



USAID Funded 7 Projects Worth \$750 Mn In India During FY24: Finance Ministry

Key Highlights

- \$97 million obligated for agriculture, health, renewable energy, and disaster management.
- No funding allocated for voter turnout initiatives, clarifies Ministry.
- Political row erupts over claims of \$21M grant for voter turnout in India.
- Jaishankar says govt is investigating the matter following Trump's claims.



New Delhi: The latest annual report from the Finance Ministry has revealed that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded seven projects in India, with a total budget of approximately \$750 million during the financial year 2023-24. The report states that, for the same financial year, USAID obligated \$97 million (about Rs 825 crore) toward these projects, covering key sectors such as agriculture and food security, water, sanitation and

hygiene (WASH), renewable energy, disaster management, and health. Additionally, funds were committed for the Sustainable Forests and Climate Adaptation Program and the Energy Efficiency Technology Commercialization and Innovation Project. The Department of Economic Affairs under the Finance Ministry, which oversees bilateral funding arrangements, detailed these allocations in its annual report. However, it clarified that no funds were allocated toward enhancing voter turnout, countering recent political controversy surrounding alleged external

influence in India's electoral process. The US has provided bilateral development assistance to India since 1951, primarily through USAID. Over the decades, USAID has contributed over \$17 billion in economic assistance, supporting more than 555 projects in various sectors. **Political Controversy Over \$21 Million Grant** Earlier this month, a political storm erupted after the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) claimed that the US had canceled a \$21 million USAID grant intended to boost voter turnout in India. For-

mer US President Donald Trump repeatedly alleged that the previous administration under Joe Biden had allocated these funds to influence India's elections. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar responded to the controversy, stating that the government is looking into the claims made by the Trump administration. "The information put out is concerning. USAID was allowed in India in good faith to carry out good faith activities. However, suggestions are now emerging that there were activities conducted in bad faith," Jaishankar said. The Congress party also weighed in on the issue, accusing the ruling BJP of spreading misinformation. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh dismissed the claims, stating, "The news about the \$21 million, which BJP and their supporters were celebrating, has turned out to be false. The \$21 million allocated in 2022 was meant for Bangladesh, not India." As the controversy continues to unfold, the Indian government is expected to closely examine all funding-related claims and their implications for India's domestic affairs.



Siddaramaiah Govt, Governor Clash Over Chancellor Role

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
The ongoing friction between the Karnataka government and Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot has intensified after the Governor returned the Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University (Amendment) Bill, 2024, suggesting its withdrawal. The bill seeks to replace the Governor with the Chief Minister as the chancellor of the university, a move that has sparked fresh tensions between the state government and Raj Bhavan. According to sources, the state government is determined to introduce similar amendments to state-run universities, aiming to strip the Governor of his role as chancellor. The bill was passed during the winter session in Belagavi in December 2024. In a note sent to the government along with the bill, the Governor warned that such an attempt to curtail his powers would lead to unnecessary conflict. "In the guise of bringing in changes, the attempt to take away the powers, responsibilities, and functions of the Governor will create friction. I advise the government to refrain from such ventures and instead take proactive and cordial steps to foster goodwill and cooperation," he stated, urging the government to withdraw the bill. The Governor further criticized the justification provided by the government for the amendment, calling it "misleading" and an attempt to "usurp power." Citing Article 254 and Supreme Court judgments, he argued that the proposal was unconstitutional, as UGC regulations take precedence over state legislation concerning university governance. Additionally, he pointed out delays in the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor, which he claimed had been deliberately stalled by the government. Expressing concerns over the condition of specialised universities in the state, he remarked, "These universities have been treated like orphans, with little attention given to their development. The RDPR University, for instance, has not had a single permanent faculty member since its inception." The standoff between the Governor and the Siddaramaiah-led government over control of universities is expected to escalate, with the government firm on its stance and the Governor standing his ground on constitutional provisions.



Mentality of Slavery.. PM Modi Slams Critics of Maha Kumbh

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Prime Minister Narendra Modi strongly criticized those opposing the Maha Kumbh, accusing them of harboring a "mentality of slavery" and aligning with foreign forces to weaken the country. Addressing a gathering in Chhattarpur, Madhya Pradesh, he said, "There is a group of leaders who mock religion, ridicule

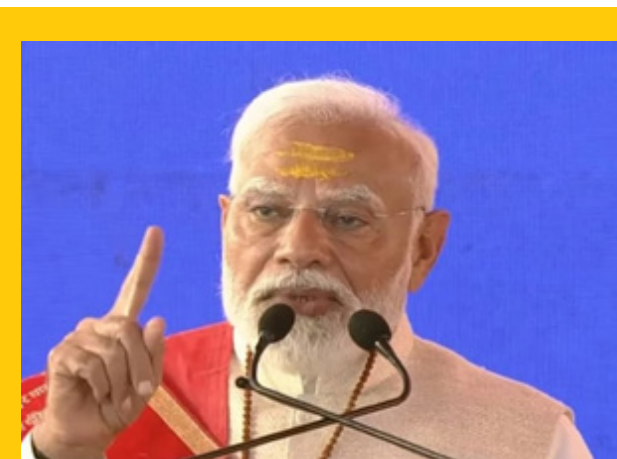
it, and divide people, often with support from foreign powers." PM Modi asserted that those who hate the Hindu faith have existed for centuries and continue to attack its temples, beliefs, and traditions. "They abuse our festivals, traditions, and customs, attempting to divide society and break its unity," he said. The Prime Minister's remarks come amid growing opposition criticism fol-

lowing recent controversies, including a stampede that claimed 18 lives and reports of fecal contamination in the Sangam waters. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had referred to the event as "Mrityu Kumbh", citing the deaths. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also questioned the scale and expenditure of the Maha Kumbh, fueling further political debate.



Yatnal Camp Still Pushes for Leadership Change in Karnataka BJP

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Despite the BJP central disciplinary committee issuing a show cause notice to senior leader Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, his faction remains firm in its demand to replace BY Vijayendra as the party's Karnataka president. According to sources, Vijayendra is expected to retain his position, with an official announcement likely soon. However, former minister Kumar Bangarappa, a key member of the Yatnal camp, reiterated their determination to challenge his leadership. "We have not backed down from our decision to field a candidate from our faction for the post of BJP state president. If elections are held, we will contest," Bangarappa stated on Saturday. He emphasized that they had already conveyed their concerns to the party high command. "Certainly, there will be a change in the BJP state president. We are confident that the election in charge, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, will oversee the process," he added. Supporting Yatnal's position, Bangarappa asserted that the notice issued to him has not deterred their faction. "Yatnal has responded to the notice, and we stand by him. Our stance will remain unchanged until the elections. The RSS and the high command will take the right decision. If the high command considers me, I am ready to take up the role of state president," he remarked. He further criticized the current state of the BJP's organizational structure in Karnataka, claiming it has weakened and needs urgent reforms.



Committed To Reduce Medical Expenses for All Citizens

2 PAGE

How Attack On Bus Conductor Rekindled Maharashtra-Karnataka Border Tensions



5 PAGE

SC: Preliminary Probe Not Mandatory for Corruption Cases

1. Preliminary inquiry not mandatory under PC Act said Top Court
2. Karnataka HC order quashing FIR overturned.
3. Unnecessary hurdles can weaken corruption probes.



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court has ruled that a preliminary inquiry is not mandatory before registering a case under the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act. It stated that while desirable in some cases, it is not a vested right of the accused. A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Sandeep Mehta delivered the verdict while hearing an appeal by the Karnataka government against a state high court judgment that had quashed an FIR against a public servant accused of possessing disproportionate assets. The court clarified that the purpose of a preliminary inquiry is not to verify the truthfulness of a complaint but to determine if it prima facie reveals a cognisable offence. It stated

that if a source information report is detailed and well-reasoned, a preliminary inquiry may be avoided. The bench ruled that a preliminary inquiry is not a "sine qua non" (essential condition) for registering a corruption case. Referring to previous judgments, it emphasized that laws should aid investigations rather than obstruct them. The Supreme Court criticized the high court's approach, stating it wrongly imposed administrative barriers that could hinder corruption investigations. "By mandating elaborate pre-investigation procedures, the high court's approach could weaken law enforcement," it observed. The judgment

highlighted that the superintendent of police has the authority to direct subordinates to register an FIR upon receiving a factual report indicating a cognisable offence. The court also clarified that a fair probe must follow legal procedures and should not cater solely to the accused. Emphasizing the intent of the PC Act, the court stated that it aims to establish a strong anti-corruption framework and prevent procedural delays that shield corrupt officials. With this ruling, the Supreme Court set aside the Karnataka High Court's order and reinstated the FIR against the accused public servant.

Committed To Reduce Medical Expenses for All Citizens

TPN Correspondent | Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday reiterated his government's commitment to making healthcare more affordable, highlighting the exorbitant treatment costs before 2014 and the steps taken to ease the financial burden on citizens.



Speaking after laying the foundation stone for the Bageshwar Dham Medical and Science Research Institute in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district, PM Modi emphasized the importance of the Ayushman Bharat scheme in providing financial relief to millions. "Our government is committed to reducing treatment costs for all citizens, which were exorbitant before 2014. We pledge to lower medical expenses significantly and will ensure Ayushman cards for all eligible individuals, covering up to ₹5 lakh in treatment expenses," he said. The Prime Minister also highlighted the role of religious organizations in healthcare services, citing Chitrakoot as an example. He added that visitors to Bageshwar Dham would now receive both spiritual and health-related blessings.

Addressing Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries, PM Modi announced that cardholders aged 70 and above are entitled to free treatment up to ₹5 lakh. He urged citizens to obtain their Ayushman cards and encouraged them to report any corruption related to its issuance directly to him. As part of his commitment to enhancing healthcare, PM Modi laid the foundation stone for a ₹200-crore cancer hospital at Bageshwar Dham. The facility will offer free treatment for underprivileged cancer patients and will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology and specialist doctors. During his two-day visit to

Madhya Pradesh, PM Modi is scheduled to reach Bhopal, where he will chair a meeting with BJP leaders at Kushabhau Thakare Auditorium. The meeting will be attended by all BJP MPs, MLAs, and party functionaries, with Chief Minister Mohan Yadav stating that PM Modi will provide valuable guidance for the state's development. Notably, PM Modi's visit marks a historic moment as he becomes the first Prime Minister to stay overnight at the Raj Bhavan in Bhopal. "Jawaharlal Nehru also visited Raj Bhavan during his Bhopal visit but stayed at a private place. This will be a significant moment for Madhya Pradesh," said Chief Minister Yadav.

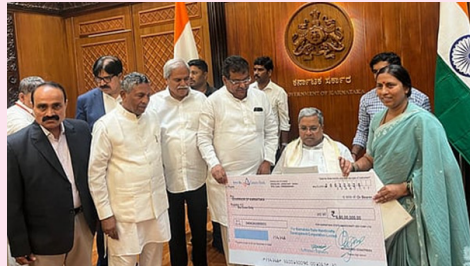
On Monday, PM Modi will inaugurate the Global Investors Summit (GIS) 2025 in Bhopal, aimed at positioning Madhya Pradesh as a key investment hub. The summit will feature departmental meetings, sessions on industries like pharma, transport, tourism, and MSMEs, and international conferences with representatives from over 60 countries. Three major industrial exhibitions will be held, including an auto show showcasing future mobility solutions, a textile and fashion expo highlighting Madhya Pradesh's expertise, and an ODO (One District-One Product) Village promoting local craftsmanship. Over 300 top industry leaders and policymakers will participate in the summit.

Karnataka handicrafts corporation pays ₹6 crore special dividend

TPN Correspondent | Kolar

Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited (KSHDCL) has paid a special dividend of ₹6 crore to the state government, along with ₹3.29 crore towards GST, marking a significant milestone in its history, said Roopa Kala Sashidhar, chairperson of KSHDCL.

Speaking to the media, Roopa Kala Sashidhar, the two-term Congress MLA from KGF, emphasized the corporation's commitment to protecting and promoting Karnataka's traditional arts and crafts. She stated that greater focus will be given to major crafts such as sandalwood carvings, rosewood inlay work, Channapatna lacquerware and toys, Mysore paintings, Bidri ware, Kinnhal toys, Navalgund durries, stone and wood carvings, traditional jewellery, banana fibre embroidery, terracotta, bronze icons, and pile carpets.



Roopa mentioned that the ₹6 crore dividend was presented in the presence of Minister K H Muniyappa and Minister M B Patil, and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah expressed his happiness over the corporation's contribution.

