



Weather Forecast

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

AAP government has left 'entire exchequer empty': Delhi CM Rekha Gupta

- Vows ₹2,500 aid for women despite financial issues
- Scheme to help 38 lakh women, costing ₹11,000 crore yearly
- BJP slams AAP over finances and accountability

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, addressing a joint press conference with BJP Delhi chief Virendra Sachdeva, criticized the previous AAP-led government's handling of the state's finances. Gupta claimed that the state coffers were "empty" when her administration took over but assured that the BJP government was fully committed to rolling out the Rs 2,500-per-month honorarium scheme for eligible women under the 'Mahila Samridhi Yojana.'

Since assuming office, Gupta mentioned holding multiple rounds of discussions with government officials about the scheme's implementation. She emphasized that while the state's financial condition left much to be desired, the BJP government would ensure that the women's aid scheme was carried out with thorough planning and dedication. "It's our commitment.



We will do it 1,000%," she added.

The scheme is estimated to benefit around 38 lakh women above 18, excluding taxpayers, government employees, and beneficiaries of other welfare schemes. The government anticipates an annual expenditure of over Rs 11,000 crore for this initiative.

Gupta also outlined the key objectives for the current assembly session, which began with the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. The session, which will last for three days, will focus on advancing development projects and ensuring financial accountability. "The most important aspect of this session, as we committed, will be the laying of the pending CAG reports in

the House," Gupta stated. She added that the previous government must now be held accountable for the misuse of public funds.

In response to former CM Atishi's statement about the proper procedure followed by the AAP government in forwarding the CAG reports, Sachdeva accused the AAP of "peddling lies" and called for them to answer for their actions.

Looking ahead, Sachdeva promised that the BJP government would focus on making Delhi a "viksit rajdhani" (developed capital) and ensure the completion of all pending development projects. He also emphasized that the work of BJP legislators would counter any attempts to defame the party.



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a sharp jab at Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Lalu Yadav, criticizing him for his past corruption, saying that "those who ate fodder meant for animals" cannot be trusted to think about farmers' welfare. Speaking at a rally in Bhagalpur, Bihar, Modi intensified his criticism by referencing the RJD's stance on the ongoing Maha Kumbh, accusing them of undermining India's heritage and faith.

Modi expressed his disappointment with RJD leaders for their negative comments about the Maha Kumbh, stating that "more people than the entire population of Europe" had taken a holy dip in the event. He added that individuals associated with "jungle raj" and those who oppose the Ram temple are also attacking this sacred occasion. "The people of Bihar will never forgive those who speak ill of this sacred occasion," he remarked, further highlighting the ideological divide between his government and the opposition.

The rally, ahead of the Bihar assembly elections, also carried a strong message for farmers. Modi reiterated that the NDA government, both at the Centre and in Bihar, has always prioritized farmers' welfare. He credited the gov-

Eye On Bihar Election, PM Modi Targets Lalu Yadav Over Fodder Scam, Kumbh

ernment's support programs, including the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), for improving the lives of farmers across the country. He mentioned that, had the NDA government not been in power, farmers would not have benefitted from schemes such as PM KISAN.

In his speech, Modi also emphasized the government's efforts to boost agricultural exports, noting that India has seen significant growth in exports of agricultural products. He revealed that Makhana (foxnuts), a crop from Bihar, would soon be part of the country's export lineup. Modi shared that the government has announced the creation of a Makhana board, which will be established soon, and that the crop will be promoted as a superfood in global markets. The PM assured farmers that their future prospects were bright under the current government.

Defamation case against Rahul Gandhi: Hearing deferred to March 6

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

A special MP/MLA court on Monday adjourned the hearing in the defamation case against Leader of Opposition and Rae Bareilly MP Rahul Gandhi to March 6. The case pertains to allegations made by Gandhi that have led to a legal dispute over defamation.

Rahul Gandhi's lawyer, Kashi Prasad Shukla, provided an update on the case, stating that the complainant was cross-examined on February 11. The proceedings, which are being closely watched due to the high-profile nature of the case, are expected to continue next month.

The defamation suit, filed against Gandhi, has sparked political discussions, as it touches on statements made by the Congress leader in the course of his public speeches. The legal battle has added to the political tensions between the ruling party and the opposition, with both sides continuing to scrutinize the implications of the ongoing case.



