the buzz surrounding Mazaka continues to grow, as fans eagerly await its release next month. The film's intriguing mix of humor, romance, and drama is expected to be a hit, drawing attention from both old and new fans of the actors involved.

Rukmini Vasanth Turns Heads in Dazzling Blue Elegance!

Rukmini Vasanth, who captivated audiences with her stellar performance in Sapta Sagaradaache Ello, is making a strong mark in Tollywood. After her recent appearance in Appudo Ippudo Eppudo, the actress has once again set social media abuzz with her latest fashion statement. Dressed in a stunning blue one-shoulder gown with bold cutouts and a thigh-high slit, Rukmini radiated confidence and charm. Her effortless grace and impeccable style made for a breathtaking visual, leaving fans mesmerized. On the professional front, Rukmini is gearing up for her next major venture, NTR 31, where she will star alongside Jr. NTR. With her undeniable talent and rising stardom, audiences are eagerly awaiting her next big-screen performance.



Squid Game 3: Netflix Announces Release Date for Final Season

Netflix has officially announced that Squid Game Season 3 will be available for streaming on June 27, 2025. Fans of the popular South Korean series have eagerly awaited the conclusion of the story, and with this announcement, anticipation is building for the highly anticipated final season.

The new season will once again feature Lee Jung Jae, Lee Byung Hun, and Wi Ha Joon in key roles. The announcement poster teases a chilling tone, featuring a masked guard in the signature pink outfit, dragging a body, and a black coffin box tied with a pink ribbon—suggesting the high stakes and dark twists that lie ahead.

Season 3 will continue the journey of Lee Jung Jae's character, the protagonist who seeks to put an end to the brutal and dystopian games that have captivated au-



diences worldwide. The second season, which premiered on December 26, 2024, left viewers on a major cliffhanger, and

the third season promises to address these unresolved questions and bring the story to its conclusion.

Interestingly, both the second and third seasons of Squid Game were filmed simultaneously, so fans will not have to wait long to see how the series wraps up. The first season of the show became a global phenomenon, dominating Netflix during the lockdown with unanimous praise. While the second season received more mixed reviews, the pressure is now on the third season to deliver a satisfying conclusion to the intense and thrilling story.

As the final season approaches, all eyes are on how Squid Game will end, and whether the show can recapture the magic that made it one of Netflix's biggest hits.

Kannada Producer Accuses Nani's Hi Nanna of Copyright Infringement



Nani's Hi Nanna, which has been a major success both at the box office and in terms of accolades since its release on December 7, 2023, is now facing a copyright controversy. The movie, directed by Shauryuv, has earned widespread appreciation and awards. However, the film is now at the center of a legal dispute after Kannada producer Pushkara Mallikarjunaiah, known for producing hits like Avane Srimanarayana and Kirik Party, leveled serious allegations against it.

Pushkara Mallikarjunaiah has claimed that Hi Nanna is a direct copy of his 2020 Kannada film Bheemasena Nala Maharaja. According to Mallikarjunaiah, the makers of Hi Nanna did not obtain official permission or remake rights to adapt his film into Telugu. He has accused them of remaking his work without any legal clearance, which has led to the allegations of copyright infringement.

In Bheemasena Nala Maharaja, the protagonist invites the her-

oine to a resort to narrate his love story, and a child also plays an important role in the plot. Mallikarjunaiah pointed out the striking similarities between the two films, with the core storyline seeming almost identical. While the setup and presentation in Hi Nanna may differ, the general premise appears to resemble that of Bheemasena Nala Maharaja.

The accusation has sparked significant debate among movie enthusiasts and netizens. While some are questioning the originality of Hi Nanna, others are keen to see how Nani and the film's director, Shauryuv, will respond to these allegations. The controversy has brought attention to the broader issue of copyright infringement in the Indian film industry, where remakes and adaptations often become contentious.

As the legal proceedings unfold, fans of both films are closely watching the situation to see how this issue is resolved.

Parasakthi Title Controversy Resolved: Siva Karthikeyan's Film Secures the Name

The title controversy surrounding the iconic name "Parasakthi" has finally been resolved, bringing clarity to the Tamil film industry. The issue began when two major actors, Siva Karthikeyan and Vijay Antony, both announced their upcoming films with the same title, leading to widespread speculation and confusion among fans.



Siva Karthikeyan's film, directed by Sudha Kongara (known for her hit film Aakasam Nee Haddhura), had initially been planned with Suriya as the lead. However, due to certain reasons, the project was later revamped with Siva Karthikeyan in the lead role. The film, which also stars Atharva, Jayam Ravi, and Srileela, released a title teaser showcasing the name "Parasakthi." This sparked a controversy as the title

of the movie was shared with the 1952 blockbuster starring Sivaji Ganesan, a highly revered classic in Tamil cinema.

Coincidentally, actor Vijay Antony, known for his breakout role in Bichagadu, also announced a film titled "Parasakthi" for his upcoming project. Vijay Antony's team had reportedly registered the title in Telugu back in July of the previous year, causing fur-

ther confusion when the two films were set to be announced on the same day.

To resolve the issue, Vijay Antony clarified that he would drop the "Parasakthi" title for his film, allowing Siva Karthikeyan's movie to retain it. In a statement, Vijay Antony explained that he had registered the title in Telugu but had no problem relinquishing it for Karthikeyan's project, which had gained more traction. As a result, Vijay Antony's film will be renamed in Telugu, while the iconic title will officially remain with Siva Karthikeyan's film.

This resolution brings an end to the controversy, and fans can now look forward to the film Parasakthi starring Siva Karthikeyan, directed by Sudha Kongara.