She highlighted that over 4,500 artisans are directly registered with the corporation, while more than 50,000 artisans are indirectly dependent on it for preserving and developing their craftsmanship. To support them, KSHDCL has set up 13 craft complexes across Karnata

in areas with a high concentration of artisans. These complexes also house common facility centres to benefit artisans.

To expand market reach, KSHDCL has established 12 retail sales outlets under the brand "Cauvery" in major cities such as Chennai, Secunderabad, New Delhi, Kolkata, and Kevadia in Gujarat.

Additionally, the corporation has set up a Gurukula in Sagara, Shivamogga district, where certificate courses in traditional crafts like wood and stone carving are conducted to sustain these heritage skills.

Roopa also noted that KSHDCL is a proud participant in the Karnataka government's 'Kalaloka' pavilion at Bengaluru International Airport. "This initiative serves as a global showcase of Karnataka's artistic heritage, offering travellers an immersive cultural experience," she said.

Forest fire ravages 35 acres at Chamundi Hills



TPN Correspondent | Mysuru

A massive forest fire broke out at Chamundi Hills on Friday, destroying nearly 35 acres of forest land before being brought under control by fire and forest department personnel. Officials suspect foul play, as preliminary investigations indicate the fire was deliberately set in two places.

Despite the intensity of the blaze, no wildlife casualties have been reported. Firefighters, along with forest officials, battled the raging flames for hours, finally extinguishing the fire around 11:30 pm. Strong winds, blowing at 45 km per hour, and soaring temperatures of 33 degrees Celsius made containment efforts challenging, with flames spreading rapidly across the valley.

To ensure complete control over the situation, authorities have deployed drones to conduct aerial surveillance and detect any remaining fire hotspots. Officials are also stepping up their vigil to prevent further incidents.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Mysuru Division Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) Basavaraju confirmed that an FIR has been registered at the local police station against unidentified miscreants suspected of starting the fire.

In response to the incident, the forest department has urged the district administration to revise the timing of temple gate closures at Chamundi Hills. Currently, all four gates leading to the temple are closed at 10 pm, but officials have now recommended closing them earlier, at 6 pm, as a precautionary measure.

Authorities are continuing their investigation to identify those responsible for the fire, while forest officials remain on high alert to prevent further damage.

Headmaster's ₹1,000 fixed deposit initiative revives struggling school in Belagavi

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

In an effort to tackle declining enrollment, Siddamalla Khot, the headmaster of a Kannada government school in Adahallatti village, Athani taluk, has launched a unique initiative—offering a ₹1,000 fixed deposit for every new student enrolled.

Khot personally funds this deposit, which will mature after 18 years, serving as an incentive for parents to choose government schooling over private institutions. His initiative aims to counter the closure threat faced by many rural government schools due to low student numbers.

Established in 2005 near the Karnataka-Maharashtra border, the school once accommodated 60 to 70 students but saw enrollment plummet due to staff shortages and infrastructure issues. By 2023, only 18 students remained, putting the institution at risk of closure.

Determined to revive the school, Khot took charge as headmaster in July 2023 and introduced several community-driven educational programs.



These include a monthly quiz competition for school students with prizes, training workshops for village youth preparing for competitive exams, and summer classes to ensure continuous learning.

With support from donors, Khot and his staff have also been working to improve school infrastructure and create a better learning environment. His efforts are slowly yielding results, offering hope for the school's revival and demonstrating how individual initiatives can make a lasting impact on rural education.



Women Achievers to Take Over PM Modi's Social Media on Women's Day



- PM Modi to hand over SM accounts to inspiring women achievers on March 8
- Urges people to celebrate and respect women's contributions across fields
- Highlights India's progress in AI, space, fitness, and wildlife conservation

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that he will hand over his social media accounts to women achievers from various fields on March 8 to mark International Women's Day. Speaking in his monthly Mann Ki Baat address, he emphasized

celebrating the strength and achievements of women, noting their increasing participation in all sectors. This initiative follows a similar move in 2020 when PM Modi had given control of his accounts to seven prominent women from different fields. With millions

of followers on X, Instagram, and YouTube, his social media presence will provide a powerful platform for these women to share their journeys, challenges, and accomplishments.

PM Modi also urged people to take measures against the growing issue of obesity. Citing research, he noted that one in eight people suffers from obesity, with cases among children increasing fourfold in recent years. He encouraged reducing oil consumption by 10% and challenging others to do the same.

Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra also shared an audio message supporting fitness efforts. Discussing India's scientific advancements, he invited citizens to visit research centers on February 28 for National Science Day, encouraging young minds to experience "one day as a scientist." He also highlighted India's achievements in artificial intelligence, referencing global praise for the country's progress in the sector during his recent visit to Paris. The prime minister lauded India's space achievements, celebrating ISRO's 100th rocket launch and

the successes of missions like Chandrayaan, Mangalyaan, and Aditya L-1. Over the past decade, ISRO has launched around 460 satellites, including those for other countries. PM Modi also highlighted the increasing participation of women in space research, calling it a sign of India's growing "Nari Shakti" in science and technology. On wildlife conservation, PM Modi praised the contributions of local communities, including the Soliga tribe in Karnataka's BRT Tiger Reserve and the people of Gujarat, for their efforts in protecting tigers and Asiatic lions. He highlighted the deep connection between Indian culture and wildlife, noting that many traditional festivals and dances revolve around animals like tigers and lions. Concluding his address, the prime minister encouraged citizens to engage in wildlife conservation, scientific exploration, and fitness initiatives. He invited women achievers to use his social media accounts to inspire the nation on Women's Day, reinforcing his commitment to empowering and celebrating women's contributions.

BBMP ordered to demolish 63 houses built on stormwater drain

Bengaluru: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered the demolition of 63 illegally built houses on the stormwater drain (SWD) connected to Hosakerehalli Lake, placing the responsibility on the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to evict occupants and clear the encroachments.

Despite previous demolition orders, activists express skepticism over BBMP's enforcement. "BBMP has issued many such orders before but has failed to act decisively," an activist said. A lake engineer clarified that the encroachments are not within the lake itself but on the SWD, making it the responsibility of the Stormwater Drain department to take action. Deputy Commissioner of Bengaluru Urban,



Jagadeesha G, stated, "We have identified and marked encroached areas. Now, it is the BBMP's duty to evict occupants."

A senior Revenue Department official revealed that two multi-storied buildings within the

SWD fall under the lake's buffer zone. Notably, these structures were built by government agencies—the Karnataka Slum Board constructed 30 temporary shelters, while the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) built 33 houses with concrete roofs. "Both agencies should be held accountable for the illegal construction," he said.

Activist Joseph Hoover, a resident near Hosakerehalli Lake, has demanded an investigation into the BDA officials who approved the project. Concerns persist over BBMP's enforcement, as activists argue that despite issuing demolition orders under Section 356 of the BBMP Act, the civic body has failed to act against unauthorised constructions.

11 men arrested for flashing swords, lethal weapons en route to Hoskote



Bengaluru: Eleven men were arrested by the DJ Halli police for brandishing swords and other lethal weapons while riding two-wheelers toward Hoskote. The accused are now facing rowdy sheets, and seven two-wheelers have been seized from them. Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda confirmed the arrests, stating, "Rowdy sheets will be opened against the 11 accused who have been apprehended." The incident occurred on the night of February 13, during Shab-e-Barat, when the group, traveling from DJ Halli to Hoskote, brandished weapons while passing over the KR Puram hanging bridge.

Among the arrested are Adnan Pasha, Niyamathulla Mujahid Ahmed, Sahil Hussain, Nayeem Pasha, and Arafath Tasleem Pasha. All are adults, police said. Despite police bandobast across

the city for Shab-e-Barat, the accused managed to travel with weapons, raising concerns over security lapses. The Joint Commissioner of Police (East) has been tasked with investigating the matter, and a report will be submitted. Action may be taken against any officers found negligent in preventing the incident. However, there is no evidence so far that the accused threatened or attacked anyone, the commissioner added.

Home Minister G Parameshwara assured strict action, stating, "We will not spare anyone who takes the law into their own hands. Our police force is vigilant, which is why Karnataka remains more peaceful than many other states." A case under the Arms Act has been registered against the accused, and further investigations are underway.

History-sheeter hacked to death near Garuda Mall in Bengaluru

Bengaluru: A history-sheeter was brutally hacked to death near Garuda Mall in the early hours of Sunday, in what appears to be a revenge attack by his rivals.

The deceased, identified as Hyder Ali, was returning from a live band party when a group of assailants ambushed his car and attacked him with lethal weapons around 1:30 am. Despite efforts to escape, Ali succumbed to multiple injuries at the spot.

Ali was a known offender with several criminal cases registered against him across multiple police stations in Bengaluru. Police sources suggest that his past rivalries could be a key motive behind the murder. Following the incident, senior police officials



rushed to the scene and initiated an investigation. Forensic teams have collected evidence, and CCTV footage from the area is being examined to identify the attackers. Police have formed special teams to track down the culprits and are questioning Ali's associates and known enemies to establish the sequence of events leading to the murder. Further investigation is underway.

Protesting sub-registrars force officials to implement HC order in Karnataka

Bengaluru: Sub-registrars and senior sub-registrars, who had been protesting at the office of the Inspector General of Registration and Commissioner of Stamps (IGR & CS) since Thursday, called off their agitation on Friday evening after securing an assurance from the commissioner.

The protest began after the revenue department failed to comply with a High Court stay order obtained on February 18, which halted the transfer of 90 sub-registrars and senior sub-registrars. The transfers had been issued on December 10, 2024. Tension escalated at the commissioner's office as sub-registrars, including many women, blocked IGR & CS K V Dayananda inside his chamber. Around 7:30 pm, Dayananda addressed the protesters and promised to convey the government's decision. However, they refused to relent. Eventually, Dayananda assured the association president over a phone call—placed on speaker mode—that login access would be restored, allowing them to continue in their previous posts. Despite calling off the protest temporarily, the Karnataka State Stamps and Registration Department Employees' Association warned of another agitation starting Thursday if their demands were not met. An official defended the transfers, stating, "We only transferred those who had served five out of the last eight years in the same location. It was done through counselling in the public interest,

yet we are now in a difficult position." Association president Shankare Gowda said, "The stay order was issued on February 18 but was ignored. We had planned to protest until February 25, but we have paused it after receiving assurances from the commissioner."

Many sub-registrars opposed the transfers, citing personal hardships. "My daughter's II PU exam is approaching. How can we be transferred suddenly in December with just 10 days to relocate?" a protesting sub-registrar questioned. Another senior sub-registrar opposed being posted in a junior role. "After years of service, why should I be assigned a sub-registrar's position?" Some also argued that the revenue department had no authority to issue transfer orders, which should be handled by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DPAR). "A new system was suddenly introduced, preventing those in the Bengaluru Metropolitan Region and 10 city corporation districts from inter-transfers. Instead, we were given postings in rural areas like Raichur and Koppal. How is this fair?" one protester asked. Despite the protest, the public remained unaffected, as first and second-division assistants took charge of sub-registrar offices. "The state recorded ₹75 crore in daily revenue, surpassing the usual 8,500 registrations across 256 sub-registrar offices," the commissioner noted.

Make fire safety part of school curriculum: Beyond Carlton

Bengaluru: Experts at a panel discussion organized by Beyond Carlton, a citizen-led fire safety initiative, have emphasized the need to integrate fire safety education into school curricula, highlighting its critical role in saving lives. The discussion was held during a memorial event marking 15 years since the tragic fire at Carlton Towers on Old HAL Road, which claimed nine lives and injured over 70 people on February 23, 2010. The event began with a Bharatanatyam performance titled Agni: Respect and Neglect, portraying fire's dual nature as both a life-sustaining and destructive force. Through artistic expression, the performance raised awareness about household fire hazards and prevention measures. During the panel dis-

ussion, Do Young Indians Care About Fire Safety?, Kiran Yadav, founder of Sampige Foundation, suggested leveraging social media to spread fire safety awareness among young people through videos and digital campaigns. Kritika Vishwanath, project director at Beyond Carlton, stressed the importance of fire safety knowledge. "If individuals have basic fire safety training, they can take immediate action to protect themselves and others," she said, advocating for its inclusion in school curricula. She added that educating children would ensure that fire safety awareness extends to their families as well. The event also honored four fire and emergency personnel from different districts for their bravery and exceptional service in the field.

Case filed against former BJP MP Pratap Simha

FIR filed against Pratap Simha over controversial remarks.