The adjournment of the hearing has pushed back the resolution of the matter to early March, keeping it in the public eye as it remains part of a broader political discourse. The outcome of the defamation case will be closely observed by political observers, as it could have significant ramifications for Rahul Gandhi's public image and his role as the leader of the opposition.

As the case progresses, all eyes will be on the court's ruling and whether it influences the political dynamics in the country.

Yogi Adityanath's jibe at Maha Kumbh critics: 'Pig got dirt, vultures got dead bodies'

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Ahead of the grand finale of the Maha Kumbh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took a sharp jab at the opposition during his speech in the state assembly. The CM asserted that the Kumbh served as a spiritual hub for everyone, where people found what they sought—some found the sacred, others their personal pursuits.

"The Kumbh is where vultures got dead bodies, pigs got filth... sensitive people got a beautiful picture of relationships, traders got business, and devotees got clean arrangements," he remarked, targeting critics who had been vocal about various incidents during the event. His comments were aimed at opposition leaders who had focused on negative aspects of the Kumbh, particularly after the stampede that resulted in the deaths of 18 people.

Adityanath further clarified that no caste was barred from attending the Kumbh, stressing that those with good



intentions were welcome, while those attempting to create chaos would face consequences. "We have not played with faith like you," he said, referring to the Samajwadi Party's handling of the Kumbh during Akhilesh Yadav's tenure as CM. He accused Yadav of appointing a non-Sanatani to manage the Kumbh, in contrast to his own active involvement in reviewing and overseeing the event.

The CM also criticized the 2013 Kumbh,

which he claimed was marked by chaos, corruption, and pollution. He cited the example of the Prime Minister of Mauritius, who reportedly refused to bathe in the Triveni due to the state of the waters.

The opposition has found multiple reasons to criticize the ongoing Kumbh, with Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Samajwadi Party leader Jaya Bachchan raising

concerns about the stampede and allegations of bodies being thrown into the river. Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee also referred to the event as "Mrityu Kumbh," sparking further controversy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also defended the Kumbh, equating critics to foreign powers trying to undermine the country and its religious heritage, and accusing them of harboring a "slave mentality."

PM Modi and S. Jaishankar to Attend Assam's Largest Jhumoir Dance Event

- 8,500 dancers, 60 diplomats to witness grand folk performance
- Jhumoir dance set for global recognition, streamed across tea estates

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar are set to attend Assam's largest-ever Jhumoir dance event, which will showcase the vibrant traditions of the state's tea tribe community. The spectacular event, featuring over 8,500 participants, will be broadcast live across 800 tea estates, allowing a wider audience to experience this traditional folk dance.



In addition to the Indian leaders, a delegation of over 60 foreign diplomats will also be present, further highlighting the international significance of the performance. For those unable to attend in person, the dance will be streamed on television and displayed on large LED screens throughout the tea gardens, allowing the local community to join in the celebration from afar.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized the cultural importance of Jhumoir, responding to recent claims questioning its authenticity. He reaffirmed that Jhumoir is an integral part of Assamese heritage and holds deep cultural significance for the tea tribe community. Sarma also revealed plans to bring Jhumoir performances to an

international stage, including upcoming shows in Delhi.

Ahead of the main event, a full-dress rehearsal was held on Sunday at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium, attended by Sarma and other government officials. While the rehearsal was open to the public, Monday's performance will be restricted to invitees with government-issued passes due to security concerns. Dancers, who have been rehearsing under professional guidance since Friday, are expected to deliver a flawless and captivating performance.

Jhumoir is a traditional folk dance performed primarily by the tea tribe communities of Assam and surrounding states like West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha. Rooted in

the daily lives of tea garden workers, Jhumoir is typically performed during harvest festivals and social gatherings. The dance is marked by synchronized movements, rhythmic beats of the Madol (a traditional drum), and melodic folk songs that narrate tales of love, labor, and life in the tea gardens.

The performance serves as both a cultural and visual spectacle, symbolizing unity and the collective spirit of Assam's tea garden workers. This upcoming event at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium is poised to bring national and global recognition to the cherished art form, following Assam's historical achievement in 2023 with the record-breaking Bihu dance performance.

Jhoot Brigade: Congress Accuses Centre of Misleading Public on USAID Funding

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress launched a sharp critique of the central government's handling of claims regarding USAID funding to India. The opposition party referred to a recent report from the Union Ministry of Finance to accuse the government of misleading the public on the issue.