Mysuru police station attack case sparks political tensions.

17 people, including a religious leader, arrested so far.

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Karnataka Police have filed an FIR against former BJP MP Pratap Simha over his remarks against Muslims while commenting on the recent Mysuru police station attack. The case was registered at Udayagiri police station based on a complaint by Youth Congress President Syed Abrar.



The complaint alleged that Simha's statements were derogatory toward Muslims and questioned their citizenship, claiming they were increasing their population. It further accused him of inciting disharmony between communities and called for legal action. Earlier, Simha had remarked that Muslims should have left India during Partition, accusing them of merely increasing

their numbers. The former Mysuru-Kodagu MP, known for his strong Hindutva stance, has courted controversy before with similar statements.

The police station attack occurred following a social media post by Satish, aka Panduranga, which allegedly mocked opposition leaders Rahul Gandhi, Akhilesh Yadav, and Arvind Kejriwal while making provocative communal remarks.

The post triggered protests by a minority community group, escalating into stone-pelting at Udayagiri police station and an attack on the DCP's vehicle.

Amid growing tensions, the BJP and Rashtra Suraksha Jan Andolan Samiti have announced a massive protest in Mysuru on February 24, accusing the Karnataka government of inaction in handling the case.

Govt funding Centre's share in Jal Jeevan Mission: Priyank Kharge

TPN Correspondent | Mangaluru

Karnataka Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Priyank Kharge, on Saturday accused the Centre of failing to allocate sufficient funds for centrally sponsored schemes, forcing the state government to bear the financial burden.

Addressing the media in Mangaluru, Kharge hit back at BJP's allegations that the Karnataka government lacks funds for its guarantee schemes and the upcoming budget. "BJP leaders claim we have no money, but they should first explain how much the Centre is releasing for centrally sponsored schemes," he said.

He pointed to the Jal Jeevan Mission as an example of the Centre's inadequate funding. "The Centre was supposed to contribute ₹3,600 crore but has only given ₹517 crore. Since they failed to fulfill their commitment, the state government has stepped in with ₹2,900 crore to ensure the drinking water project continues. The project carries their name, but the money is ours," he remarked. Kharge also accused the Centre of financial discrimination against Karnataka, despite the state being one of the highest tax contributors. "If you contribute



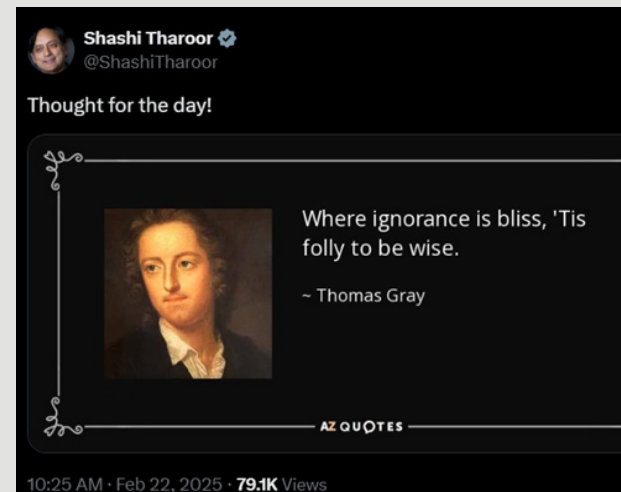
₹100 in taxes, the Centre returns only ₹13 to Karnataka, while states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar receive ₹200 to ₹300. Is this fair? If BJP has any shame, they should speak against this injustice towards Kannadigas," he demanded. On the delay in disbursing the Gruha Lakshmi scheme funds, Kharge reiterated that the issue had already been addressed by the chief minister and other leaders. He dismissed BJP's criticism of Karnataka's guarantee schemes as "freebies," stating that even BJP workers were benefiting from them. Kharge also defended the recent meetings of Karnataka Congress leaders, including DCM D K Shivakumar, with the party high command. "As a minister, should I meet our high command or go to Keshava Kripa? My meetings are

with leaders like Randeep Surjewala, K C Venugopal, Mallikarjun Kharge, and Rahul Gandhi—not Narendra Modi or J P Nadda," he said.

On speculation regarding a leadership change, Kharge denied any discussions about replacing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. "D K Shivakumar has said that the next elections will be fought under his leadership. But as of now, Siddaramaiah is the CM, and Shivakumar is the DCM and KPCC president. The high command has given us responsibilities, and we will abide by them," he stated. Kharge also confirmed that the All India Congress Committee (AICC) had sought report cards from state leaders to evaluate the implementation of promises made in the manifesto. "Report cards are for two entities—the high command and the public," he added.

Responding to his recent statement on racism in Bengaluru, Kharge clarified that the concern was about respecting Karnataka's culture. "Bengaluru attracts migrants due to employment opportunities. All we ask is that people respect our language, culture, and food habits—just as we respect those of other states. We believe in inclusivity, but not at the cost of our dignity," he said.

"Folly to Be Wise..." Shashi Tharoor's Cryptic Post Amid Congress Rift Speculation



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Amid growing speculation of a rift between Shashi Tharoor and the Congress party over his recent remarks, the Thiruvananthapuram MP posted a cryptic message on X, quoting poet Thomas Gray: "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

Tharoor has faced criticism from Kerala Congress leaders for his praise of certain policies of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led CPI(M) government in Kerala and his positive remarks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit. Defending his stance, Tharoor stated that his comments were made in India's best interests, asserting that "we cannot always speak only in terms of party interest."

His appreciation of PM Modi's diplomatic engagement with the US highlighted India's rising global stature, as Modi became only the fourth world leader to meet then-President Trump after his inauguration. Tharoor also praised Kerala's entrepreneurial growth under the CPI(M)-led government, crediting former Chief Minister

Oommen Chandy for laying the foundation through initiatives like 'Startup Village' and the 'Kerala Startup Mission.'

The Congress party's mouthpiece in Kerala, Veekshanam Daily, published an editorial indirectly criticizing Tharoor, urging him not to "betray" party workers ahead of local body elections.

The editorial alleged that any attempt to downplay the prevailing anti-incumbency wave in Kerala reflected a "distorted" political stance.

Following this, Tharoor withdrew a poster from his Facebook that reportedly referred to CPI(M) members as "cannibals." The poster was linked to the commemoration of Youth Congress workers Kripesh and Sarathlal, who were killed in Periyar, Kasaragod, allegedly by CPI(M) workers five years ago. Later, he reshared their photos without referencing CPI(M).

Tharoor's recent statements and actions have fueled internal debates within the Kerala Congress, raising questions about his future positioning within the party.

Amid Protests, Centre to Revise Draft Bill Amending Advocates Act

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Centre has decided to revise the draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025, following widespread opposition from bar associations and legal professionals. The public consultation process, which began on February 13, has now concluded, and the government will rework the bill based on the feedback received.

The draft bill proposed significant changes, including revised definitions for "legal practitioner" and "law graduate." According to the proposal, a law graduate is defined as someone with a bachelor's degree in law from a recognized institution, while a legal practitioner includes advocates, law graduates working in courts, tribunals, corporate entities, and foreign law firms.

Several bar bodies strongly opposed these changes, and the Congress also criticized the bill, calling it "poorly drafted" and inadequate in addressing key issues in the legal profession. In response, the law ministry stated that the bill was released for transparency and public engagement.

"Considering the number of suggestions and concerns received, it has been decided to conclude the consultation process now," the ministry said, add-



ing that a revised draft will be prepared after further discussions with stakeholders.

The government had originally framed the amendments to align India's legal profession and education system with global standards, aiming to enhance legal education and equip lawyers for evolving challenges. However, with strong resistance from the legal community, the Centre will now reassess its approach before proceeding further.

No Place for O Panneerselvam in AIADMK, Says Palaniswami

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami has ruled out any possibility of expelled leader O Panneerselvam (OPS) rejoining the party, days after OPS expressed willingness to return.

In a letter to party cadres ahead of late Chief Minister J Jayalithaa's 77th birth anniversary, Palaniswami indirectly rejected OPS's proposal, asking, "Can the wolf and sheep co-exist? Can weeds and crops be part of a harvest?"

Days ago, OPS, along with TTV Dhinakaran and Sasikala, had said they were open to reuniting with AIADMK without conditions, provided the general secretary post was elected by cadres.

Palaniswami also attacked the DMK government, claiming people were dissatisfied and



wanted AIADMK back in power in the 2026 Assembly elections. He praised Jayalithaa's leadership, recalling her ability to govern effectively despite financial challenges caused by the Congress-led UPA government, in which DMK was a key ally.



How Attack On Bus Conductor Rekindled Maharashtra-Karnataka Border Tensions

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Bus services between Karnataka and Maharashtra have been suspended following violent incidents sparked by an altercation in Karnataka's Belagavi district. The immediate trigger was the assault of a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus conductor for allegedly not responding in Marathi. In retaliation, a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) driver was attacked in Karnataka's Chitradurga district.

Belagavi Incident

The clash began on Friday in Marihal, Belagavi district, when a KSRTC conductor was assaulted for not understanding Marathi. According to his police complaint, a girl had asked for a ticket in Marathi, and when he requested her to speak in Kannada, she and her male companion allegedly attacked him. The situation escalated as a larger group intercepted the bus and assaulted the conductor.

Police arrested four individuals linked to the attack. However, the conductor was also booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act after the girl filed a complaint alleging inappropriate behavior.



Retaliation in Chitradurga

In what appears to be a retaliatory incident, a Maharashtra bus driver, Bhaskar Jadhav, was assaulted and blackened with paint in Hiriyur Taluk, Chitradurga district, the following day. Several individuals have been arrested in connection with this attack.

Following this, Maharashtra's Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik announced the suspension of MSRTC services to Karnataka, citing safety concerns. He claimed that an MSRTC bus traveling from Bengaluru to Mumbai was attacked in Chitradurga around 9:10 pm on Friday by pro-Kannada activists.

The tensions escalated further on Sunday when an ultra-luxury KSRTC bus was vandalized in Maharashtra, with slogans such

as 'Jai Maharashtra' and 'Maharashtra Navnirman Sena' painted on it.

Karnataka transport authorities have also limited bus operations to Maharashtra. "We have restricted services and are coordinating with Maharashtra officials to restore normalcy," a senior North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) officer stated.

Historic Dispute

Belagavi, home to a significant Marathi-speaking population, has long been at the center of a territorial dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka. Maharashtra has claimed Belagavi and several border villages, arguing they were wrongly assigned to Karnataka during state reorganization in 1956.

The Karnataka government has strongly opposed these claims and reinforced its authority by constructing the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi, where annual legislative sessions are held.

In 1966, the Mahajan Commission ruled in favor of Karnataka, dismissing Maharashtra's claim over Belagavi. Maharashtra, refusing to accept the decision, took the matter to the Supreme Court in 2004, where the case remains unresolved.



Rescue Efforts Intensify At Collapsed Telangana Tunnel As Water, Debris Hinder Progress

TPN Correspondent | Telangana

Rescue operations continue in Telangana's Nagarkurnool district as authorities struggle to reach eight workers trapped inside a collapsed tunnel near the Srisaillam dam for over 24 hours.

The tunnel roof collapsed yesterday morning while workers were inside to repair a leak, cutting off all communication with them. Muck mixed with water has spread over a 200-metre stretch, making access difficult for rescue teams. Four NDRF teams are en route to the site, while several agencies are already engaged in efforts to clear debris and dewater the tunnel.

Reports indicate that shifting boulders have made the collapsed section unstable. Water is gushing in from a fracture on the tunnel wall, necessitating dewatering before any significant rescue progress can be made. The collapsed section is about 13 km from the tunnel's entrance. Exclusive foot-

age from inside the tunnel showed rescuers calling out the trapped workers' names in an attempt to locate them. However, an NDRF official confirmed that no response was received. A team had ventured inside the tunnel overnight, covering 11 km by locomotive and 2 km on a conveyor belt, but their efforts to establish contact were unsuccessful.

The situation is being monitored at both the state and central levels. The Union Home Ministry is coordinating with the Telangana government to provide necessary assistance.

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was briefed on the situation in a review meeting with Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar, Adviser (Irrigation) Adityanath Das, and Chief Minister's Adviser Vem Narender Reddy. The Chief Minister directed officials to accelerate rescue efforts and extend government support to the affected families, urging all departments to remain on high alert during the operation.

Vijay Mallya seeks annulment of UK bankruptcy order, citing excess recovery by Indian banks

TPN Correspondent | London

Embattled businessman Vijay Mallya has moved to annul his UK bankruptcy order, arguing that Indian banks have already recovered more than what was due. His legal team cited Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's recent statement in Parliament, claiming that ₹14,131.6 crore had been restored to the banks.

Justice Anthony Mann of the London High Court has reserved judgment on three interlinked appeals concerning Mallya's bankruptcy order, which was issued in July 2021. The appeals chal-



lenge aspects of the case, including the banks' security over Mallya's assets and amendments to the order.

Mallya's new legal representatives, Zaiwalla & Co., argue that the banks' con-

tinued pursuit of bankruptcy proceedings in the UK contradicts Sitharaman's statement, which they believe should be accepted as fact. Mallya has replaced his previous legal team, Reynolds Porter Chamberlain, and instructed his lawyers to pursue annulment irrespective of the pending appeals.

Meanwhile, Mallya remains on bail in the UK, facing a separate legal battle over India's extradition request, with reports suggesting he has applied for asylum. He continues to maintain that Indian banks are pursuing the same debt in both India and the UK.

Won't Accept NEP Even If Centre Offers Rs 10,000 Crore: MK Stalin

TPN Correspondent | Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has reiterated his firm opposition to the National Education Policy (NEP), stating that the state will not implement it even if the Centre offers ₹10,000 crore. He asserted that the opposition is not just about the imposition of Hindi but also due to the policy's long-term impact on students and social justice. Addressing a Parent-Teachers Association event in Cuddalore, Stalin said, "We are not against any language but will not allow its imposition. The NEP is regressive and will push students away from schools." He criticized the policy for denying financial aid

to SC/ST and BC students and for introducing public exams for third, fifth, and eighth standards, along with a common entrance test for arts and science colleges.

The controversy over NEP in Tamil Nadu escalated after Stalin wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had threatened to withhold ₹2,000 crore under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan unless the state adopted NEP. "I will not allow NEP and commit the sin of pushing Tamil Nadu back by 2,000 years," Stalin said.

Responding to Stalin's remarks, Pradhan accused the Tamil Nadu CM of creating a

"false narrative" for political reasons. "The three-language formula is not about imposing Hindi. Tamil Nadu had agreed to NEP earlier but made a U-turn for political reasons," he said.

Pradhan dismissed Stalin's claim of fund cuts, stating that Tamil Nadu's "rigid stand" was depriving students of benefits under the PM SHRI scheme. He also pointed out that Tamil Nadu continues to receive funds under the PM-Poshan (mid-day meal) scheme. With both sides holding their ground, the standoff over NEP in Tamil Nadu is likely to continue, further intensifying the Centre-state tussle over education policies.

Australian Man's Final Wish Fulfilled Buried in India on His 12th Visit

TPN Correspondent | Munger

Donald Sams, a 91-year-old Australian resident, had an unbreakable bond with India, so much so that he wished to be buried here after his death. That wish was honored when he passed away during his 12th visit to the country.

Sams, a retired officer from the Australian high command, was traveling with a 42-member Australian team on a Ganges River cruise from Sultan Ganj to Patna when he fell ill. He was rushed to the National Hospital in Munger, where doctors declared him dead. Following approval from the Australian Embassy and his wife, Alice Sams, he was laid to



rest in Munger's Christian cemetery at Churamba with full Christian customs. Munger District Magistrate Avnish Kumar Singh confirmed that the funeral arrangements were made under the em-

bassy's direction. "The funeral was held without a post-mortem as per the wishes of his wife, Alice. The cruise ship carrying the dead body anchored at Babua Ghat from Friday night until Saturday afternoon," he stated.

Sams' love for India was deeply rooted in his family history. His father had worked in Assam during British rule, which inspired him to visit the region frequently. Every trip to India saw him following a ritualistic journey from Kolkata to Patna via the Ganges. In his will, he had requested that his last rites be performed in India, a wish that has now been honored.

Ganga Water Fit For Dip At Sangam



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Amid controversy over a Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) report claiming increased faecal coliform levels in the Ganga at Prayagraj, University of Allahabad Professor Umesh Kumar Singh has dismissed the findings, asserting that the river water at Sangam remains fit for bathing.

Professor Singh pointed out inconsistencies in the CPCB's data and urged the agency to reveal its sampling methods. "The dissolved oxygen level is good, and the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) is also within limits. But CPCB has exaggerated faecal coliform levels. They should clarify their data collection process," he said.

The CPCB report, presented to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), suggested a rise in pollution levels in the Ganga during the Maha Kumbh due to an alleged increase in faecal coliform bacteria. The report included data on pH levels, dissolved oxygen, chemical oxygen demand

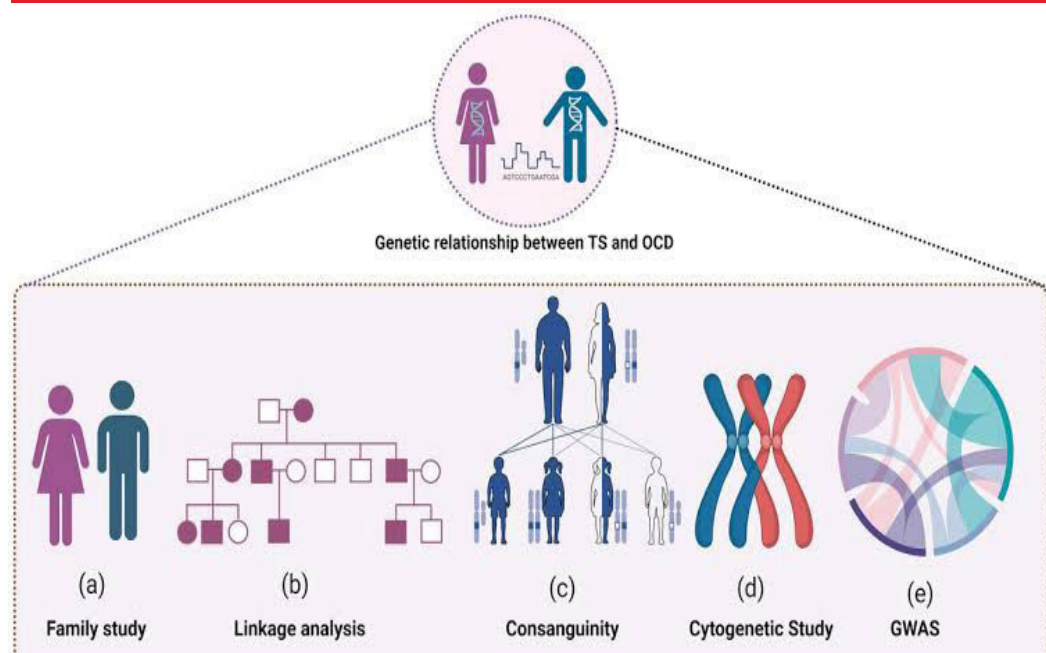
(COD), BOD, turbidity, and faecal coliform from various locations, including Sangam, Deeha Ghat, Shringverpur Ghat, and Old Naini Bridge.

Professor Singh questioned why the CPCB report did not highlight nitrate and phosphate levels, which would typically indicate sewage or industrial waste contamination. He also noted that bathing naturally introduces some bacteria into the water. "Faecal coliform levels appear exaggerated, while dissolved oxygen and BOD remain within permissible limits," he added.

Spiritual leader Acharya Jaishankar, an IIT graduate who renounced his career in the US, also refuted the CPCB's claims. "The water at Sangam is fit for bathing and is better than before," he stated, recalling his past experiences of taking dips in the Ganga. With growing scrutiny over the CPCB's findings, Professor Singh has urged the board to reanalyze the samples to ensure accurate and transparent reporting.

CONSANGUINITY

Family Bonds or Genetic Burdens? The Scope of Advanced Testing in Predicting Genetic Disorders in Marriages among close relatives



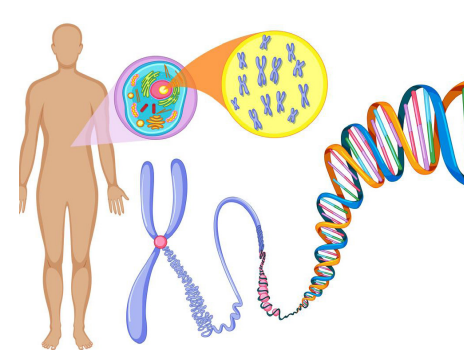
Family Bonds or Genetic Burdens



Imagine getting married to someone who has the same grandparents as you. In many cultures around the world, especially in India, this isn't just a thought—it's a reality. Consanguineous marriages, which are unions between closely related people, have been part of cultural practices for a long time. These marriages are seen as a way to preserve traditions and strengthen family bonds. However, they carry a hid-

den risk: a higher chance of passing on genetic disorders. In the general population, about 6% of children are born with birth defects due to genetic issues. But in consanguineous marriages, this risk doubles. When close relatives marry, both might unknowingly carry the same genetic mutations, increasing the chances of birth defects or inherited health problems in their children.

Inside the Genetic Blueprint: The secrets Hidden in Our DNA



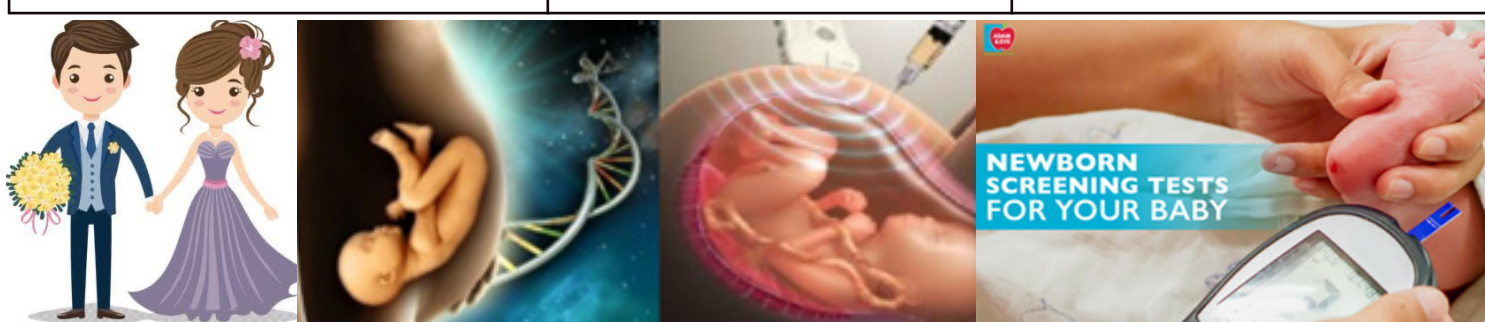
from the mother come together during fertilization, the child gets half of their DNA from each parent. Sometimes, genetic disorders are caused by "hidden" faulty genes, which are known as recessive genes. For a child to have a recessive condition, both parents must carry the same defective gene.

The human body is made up of tiny cells that contain our genetic material, called DNA, arranged in 46 chromosomes. DNA is like a blueprint for our body and is passed down from both parents, shaping traits like eye color, height, and even the likelihood of certain health problems. When a sperm from the father and an egg

from the mother come together during fertilization, the child gets half of their DNA from each parent. Sometimes, genetic disorders are caused by "hidden" faulty genes, which are known as recessive genes. For a child to have a recessive condition, both parents must carry the same defective gene. In marriages between close relatives, there's a higher chance that both partners carry the same genetic mutations. In India, conditions like thalassemia, sickle cell anemia, heart defects, and hearing loss are more common among children born to closely related parents. Therefore, genetic testing is crucial for these families to mitigate these risks.

Proportion of genetic code shared between close bond relatives

Relationship	Relationship Type	Proportion Of Genetic Code They Have in Common
Identical Twins		All (100%)
Non-identical Twins, Siblings, Parents & Children	First Degree relatives	Half (50%)
Uncles & Aunts, Nephews & Nieces, Grandparents and half- siblings	Second Degree relatives	Quarter (25%)
First cousins, half-uncles & aunts, half-nephews & nieces	Third Degree relatives	Eighth (12.5%)



Stage	Genetic Test/Procedures	Description
Pre-marital & pre-conceptual counseling	Carrier Screening by WES; SMA & DMD carrier screening by MLPA	If both partners are carriers, they can explore options like avoiding marriage or alternatives (e.g., adoption, IVF with donors)
Pre-natal testing	Chorionic Villus Sampling & Amniocentesis	If there is a family history of a genetic disease, the specific variant is analysed using the appropriate genetic test.
Newborn screening	Bloodspot Screening by Heel Prick method	Biochemical markers are checked that can indicate genetic disorders like congenital hypothyroidism, which can be treated early.
Child growth milestone tracking	Regular Paediatric checkups	Tracking a child's growth up to 3 years old helps detect early signs of genetic disorders or delays, ensuring timely support for healthy development.