Congress leader Jairam Ramesh took to X (formerly Twitter) to assert that the government had lied about the nature of the seven projects listed in the finance ministry's annual report for 2023-24. Ramesh emphasized that none of these projects were related to "voter turnout," as alleged by some government representatives.

In his post, Ramesh pointed out that the Ministry of Finance had exposed the government's claims, calling out Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the External Affairs Minister for making false statements. The finance ministry's report, he explained, revealed that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is currently involved in seven projects in collaboration with the Indian government, with a total budget of approximately \$750 million. However, Ramesh emphasized that none of these projects had anything to do with voter turnout.

"Not a single one of these projects has to do with voter turnout. ALL of them are with and through the Union government," Ramesh asserted in his post. He further accused the government of deliberately spreading misinformation in order to discredit USAID's involvement in India's development projects.

The ongoing debate centers around the role of USAID in funding projects within India and whether there is any involvement in electoral processes. Congress has used the finance ministry's report to highlight discrepancies between the government's claims and the actual details outlined in the official document. The ruling government has yet to respond to the specific allegations raised by Congress regarding the funding and its connection to voter turnout.

I Have Options If You Don't Need Me: Shashi Tharoor's Message To Congress



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Shashi Tharoor, the diplomat-turned-MP, has sent a pointed message to the Congress high command amid a brewing row over his praise for Kerala's Left-led government. The four-time elected MP from Thiruvananthapuram made it clear that if Congress no longer values his contributions, he has no shortage of other pursuits. Tharoor, who has stirred controversy within his party by praising the Kerala government's policies and growth, emphasized that he has numerous options beyond Congress, including his books, international speaking engagements, and invitations for talks.

Tharoor's remarks were made in the context of his recent participation in 'Varthamanam,' a Malayalam-language podcast by The Indian Express, set to launch on Wednesday. In the teaser for the podcast, Tharoor criticized the absence of a Congress representative on the platform, signaling his growing frustration with the party's stance towards him.

His praise for Kerala's Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led government has earned him criticism from his own party members, who feel that his comments are a betrayal. Tharoor, however, defended his statements, asserting that his opinions about the state's progress in sectors like startups were based on facts, not politics. He also defended his previous praise for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, saying his comments were made with India's interests in mind, not for party gain.

In his recent statements, Tharoor highlighted the need for Congress to expand its appeal in Kerala if it hopes to avoid another loss in state elections. He criticized the party for relying solely on its traditional support base, stating that for Congress to be in power, it needs to secure additional votes from those who have not supported it in recent elections.

Tharoor also stressed that his return to India after a successful career abroad was driven by his desire to serve the country, not just to follow party lines. His comments reflect a growing rift within the Congress, as he continues to chart his own course in Indian politics.

Congress Protests in Rajasthan Over Minister's Remarks on Indira Gandhi

TPN Correspondent | Rajasthan

Congress workers in Rajasthan staged a strong demonstration outside the state assembly in response to remarks made by state minister Avinash Gehlot about former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The protest, which involved a significant number of Congress leaders, was met with police intervention, as barricades were set up to prevent the demonstrators from advancing toward the assembly premises.



Among the prominent figures leading the protest were MPs Harish Meena and Murari Meena, former minister BD Kalla, and several other senior Congress leaders. The protest was sparked by remarks made by Gehlot last Friday, which quickly escalated into a political controversy. The minister's comments about Indira Gandhi ignited strong reactions from Congress members, prompting them to stage a sit-in inside the assembly as a sign of their opposition.

The situation escalated further as Congress workers, upset by Gehlot's controversial remarks, took to the streets to demand an apology and accountability from the minister. The police responded by placing barricades and preventing the protesters from getting closer to the assembly building, trying to maintain order and prevent any further disturbances.

The political storm surrounding Gehlot's comments intensified as Congress leaders rallied against the minister's remarks, which they viewed as disrespectful to the legacy of Indira Gandhi. The protest outside the Rajasthan Assembly highlighted the deep divisions within the state's political landscape, with Congress making it clear that it would not tolerate any remarks undermining the legacy of one of the party's most iconic leaders.

As the protest unfolded, Congress MPs and leaders continued their efforts to raise awareness about the issue, demanding the state government take action and hold Gehlot accountable for his remarks. This ongoing political dispute further highlights the tense environment in Rajasthan's political arena.