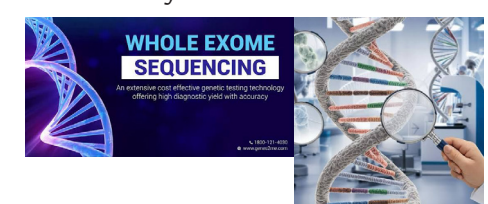
Genetic Testing for Couples: From Engagement to Baby born



Think of trying to complete a tricky puzzle where some pieces are missing or don't fit quite right. That's similar to figuring out certain genetic disorders. Ultrasound scans can detect major physical defects in a fetus, but they can't confirm genetic issues. For genetic abnormalities, tests like the nuchal translucency scan or TIFFA scan can help, though they only suggest potential problems, not confirm them. Prevention at Every Step: The Power of Genetic Testing Before, During, and After Pregnancy Couples in consanguineous marriages can benefit greatly from genetic counseling and testing at different stages. The latest and advanced genetic testing that are available are:

(WGS) is a test that reads and analyzes a person's entire DNA, providing a comprehensive map of their genetic information to help identify potential health issues and shorten the diagnostic journey.

- Whole Exome Sequencing (WES) can identify potential genetic conditions by examining the protein-coding regions of the genome, which contain over 20,000 genes.
- MLPA (Multiplex Ligation-dependent Probe Amplification) helps identify gene deletions or mutations for commonly observed conditions like Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) or Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD).
- Chromosomal Microarray is a test that detects chromosomal abnormalities, such as missing or extra pieces of chromosomes, which can lead to developmental delays, genetic disorders like Down Syndrome, and other syndromes.



Genetic Testing Worldwide: Reducing Genetic Disorder

Countries like Iran, Cyprus, Israel, and the UAE have implemented genetic testing programs to reduce genetic disorders, offering valuable lessons for India. Iran's nationwide thalassemia screening since the 1990s has halved its incidence, while Cyprus and Israel have reduced conditions like thalassemia, Cystic Fibrosis, and Tay-Sachs through pre-marital screen-

ings. In January 2025, the UAE introduced a mandatory genetic testing program for Emirati couples, screening 570 genes linked to over 840 medical conditions. These programs show how genetic testing, combined with education and counseling, can effectively reduce genetic disorders, offering insights for improving health in India.

The Wake-Up Call: The Importance of Genetic Testing

As science advances, so do the methods to detect genetic disorders. Tests like Whole Genome Sequencing and trio exome sequencing offer powerful tools to identify even the smallest genetic variations, providing a clearer picture of health. However, there's no one-size-fits-all solution, and choosing the right test can be complex. This is where genetic counseling becomes essential, guiding families to the best approach for an

accurate diagnosis. In consanguineous marriages, where inherited conditions are more common, genetic testing can help identify potential health risks early. It's not about criticizing traditions, but using science to prevent inherited diseases. By embracing genetic testing, we can create healthier families and communities worldwide—why wait for surprises when we can avoid them?



Dr. Buragadda Srinadh, MD
Director
Asian institute of Fetal medicine and Reproductive genetics



Judiciary Doesn't Have Right to Amend Constitution

TPN Correspondent | Maharashtra

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar asserted that the judiciary does not have the authority to amend the Constitution, emphasizing that only Parliament and state legislatures hold that right. Speaking at the inauguration of the Constitution Awareness Year celebrations, he underscored the importance of nationalism, urging people to prioritize the nation above politics and personal interests. Dhankhar warned against external influences in India's democratic system, referring to recent reports of alleged USAID funding aimed at influencing voter turnout. "By getting funds from outside, the democratic system is being made unholy. The persons of their choice are made to win polls. This is dangerous and cannot be tolerated," he remarked. Highlighting the importance of constitutional awareness, he praised the Constitution's framers for their meaningful dialogue and high-level debates. "They never let the prestige of the temple of democracy go down," he said, while criticizing disruptions in parliamentary proceedings. "The more we learn about the Constitution, the more we will turn towards nationalism," Dhankhar stated, adding that fundamental rights must be nurtured responsibly. He also recalled the Emergency of 1975 as the "darkest hour" in India's democratic history, condemning the Supreme Court's decision at the time to uphold the government's stance. Referring to the historical significance of the Constitution, he noted that it contains 22 demonstrative images representing India's rich cultural heritage, including Lord Ram, Lord Krishna, and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Reiterating the supremacy of elected legislatures in constitutional amendments, Dhankhar stated, "No one else has this right, not even the judiciary."

Udit Raj seeks protection over threats from BSP workers

- Udit Raj said Mayawati should be "throttled".
- He approached Delhi Police, citing threats from BSP workers.
- A viral video allegedly called for his killing with a ₹1 lakh reward.
- He claims unusual movements near his house and seeks security.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Congress leader Udit Raj has approached the Delhi Police, seeking protection against alleged threats from Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) workers, including its leader Akash Anand. The move follows a controversy over his recent remarks against BSP chief Mayawati. In a letter to the Delhi Police Commissioner, Udit Raj claimed that a video circulating on the YouTube channel 'Bahujan Dastak' features an interviewer inciting the public to attack him. "The interviewer has openly called for my throat to be slit and even announced a reward of ₹1 lakh for such an act," he stated. He further alleged that since the release of the video, he has noticed unusual movements near his house, raising serious concerns about his safety. "I apprehend that any untoward incident may occur if adequate security is not provided immediately," he wrote, urging the police to file an FIR and take strict legal action against those responsible. Udit Raj, who also heads the All India Unorganised Workers and Employees Congress (KKC) and the Dalit, OBC, Minority, and Adivasi Parisangh (DOMA Parisangh), revealed that he has been receiving threatening calls



since February 17, the day after his controversial remarks against Mayawati. He claimed that on the evening of February 17, a caller allegedly told his PSO that Mayawati and Akash Anand had ordered him to harm Udit Raj. The Congress leader insists that the threats have escalated, making immediate police intervention necessary. The controversy erupted after Udit Raj's remarks in Lucknow, where he suggested that Mayawati should be "throttled" for allegedly suppressing social welfare movements. His statement triggered a strong backlash from Mayawati, who accused the

Congress of historically opposing the ideology of B.R. Ambedkar. Political reactions have been swift. BJP national spokesperson Shahnawaz Hussain criticized Udit Raj, saying, "Congress is insulting Dalits with this statement. They are targeting a prominent Dalit leader like Mayawati. This will cost them dearly." JD(U) leader Rajeev Ranjan Prasad also condemned the remark, stating, "Such statements are unacceptable in a democracy. The Congress is speaking out of frustration." As tensions rise, Udit Raj awaits police action, demanding both security and accountability for the alleged threats.

"Will Keep Indian Culture Alive Abroad"

Kash Patel's Uncle On His FBI Oath



TPN Correspondent | Vadodra

Krishnakant Patel, the uncle of Indian-American Kash Patel, expressed pride and joy over his nephew's appointment as the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). He highlighted the significance of Patel taking his oath on the Bhagavad Gita, calling it a powerful symbol of preserving Indian culture abroad. "I want to say that he took oath on the Bhagavad Gita, which shows that he will keep his Indian culture alive abroad. That is the biggest thing," Krishnakant Patel told ANI. Kash Patel, who officially assumed office as the ninth FBI Director, has ancestral roots in Bhadran village, Anand district. His uncle confirmed that the family still maintains a house there. "I found out yesterday itself that he has become the FBI's director. I am very happy about it. We have not contacted him for a long time. We will do it now," he said. During the swearing-in ceremony, Patel acknowledged his Indian heritage while celebrating the opportunities offered by the United States.



Nationalists Respect Each Other Jaishankar on Modi-Trump Chemistry

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar described Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the US as highly successful, highlighting the strong chemistry between Modi and former US President Donald Trump. During the official working visit on February 12-13, both leaders discussed a wide range of bilateral issues. Speaking at an event in New Delhi, Jaishankar emphasized that both leaders, being nationalists, share mutual respect. "Trump is an American nationalist, and I think in many ways, nationalists respect each other. Trump accepts that Modi is in it for India, and Modi accepts that Trump is in it for America," he stated. Jaishankar noted that Trump's rapport with world leaders has been mixed,

but with Modi, the relationship has remained positive. He pointed out that in a picture book curated by Trump after his presidency, the highest number of images featured India, including the 'Namaste Trump' event held at Ahmedabad's Motera Stadium in 2020. Discussing the strategic aspect of their meeting, Jaishankar said, "The purpose of the discussion was to find common ground and work together for mutual benefit. The talks were open, conducted with humor, geniality, and cordiality." At the DU Literature Festival, where he was speaking about his book *What Bharat Matters*, Jaishankar also drew an analogy from the Ramayana. He described Ravana's arrogance and complacency as lessons in strategic miscalculation, suggesting that similar traits can be observed in global politics today.

UK Presents Honorary Knighthood Medal to Sunil Bharti Mittal



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Bharti Enterprises founder and chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal was honored with the insignia of the Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) at a

special investiture ceremony in New Delhi on Saturday. The ceremony, held at the British High Commissioner's residence in the presence of friends and family, followed the announcement earlier in 2024 that King Charles III had conferred the Honorary Knighthood upon Mittal for his contributions to UK-India business relations. Expressing his gratitude, Mittal said, "It is an honor to receive the KBE from His Majesty, King Charles III. As India and the UK continue to strengthen bilateral ties, I take this recognition as both a privilege and a responsibility. I remain committed to advancing India-UK business relations." Lindy Cameron, the British High Commissioner to India, praised Mittal's contributions, describing him as a great friend of the UK with major investments in BT, Gleneagles, Norlake Hospitality, and OneWeb. "I was delighted to present Sunil Bharti Mittal the KBE medal on behalf of His Majesty the King. His leadership has significantly strengthened the UK-India partnership, including his work with the India-UK CEO Forum," Cameron stated. Mittal recently led a senior Indian business delegation to the UK, meeting Prime Minister Keir Starmer and key Cabinet Ministers to explore opportunities for enhancing economic cooperation between the two nations.

Maharashtra Suspends Bus Services to Karnataka After Attack on Driver



TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik on Saturday announced the suspension of state transport bus services to Karnataka after an MSRTC bus was attacked in Chitradurga. The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus, traveling from Bengaluru to Mumbai, was attacked around 9:10 pm on Friday by pro-Kannada activists. The assailants blackened the face of the driver, Bhaskar Jadhav, and assaulted him, Sarnaik said. A police case has been registered in Karnataka regarding the attack. "Bus services to Karnataka won't resume unless the Karnataka government makes its stand clear on the issue," the minister stated. On the same day, a Karnataka transport corporation conductor was allegedly assaulted

near Belagavi for not responding to a girl in Marathi. The incident has led to heightened tensions between the two states. In response to the Belagavi incident, Karnataka police arrested four individuals for assaulting the conductor, Mahadevappa Mallappa Hukkeri. However, the conductor has also been booked under the POCSO Act following a counter-complaint by the 14-year-old girl, alleging derogatory remarks. Belagavi Police Commissioner Iada Martin Marbaniang assured a neutral investigation, stating that law and order would be maintained. Meanwhile, pro-Kannada activists staged protests, blocking roads and burning effigies, while Marathi groups condemned the assault on the MSRTC driver. The Belagavi region has long been a flashpoint due to border disputes and linguistic tensions, with this latest episode adding to the ongoing friction.

Despite Their Attacks

Giorgia Meloni Backs Modi, Trump At CPAC

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni delivered a sharp critique of the global Left, accusing liberals of hypocrisy and reacting with "hysteria" to the rise of right-wing leaders. Speaking via video link at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington DC, she praised US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance while condemning left-wing "elites."

PM Meloni argued that liberals have grown increasingly frustrated with the electoral success of conservative leaders, especially following Trump's return to the White House.

"When Bill Clinton and Tony Blair created the global leftist liberal network in the 90s, they were called statesmen," she remarked. "Today, when Trump, Meloni, (Javier) Milei, or maybe (Narendra) Modi talk, they are called a threat to democracy. This is the Left's double standard, but we are used to it. And the good news is people no longer believe in their lies. Despite all the mud they throw at us, citizens keep voting for us," she said.

She described Trump as a resilient leader committed to global conservative cooperation,

claiming that left-wing forces were growing anxious. "The Left is nervous, and with Trump's victory, their irritation has turned into hysteria. Not only because conservatives are winning, but because conservatives are now collaborating globally," she added.

As leader of the far-right Brothers of Italy party, PM Meloni was the only EU head of government to attend Trump's inauguration in January.

Her participation in CPAC drew strong opposition in Italy, particularly after Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief strategist, appeared to use a Nazi salute during the conference. Critics, including opposition MPs, called on Meloni to cancel her address, pointing to French far-right leader Jordan Bardella's decision to withdraw from the event over Bannon's gesture.

Elly Schlein, leader of Italy's center-left Democratic Party, condemned Meloni's association with CPAC. "She should have the decency to disassociate herself from this neo-fascist gathering," Schlein said. "She has not said a word for days about Trump's insults and frontal attacks on Ukraine and the European Union. She is unable to defend Italian and European interests



because she does not want to displease the new American administration." Amid concerns in Europe over Trump's approach to Russia and NATO, Meloni insisted that trans-

atlantic ties remain firm. "The United States and Europe will remain close under Trump," she stated.

They Take Advantage Of Us

Trump's Fresh Attack On USAID Funds For India



TPN Correspondent | Washington

US President Donald Trump has renewed his criticism of USAID, questioning why the United States is providing financial assistance to India while accusing the country of imposing high tariffs on American goods. Addressing the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington, Trump alleged that USAID funds were being used to influence India's election process.

"Eighteen million dollars for helping India with its elections. Why the hell? Why don't we just go to old paper ballots and let them

help us with our elections, right? Voter ID. Wouldn't that be nice? We're giving money to India for elections. They don't need money," Trump said.

Trump further accused India of taking economic advantage of the US. "One of the highest tariffed nations in the world. We try and sell something, they have a 200 per cent tariff. And then we're giving them a lot of money to help them with their election," he remarked.

Trump's comments have sparked fresh debate over USAID's role in India and the broader economic ties between the two nations.

USAID Was Allowed Here In Good Faith

Jaishankar On USAID Voter Turnout Fund

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has voiced concerns over reports from the US alleging that millions of dollars were funneled into India to influence elections. His remarks come after US President Donald Trump claimed that \$21 million had been allocated for "voter turnout" in India before his administration scrapped the initiative.

Speaking at the Delhi University Literature Festival, Jaishankar emphasized the growing threats posed by external influences. "Your security can be threatened without you leaving your house because the thought processes, the influences, the narratives, your morale, your sense of what is right and wrong, are all influenced by your phone, what you read every day, the pictures you see," he stated.

Jaishankar acknowledged the concerns raised by Trump's administration, suggesting that certain activities may have been aimed at pushing a particular narrative. "As a government, we are looking



into it because such organizations have an obligation to report. And my sense is, the facts will come out," he said.

India Begins Probe Into Alleged Funding

Trump had previously announced that the US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) had scrapped several taxpayer-funded initiatives, including the alleged \$21 million earmarked for India's voter turnout.

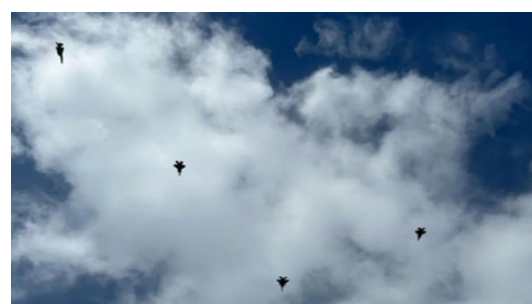
"USAID was allowed here in good faith, to do good faith activities. Suggestions are being made out of America that there are activities which are in bad faith. So, it surely warrants a look," Jaishankar

added, indicating that the government will investigate further.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) and other security agencies have begun preliminary inquiries into Indian entities and individuals who may have served as conduits for the alleged funds. Reports suggest that non-profits, social workers, media firms, and business entities are now under scrutiny for possible violations of anti-money laundering laws.

As the investigation unfolds, concerns over foreign influence in India's democratic process have reignited debates over transparency and accountability in funding activities within the country.

Israeli Jets Fly Over Hezbollah Chief's Funeral Amid Mass Gathering



TPN Correspondent | Beirut

Israeli fighter jets flew over Beirut today as thousands gathered for the funeral of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, nearly five months after his death in an Israeli airstrike. The low-flying aircraft momentarily drowned out the chants of Hezbollah supporters, intensifying the tension surrounding the event.

Visuals from the funeral showed four Israeli F-16 jets passing over the stadium, an act seen as a show of dominance by Israel. Meanwhile, the Israeli army marked the occasion with a post on X, stating, "Today is Hassan Nasrallah's funeral. Today the world is a better place."

Nasrallah, who led Hezbollah for decades, was killed in an Israeli strike that dealt a severe blow to the Iran-backed militant group. His death was part of a broader Israeli offensive that significantly weakened Hezbollah's command structure. The mass funeral, held at the 55,000-seat Camille Chamoun Sports City stadium in Beirut's

southern suburbs, was attended by a sea of Hezbollah supporters carrying flags and portraits of their slain leader.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a statement vowing continued resistance against Israel. "The enemy should know that resistance against oppression and arrogance is not over. It will continue until the desired goal is achieved," he declared.

Hezbollah has faced a series of setbacks in recent months, with much of its leadership eliminated and its military strength eroded. The impact was worsened by the fall of its key ally, Bashar al-Assad, in Syria, disrupting Hezbollah's supply routes.

Despite these challenges, supporters at the funeral vowed to keep the movement alive. "We may have lost a great leader, but we have not lost the spirit of resistance," said Hassan Nasreddine, a mourner who traveled from southern Lebanon for the event. The ceremony also honored Hashem Safieddine, who briefly led Hezbollah after Nasrallah's death but was killed in an Israeli strike before he could be officially named as his successor. Nasrallah was initially buried next to his son, Hadi, who died fighting for Hezbollah in 1997. His formal funeral was postponed until the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, as part of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that ended last year's war.

Kremlin Calls Putin-Trump Talks 'Promising'



TPN Correspondent | Moscow

The Kremlin has welcomed the dialogue between Russian President Vladimir Putin and former U.S. President Donald Trump as "promising," calling both leaders "extraordinary" figures capable of shaping global politics. The remarks come amid secret U.S.-Russia discussions in Saudi Arabia on restoring ties and exploring a possible Ukraine ceasefire—talks that notably excluded Kyiv and European allies.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov emphasized the significance of the Putin-Trump engagement, stating, "This is a dialogue between two extraordinary presidents. That's promising. It is important that nothing prevents us

from realizing the political will of the two heads of state." Trump's outreach to Moscow earlier this month was hailed as a breakthrough for Putin, ending nearly three years of diplomatic isolation following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Despite these discussions, the Kremlin has made it clear that it will "never" give up occupied territories in eastern Ukraine. Peskov reaffirmed Russia's stance, citing Moscow-held referendums widely condemned as illegitimate. "No one will ever sell off these territories. That's the most important thing," he declared.

Meanwhile, Putin marked Russia's "Defender of the Fatherland Day" by framing the war

in Ukraine as a divine mission. Addressing Russian servicemen, he stated, "Fate willed it so, God willed it so. A mission as difficult as it is honorable—defending Russia—has been placed on our and your shoulders." The statement came just a day before the third anniversary of the war, as Russia escalated attacks on Ukraine. Kyiv reported that Moscow launched a record 267 drone strikes overnight, with 138 intercepted and 119 lost, while multiple regions, including the capital, were hit.

Trump's engagement with Putin and his harsh rhetoric against Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky have unsettled Western allies. Trump has falsely claimed that Kyiv started the war and questioned Zelensky's popularity. In response, Zelensky urged continued Western unity, stating, "We must do our best to achieve a lasting and just peace for Ukraine. This is possible with the strength of all partners—Europe, America, and all who seek peace."

Moscow, however, has seized on Trump's attacks on Zelensky. Peskov dismissed the Ukrainian leader's criticism of Trump, saying, "No president would tolerate that kind of treatment. So his reaction is completely understandable."

Stock Markets May Remain Mixed Amid Global Uncertainty



Nifty has strong support at the 22,800 level.

Wabag Technology



After hitting a lifetime high in December, these shares have corrected by 42%, finding support at the crucial ₹1,200 level. Trading and delivery volumes are rising, indicating a potential trend reversal. Investors should consider entering at ₹1,400, with a target of ₹1,550/₹1,600. A stop-loss at ₹1,360 is advised.

SAIL

This stock has been in a downtrend since May last year but has been forming a base since January. Tight price action and strong investor interest following quarterly results indicate potential growth.



Investors should enter at ₹110/₹107, targeting ₹125/₹130, with a stop-loss at ₹103.

Godrej Industries

After facing resistance at ₹1,246 in January, these shares have corrected by 34% but have rebounded from the crucial ₹780 level. They surged 40% in



the last two sessions on heavy volumes. Investors should consider taking a position at ₹1,050/₹1,000, targeting ₹1,250/₹1,350, with a stop-loss at ₹960.

JSW Energy

In a downtrend since September, this stock found support at ₹420 and



has gained in the last four sessions. It broke through the 10- and 20-day moving averages with heavy volume. Investors should enter at ₹470, with a target of ₹550/₹600, and set a stop-loss at ₹445.

InterGlobe Aviation

Despite overall market weakness, this stock is showing strength and outperforming the Nifty. After an



initial downtrend, increasing losses are attracting investors, and EPS saw significant growth in the last quarter. Investors should take a position at ₹4,545, targeting ₹4,750, with a stop-loss at ₹4,410. Market movements will largely depend on global cues, with investors awaiting clarity on trade policies and economic conditions.

Domestic stock markets are expected to remain mixed this week, with indices struggling for direction amid a lack of positive global cues. Investors remain cautious as former U.S. President Donald Trump continues to make successive announcements on tariffs, adding to market uncertainty. With benchmark indices already at lower levels, consolidation seems un-

likely in the near term. Last week, stocks in the metal, commodities, public sector, and oil and gas sectors performed well, while small-cap and mid-cap indices also saw a recovery. However, auto, pharma, FMCG, and IT stocks faced selling pressure. The



MURTHY NAIDU PAADAM
Stock Market Analyst
+91 988 555 9709

India leading in AI adoption, also shaping its governance: Nirmala Sitharaman



TPN Correspondent | Kottayam

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday asserted that India is not only at the forefront of Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption but is also actively shaping global AI governance.

Speaking at the 6th convocation of the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Kottayam, Sitharaman said, "We're not just leading in AI adoption. We're also shaping how AI is governed. The recent AI Action Summit in Paris, where India was co-chair, highlights our leadership in this space. Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi emphasized that AI governance is a global responsibility, not just a national concern." She underlined the importance of responsible AI use, stressing ethical implementation. "AI should be inclusive, ethical, and trustworthy. If AI is misused or used unethically, fears regarding its impact will persist," she added. The minister further pointed out that the Indian government is not merely experimenting with AI but is actively engaging stakeholders and formulating policies to ensure its proper implementation.

Highlighting India's growing presence in AI, she quoted Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, who referred to India as the "use case capital of AI." She noted that India is not just conducting research but also implementing AI on a large scale. India witnessed a remarkable surge in AI-related app downloads, recording 3 billion in 2024, surpassing the US (1.5 billion) and China (1.3 billion). The country's innovation landscape also saw significant progress, with its rank in the Global Innovation Index improving to 39th in 2024, up from 81st in 2015. Additionally, India's patent-to-GDP ratio rose from 144 in 2013 to 381 in 2023, reflecting a growing emphasis on research and development.

India also secured a strong position in global intellectual property, ranking 6th in worldwide IP filings in 2023. The country holds the 7th spot in intangible asset intensity, outperforming several high-income nations. Moreover, India's Network Readiness Index ranking improved from 79th in 2019 to 49th in 2024, highlighting advancements in digital connectivity and technological adoption. Sitharaman emphasized that these advancements reflect India's progress toward greater innovation and self-reliance in the technology sector.

Adani Group's Tax Contribution Rises to ₹58,104 Crore in FY24

The Adani Group reported a significant rise in its tax contributions, with payments reaching ₹58,104 crore in the financial year 2023-24, up from ₹46,610 crore in the previous year. The conglomerate, led by billionaire Gautam Adani, released its Tax Transparency Report, detailing its financial contributions across its portfolio of companies.

The taxes paid include direct contributions such as global taxes, duties, and levies borne by Adani's companies, as well as indirect taxes collected on behalf of stakeholders. Additionally, it covers social security contributions made for employees' benefits.

"For FY 2023-24, Adani Group's total global tax and other contributions to the exchequer amounted to ₹58,104.4 crore, marking a notable rise from the previous year's ₹46,610.2 crore through its listed entities," the company said in a statement.

The independent Tax Transparency Reports were published by seven key Adani Group companies, including Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Adani Green Energy, Adani Energy Solutions, Adani Power, Adani Total Gas, and Ambuja Cements. The report also accounts for tax contributions from NDTV, ACC, and Sanghi Industries, which are part of Adani's broader business portfolio.

Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, emphasized the importance of financial transparency, stating, "As one of India's largest contributors to the exchequer, our responsibility extends beyond compliance. Every rupee we contribute reflects our commitment to transparency and good governance. By voluntarily sharing these reports, we aim to foster greater stakeholder confidence and set new benchmarks for responsible corporate conduct."

The conglomerate's voluntary tax disclosure aligns with a growing global trend, where companies proactively release tax transparency reports despite the absence of regulatory mandates. The initiative aims to enhance stakeholder trust and reinforce Adani's commitment to ethical corporate practices.

"Adani Group considers tax transparency an integral part of its broader ESG framework. We strive to harmonize growth with social responsibility, aiming to transform India's infrastructure landscape while fostering innovation and long-term stakeholder value," the company stated.

With the global tax environment evolving, major corporations are now publishing transparency reports to enhance credibility and showcase accountability. The Adani Group engaged an independent professional agency to verify its contributions to the exchequer, ensuring that its disclosures meet high standards of corporate responsibility.

"By emphasizing transparency and integrity in tax compliance and reporting, the group aims to build trust with stakeholders and demonstrate its commitment to responsible business practices," the statement added.

Assam CM inaugurates Reliance's new Campa Cola plant in Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated Reliance Consumer Products' new Campa Cola bottling plant in Guwahati on Saturday. Set up in collaboration with Jericho Foods and Beverages, the facility is expected to generate employment opportunities for 1,300 people in the state.

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries, announced the launch through a social media post on platform X. The plant marks a significant expansion of the company's Campa portfolio in Northeast India, reinforcing Reliance's strategy to revive heritage brands while fostering regional economic growth.

The manufacturing facility spans 6 lakh square feet, making it one of the largest beverage production units in the region. According to the company, the plant has an initial production capacity exceeding 10 crore litres of carbonated soft drinks and nearly 18 crore litres of packaged drinking water. It will manufacture popular beverages such as Campa Cola, Campa Orange, Campa Lemon, Power Up, and drinking water under the Independence and Sure Water brands.

"Our operations here will generate new employment opportunities, directly contributing to local economic growth.



This expansion is a key step in our strategy of reviving India's heritage brands while fostering sustainable development for the region," said Ketan Mody, Chief Operating Officer of Reliance Consumer Products Ltd. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma praised the initiative, stating that it would strengthen the brand and create more expansion opportunities. "I believe that this brand will grow from strength to strength and

will have an opportunity to expand more. I wish all the best to Reliance Consumer Products Limited, as well as to Jericho," he said at the inauguration event.

He also emphasized the affordability of Campa products, which he said offers an advantage in the competitive market. "While they are giving at an affordable price, they are not compromising with the quality, which is at par with other global standards," he added.

In a social media post, the Assam CM reiterated that the plant's establishment will provide employment for 1,300 youths, contributing to the state's economic development. The project is expected to further bolster Assam's position as an emerging hub for manufacturing and industrial growth.





NASA Lowers Risk of Asteroid 2024 YR4 Impact in 2032



TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C. NASA has significantly reduced concerns regarding asteroid 2024 YR4, revising its estimated impact probability in 2032 from 1 in 32 to 1 in 360. The 55-meter-wide asteroid, initially considered the most hazardous object on NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Studies (CNEOS) Sentry Risk Table, now has a 99.72% chance of completely missing Earth.

The reassessment follows new observational data collected between February 18 and February 20, allowing for refined calculations of the asteroid's trajectory. As a result, NASA has downgraded its classification to Level 1 on the Torino Scale, which assesses the threat posed by near-Earth objects. Richard Binzel, creator of the Torino Scale, indicated that further observations might move

2024 YR4 to Level 0, signifying no risk. Despite the risk reduction, asteroid 2024 YR4 remains the most concerning object on the Sentry Risk Table, followed by asteroid 1950 DA, which has a 0.039% chance of impacting Earth in the year 2880. Experts stress that continuous monitoring will provide greater clarity, especially when the asteroid makes another approach in 2028.

David Rankin, an astronomer with the Catalina Sky Survey, explained that small uncertainties in measurements could result in large trajectory shifts over time. However, he reassured that additional observations will likely continue lowering any remaining impact probabilities.

NASA also acknowledged a minor possibility that 2024 YR4 could collide with the Moon, though the likelihood remains extremely low. The asteroid is now moving away from Earth and will not be visible to ground-based telescopes until 2028, when further tracking will refine its projected path. Scientists remain confident that it will continue its orbit around the Sun without posing any danger to Earth.

Boult Launches Mustang Q Headphones, Torq and Dyno TWS Earbuds in India



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Boult has introduced its latest range of audio products in India, unveiling the Mustang Q over-the-ear Bluetooth headphones alongside Mustang Torq and Mustang Dyno truly wireless (TWS) earbuds. Developed in collaboration with Ford's Mustang, these new offerings feature a design inspired by the iconic car, complete with Mustang-themed stripes, logos, and color shades.

The Boult Mustang Q is priced at ₹2,499 and comes in a single Blue variant. The Mustang Torq and Mustang Dyno earbuds are priced at ₹1,499 and ₹1,299, respectively. The Torq model is available in Silver and Yellow, while the Dyno variant comes in Grey. All three products are now available for purchase in India.

The Boult Mustang Q headphones boast

an IP67-rated water-resistant build and promise up to 70 hours of battery life on a single charge with active noise cancellation (ANC) enabled. They are equipped with 12mm drivers, environmental noise cancellation (ENC), and Bluetooth 5.4 connectivity, ensuring seamless compatibility with Android and iOS devices. The headphones also offer four EQ modes—Bass, Rock, Vocal, and Pop—and support dual-device pairing. A 10-minute charge provides up to 10 hours of playback time. The Mustang Torq and Mustang Dyno earbuds feature 13mm drivers for enhanced bass and support AAC and SBC codecs. With a quad-mic setup and ENC, these earbuds aim to provide clear call quality with minimal background noise. They also support AI voice assistants and offer touch controls for managing calls

and media playback.

For gamers, both models feature a low-latency mode with a 45ms response time, which can be activated through the Boult Amp app. They are IPX5-rated for sweat and water resistance, ensuring durability for workouts and outdoor use. With Bluetooth 5.4 connectivity, the earbuds support dual-device pairing and USB Type-C fast charging. The Mustang Torq offers up to 60 hours of total playback and provides two hours of listening time with just a 10-minute charge.

Boult's latest lineup aims to cater to music lovers and gamers alike, combining extended battery life, enhanced durability, and premium design inspired by Ford's Mustang.

Record Number Of Olive Ridley Turtles Arrive For Nesting At Odisha Beach



TPN Correspondent | Berhampur

The Rushikulya river mouth in Odisha's Ganjam district has witnessed a record-breaking mass nesting of endangered Olive Ridley turtles, with over 6.82 lakh turtles laying eggs so far. This sur-

passes the previous high of 6.37 lakh turtles recorded in 2023.

The mass nesting began on February 16, and the numbers are expected to increase further, said Berhampur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Sunny Khokkar.

Favorable climatic conditions are believed

to be a key factor behind the increased nesting activity. "The better climatic conditions this year have helped more turtles lay eggs in the Rushikulya river mouth, which is emerging as a major rookery," said senior scientist Bivas Pandav from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun.

Experts also anticipate a higher number of hatchlings due to the timely nesting. "Since the mass nesting has occurred on time, we expect a good number of hatchlings," said Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) scientist Basudev Tripathy.

Meanwhile, conservation efforts are in full swing. The government has installed protective fencing along a 9-km stretch from New Podampeta to Prayagi to safeguard the eggs from predators. "We have taken utmost care to protect the eggs, which may hatch after 45 days," said Dibya Shankar Behera, Range Officer of Khalikote.

Additionally, researchers have recaptured over 330 turtles that were GPS-tagged between 2021 and 2023, providing valuable insights into their migratory patterns, said ZSI scientist Anil Mohapatra.

Amazonian Town Faces Crisis as Massive Sinkholes Expand



TPN Correspondent | Buriticupu

The city of Buriticupu in Brazil's northeastern Amazon is facing a growing crisis as massive sinkholes continue to expand, threatening the homes of at least 1,200 residents. The municipal government recently declared a state of emergency as the situation worsened.

In a decree issued earlier this month, officials warned that the sinkholes have been expanding "exponentially" in recent months, putting more homes at risk. Several buildings have already collapsed, and the danger continues to increase.

The issue has been unfolding for nearly 30 years due to heavy rains eroding sandy soils, worsened by deforestation and poorly planned construction. Known

as "voco-roca" in Brazil—a term of indigenous origin meaning "to tear the earth"—these sinkholes have now reached a critical stage.

The situation is particularly dire during the current rainy season, according to geographer Marcelino Farias of the Federal University of Maranhao. Long-time resident Antonia dos Anjos, 65, expressed her fears, saying, "There's this danger right in front of us, and nobody knows where the next hole will open up."

Buriticupu's secretary of public works, Lucas Conceicao, admitted that the municipality lacks the resources to handle the crisis. "The challenges range from stopping the erosion to relocating people from risk areas," he said.

Google rolls out new filters for call history sorting on Android

Google is introducing a new feature in its Phone app that enhances call history sorting by categorizing calls based on type, such as spam, contacts, or unknown callers. This update, initially available to beta users, is now reportedly rolling out to all Android users.

According to a report by Android Authority, the new feature allows users to filter call history into categories like all, missed, contacts, spam, and non-spam. This makes it easier to find specific callers without scrolling through an extensive list of unrelated calls. However, users currently do not have the option to filter calls by incoming or outgoing status.

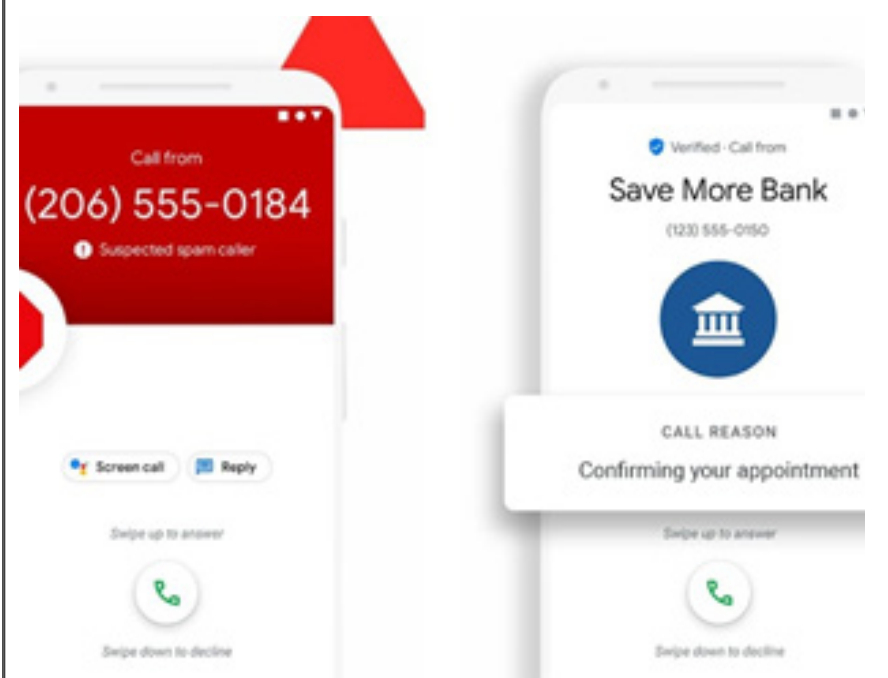
Call filters were first introduced with the 159.0.718038457-public-beta-pixel2024 update of the Phone app last month. At that time, it was limited to beta users with no official announcement on a public rollout. The latest report indicates that the feature is now becoming wide-

ly available, though it may be a phased rollout controlled via a server-side update. As a result, some users, including Gadgets 360 staff members, have yet to see the feature on their devices, including Pixel phones.

Additional Spam Protection Features

The new call sorting feature adds to Google's ongoing efforts to improve spam protection and enhance user convenience. One of the key tools in this regard is the Call Screen feature available on Pixel devices. It acts as an intermediary, screening calls by asking the caller their name and reason for calling, then providing a transcript to the receiver before they decide whether to answer.

Another notable feature is reverse lookup, which helps users identify unknown numbers and filter out spam calls. These measures are part of Google's broader strategy to reduce call spam and improve the overall calling experience for Android users.



Virat Kohli's 51st ODI century powers India past Pakistan in Champions Trophy clash



Virat Kohli once again proved his dominance in high-pressure encounters, smashing his 51st ODI century to lead India to a commanding six-wicket victory over Pakistan in the Champions Trophy 2025. The win not only strengthened India's hold on the top spot in Group A but also virtually secured their place in the semifinals. Chasing a target of 242, Kohli anchored the innings with an unbeaten 100 off 111 balls, featuring seven fours. He found valuable support from Shreyas Iyer (56 off 67) and Shubman Gill (46 off 52) as India comfortably overhauled the total with more than seven overs to spare. The match began with Shaheen Shah Afridi giving Pakistan a brief moment of hope, dismissing Rohit Sharma (20) with a toe-crushing yorker. However, Kohli remained unfazed, expertly handling Pakistan's pace attack and playing cautiously against leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed. His partnership with Iyer, worth 114 runs for the third wicket, effectively shut Pakistan out of the contest. Earlier, Pakistan struggled to accelerate despite a fighting half-century from Saud Shakeel (62 off 76) and a steady 46

from skipper Mohammad Rizwan. The duo added 104 runs for the third wicket, but tight bowling from Kuldeep Yadav (3/40) and Hardik Pandya (2/39) restricted them to 241. Babar Azam (23) looked promising but edged behind while attempting an expansive drive off Pandya. Imam-ul-Haq (10) was run out after a mix-up, leaving Pakistan at 47/2. Their innings stagnated as India's disciplined bowling attack denied them easy runs, with a 55-ball stretch without a boundary in the middle overs. Shakeel and Rizwan stabilized the innings before India struck back. Rizwan was bowled by Axar Patel, while Shakeel holed out attempting a pull shot off Pandya. The lower order, including Shaheen and Naseem Shah, fell cheaply to Kuldeep's spin, while Khushdil Shah's late 38-run cameo pushed Pakistan past 240. Despite brief injury concerns for Mohammed Shami and Rohit Sharma during Pakistan's innings, India remained in full control. Kohli, underlining his big-match temperament, became the fastest player to reach 14,000 ODI runs during his innings, adding yet another feather to his illustrious cap.

Megastar Chiranjeevi attends India-Pak match in Dubai



Megastar Chiranjeevi was among the distinguished personalities who attended the highly anticipated India-Pakistan clash in the Champions Trophy at the Dubai International Stadium. Known for his love for sports, the legendary actor was seen enjoying the electrifying contest that had fans across the world glued to their screens. Chiranjeevi was seated in the VIP gallery alongside some of India's rising cricket stars. He was spotted with young cricketers Tilak Varma and Abhishek

Sharma, sharing insights and enjoying the thrilling game. A photograph of this memorable moment has gone viral on social media, drawing admiration from both cinema and cricket fans alike. The India-Pakistan rivalry has always been one of the biggest spectacles in world cricket, and with Chiranjeevi's presence adding to the star-studded ambiance, the event became even more special for those in attendance.

MS Dhoni watches India-Pakistan clash with Sunny Deol



Former Indian captain MS Dhoni was spotted enjoying the high-stakes Champions Trophy 2025 match between India and Pakistan alongside Bollywood actor Sunny Deol. The video of the duo watching the game at the Dubai International Stadium quickly went viral on social media. The India-Pakistan rivalry, one of the most intense in cricket, has always drawn massive attention from fans worldwide. Given the politi-

cal tensions between the two nations, bilateral series have not been played for over a decade, making ICC tournaments the only stage where the two teams face off. In a video shared by Star Sports India on Instagram, Dhoni and Deol were seen engaged in discussion while seated among enthusiastic fans. The presence of the legendary cricketer and the Bollywood star added to the excitement surrounding the marquee clash.

Jasprit Bumrah in Dubai for India-Pakistan clash, receives all ICC awards



Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah arrived in Dubai ahead of the much-anticipated India-Pakistan Champions Trophy clash, where he was felicitated with his prestigious ICC awards for 2024. The International Cricket Council (ICC) shared a picture of Bumrah posing with his accolades at the Dubai International Stadium. Bumrah received multiple top honors, including ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year, ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year, ICC Men's Test Team of the Year, and ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year. His stellar performances across formats in 2024 solidified his place as one of the greatest bowlers of his generation. Despite his achievements, Bumrah is missing the ongoing Champions Trophy due to a back injury sustained during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test in Sydney earlier this year. Harshit Rana has

replaced him in the squad. The Indian fast bowler had a sensational 2024, leading the charts with 86 wickets in 21 international matches at an average of 13.76. His dominance in Test cricket was unmatched, scalping 71 wickets in 13 matches at a staggering average of 14.92, including five five-wicket hauls. His performance in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, where he took 32 wickets in five Tests, was a standout, even as India lost the series 3-1 to Australia. Bumrah's brilliance extended to T20 cricket as well, where he played a pivotal role in India's T20 World Cup-winning campaign, bagging 15 crucial wickets at an average of 8.26 and earning the 'Player of the Tournament' award. His efforts in IPL 2024 also saw him finish as the leading wicket-taker for Mumbai Indians with 20 scalps in 13 matches.

Vivek Oberoi bumps into Venkatesh Prasad during India-Pak clash



Bollywood actor Vivek Oberoi, who was last seen in the streaming series Indian Police Force, is currently in Dubai, soaking in the excitement of the India-Pakistan Champions Trophy clash. During the match, he had a chance encounter with former Indian cricketer Venkatesh Prasad. Taking to Instagram, Vivek shared a picture from the Dubai International Stadium, where he was seen posing with the legendary fast bowler. Recalling one of Prasad's most iconic moments in Indo-Pak cricket history, Vivek wrote, "The legend! So good to see you, Venky Anna, and thank you for blessing my son! Who can for-

get that Ind-Pak match where you dismissed Aamir Sohail! Battles like that are what make Ind-Pak matches so memorable!" Beyond his cricket admiration, Vivek has recently been making headlines for his views on wealth creation and financial planning. A resurfaced video of the actor shared on social media highlights his investment philosophy, where he advises maintaining savings worth three times one's annual income as a safety net. "Your income of one year, whatever it is, keep three times that in savings. That way, you are sorted for three to five years in case of any uncertainties in life," he shared.

Lionel Messi And Inter Miami Held By New York City In MLS Opener

Lionel Messi showcased his brilliance in stoppage time to help Inter Miami secure a dramatic 2-2 draw against New York City FC in their Major League Soccer (MLS) season opener on Saturday. Despite playing most of the match with 10 men after Tomas Aviles' early red card, Miami managed to avoid defeat, thanks to Messi's two crucial assists, including a last-gasp equalizer.

With Javier Mascherano making his MLS debut as Miami's head coach, the team featured several new faces but struggled for cohesion. The match started perfectly for Miami, with Messi setting up Aviles for an early fifth-minute lead. However, things quickly turned south as Aviles was sent off in the 23rd minute for bringing down Alonso Martinez. New York capitalized on the advantage, equalizing through Mitja

lenic and later taking the lead after Jordi Alba's misplaced pass gifted a goal to Martinez. Messi, facing a resolute New York defense and limited support from an ineffective Luis Suárez, still managed to make an impact. In the dying moments, he delivered a precise assist to Telasco Segovia, who chipped the ball past goalkeeper Matt Freese to secure a crucial point for Miami.



Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala Spread Joy at Child Care Centre

Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala recently visited the St. Jude India Child Care Centre in Hyderabad, where they spent quality time with children battling cancer. The couple shared heartwarming moments with the kids, with Naga Chaitanya seen bonding with the children and even dancing with them. Sobhita, who looked effortlessly stylish in a white shirt and baggy denim jeans, was also seen taking a selfie with one of the children.

The couple, who got married in December last year in a traditional Telugu ceremony,

made a lasting impression on the kids and staff with their warm gestures. In a post shared by a fan page on Instagram, the caption read, "Smiles & laughter with the cancer warriors." Naga Chaitanya recently opened up about how Sobhita handled the wedding planning, praising her for bringing out the beauty of Telugu culture in every detail. Both actors are continuing their work in the entertainment industry, with Naga Chaitanya recently starring in Thandel and Sobhita in Love, Sitara on ZEE5.



Mark Strong Meets Tabu in Mumbai, Calls Himself Her Biggest Fan

British actor Mark Strong, currently in India, reunited with his *Dune: Prophecy* co-star Tabu in Mumbai, calling it a "wonderful reunion." The 61-year-old actor shared photos with Tabu on Instagram, expressing his admiration for the Bollywood star, writing, "The glamorous beautiful talented Tabu and her biggest fan." Tabu also posted pictures from their meeting, captioning, "Javico and Francesca re-unite!!!" referring to their roles in the *Dune* prequel. Strong, known for films like *Kingsman* and *Sherlock Holmes*, is touring India and recently visited Rajasthan, where he explored Amber Fort and Johari Bazaar. Tabu welcomed him to India in a comment on his post.

Love Scout Review

A Slow-Burn Workplace Romance With Depth

Love Scout is a refreshing K-drama that stands out by offering a subtle and thoughtful exploration of workplace dynamics, personal growth, and romance. Set in a headhunting firm, it presents the relationship between the ambitious female boss, Kang Ji-yun (Han Ji-min), and her warm, empathetic male secretary, Yu Eun-ho (Lee Jun-hyuk), in a grounded, slow-burn manner that avoids clichés.

What makes *Love Scout* truly special is its careful handling of secondary characters and its nuanced take on power and vulnerability. The series focuses not on dramatic climaxes but on the quiet, meaningful development of relationships, highlighting human connection and respect. The slow evolution of Ji-yun and Eun-ho's bond feels authentic, with moments of intimacy and understanding.

With thoughtful direction, a beautiful soundtrack, and understated cinematography, *Love Scout* proves to be a rare gem, challenging conventional gender roles while handling romance with elegance and restraint.



Kangana Ranaut Criticizes Bollywood's Impact on Marriages



New Delhi: Amid the success of Sanya Malhotra's *Mrs.*, which addresses themes of patriarchal oppression and domestic struggles in arranged marriages, Kangana Ranaut has shared her perspective on the Indian marriage system. Without directly referencing the film, Kangana took to Instagram Stories, urging people not to generalize the concept of Indian joint families.

She shared her experiences of growing up, stating that women in her family commanded their households with authority and managed everything, including finances and family dynamics. Kangana emphasized that marriages should focus on duty, as defined by the Dharma in ancient scriptures, rather than seeking attention or validation. She criticized Bollywood for distorting traditional views on marriage, calling out the industry's portrayal of love stories that undermine the real purpose of relationships.

Indie Film Festival Awards: Chandu Champion and Laapataa Ladies Earn Nominations

New Delhi: The first edition of the Indie Film Festival Awards – New York has announced its nominations for Hindi films of 2024, with *Chandu Champion* and *Laapataa Ladies* earning nods. *Chandu Champion*, directed by Kabir Khan and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala, tells the inspiring story of Paralympic swimmer Murlikant Petkar, starring Kartik Aaryan. Meanwhile, Kiran Rao's *Laapataa Ladies*, a comedy-drama that explores themes of identity and empowerment, follows the journey of two women on an unexpected adventure. The film, featuring Nitanshi Goel, Pratibha Ranta, and Sparsh Shrivastava, was also India's official entry for the Oscars. Both films have captured significant attention for their impactful storytelling and performances.



Dhanashree Verma and Yuzvendra Chahal Officially Divorced: Request for Privacy

New Delhi: Cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal and choreographer Dhanashree Verma have officially settled their divorce, as confirmed by Chahal's lawyer, Nitin K Gupta. The divorce petition, filed by mutual consent, is currently under judicial review at the Bandra Family Court in Mumbai. The couple, who married on December 11, 2020, has requested the public to refrain from speculating or commenting on the matter.

Chahal's lawyer emphasized that further legal steps are underway, and both Chahal and his family have decided not to discuss media reports. Dhanashree's family also refuted rumors of a Rs 60 crore alimony demand, calling them completely false and irresponsible. The couple's divorce rumors began in 2023 after Dhanashree dropped "Chahal" from her Instagram handle.