Double-Blunder Government: Akhilesh Yadav's Dig Over Maha Kumbh Arrangements

TPN Correspondent | Etawah

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the Yogi Adityanath government over its arrangements for the Maha Kumbh, accusing the state government of focusing more on "marketing" its image rather than addressing the difficulties faced by devotees during the religious event. He claimed that the people attending the Maha Kumbh felt "hurt" and inconvenienced compared to previous experiences.



Yadav targeted the state government's efforts to promote the event, citing Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's statement that preparations had been made for 100 crore pilgrims. While the statement was meant to inspire confidence, Yadav argued that it only set unrealistic expectations, especially when large numbers of devotees faced problems during the event.

He also referred to the claims and counterclaims about the pollution levels in the Sangam in Prayagraj, calling the state government the "double-blunder government." Yadav criticized the government's promotional efforts, claiming that high-profile personalities were invited to the event to boost its image. He referred to the government's assertions that the Maha Kumbh was a once-in-144-year event as a "big lie."

In addition to criticizing the event's management, Yadav expressed concerns about the tragic stampede on January 29, which led to 30 casualties. He pointed out that despite the massive investments and publicity, the government failed to provide basic facilities, such as food for devotees, and failed to prevent accidents.

Yadav called for an extension of the Kumbh dates, as many pilgrims had not yet completed their rituals due to the disorganized arrangements. He also blamed the BJP for failing to deliver on its promises to improve the economy, create jobs, and support businesses, accusing the government of misleading the public with promises that had not materialized.

The Maha Kumbh Mela, which began on January 13, will conclude on February 26, coinciding with Maha Shivratri.

It's Time To Invest In Madhya Pradesh: PM Modi At Global Investors Summit



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the inauguration of the 'Invest Madhya Pradesh - Global Investors Summit 2025' in Bhopal, highlighted the state's growing potential as a preferred business destination. He emphasized that Madhya Pradesh, with its strong talent pool and thriving industries, is positioned as an attractive investment hub. The summit, held at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya near Upper Lake, was aimed at showcasing the state's limitless possibilities for investors and industrialists.

PM Modi noted that the World Bank has projected India to remain the world's fastest-growing economy for the next two years. He also mentioned the establishment of a Deregulation Commission to create

a more investment-friendly regulatory ecosystem in the country. With India's emergence as a key player in the global aerospace sector, PM Modi highlighted significant opportunities in industries like textiles, tourism, and technology, which are expected to generate millions of jobs in the coming years.

The Prime Minister unveiled 18 new policies by the Madhya Pradesh government designed to attract substantial investment. He assured that the state's development has gained momentum with the 'double engine' government, significantly improving governance and infrastructure.

Madhya Pradesh is now a leader in India's electric vehicle revolution, with strong growth in the health and wellness sector. PM Modi also highlighted the global appreciation

of India's 'heal in India' initiative, which is gaining traction worldwide.

Reflecting on the state's transformation over the past two decades, the Prime Minister acknowledged the early challenges in electricity, water, and law and order but praised the current progress. He reiterated that Madhya Pradesh is now among the top investment destinations in India.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav shared his vision for Madhya Pradesh to become a major global investment hub and committed to doubling the state's economy in the next five years. The state has declared 2025 as the 'Year of Industries and Employment,' aligning with India's broader goal to become a developed nation by 2047.

- Calls Madhya Pradesh a top investment destination
- New policies unveiled to boost business
- Aims to double its economy, focusing on industries

Atishi Urges Delhi CM to Fulfill BJP's Promise of ₹2,500 for Women



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Atishi called on Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday, urging her to honor Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of transferring ₹2,500 per month to the accounts of every woman in Delhi under the Mahila Samman Yojana. Atishi, who is also the Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, criticized the BJP for failing to fulfill its electoral guarantees.

Atishi revealed that she had been trying to secure an appointment with the Chief Minister for over two days but was unable to meet her. As a result, AAP leaders approached Rekha Gupta directly during the ongoing Assembly session. Atishi said, "We had asked for time from the Chief Minister for the last two days but did not get a response. So, today, we went to meet CM Rekha Gupta ji during the session and told her that the promise made by Modi ji in the first Cabinet meeting has been broken. This guarantee has proven to be false."

The Leader of Opposition further emphasized that the BJP's inability to fulfill its promises, especially the ₹2,500 monthly benefit to women, was a sign of broken commitments. Atishi expressed hope that the first installment of the ₹2,500 under the Mahila Samman Yojana would be credited to the accounts of every woman in Delhi by March 8, as promised during the BJP's election campaign.

Atishi's remarks come as the AAP continues to challenge the new BJP-led government in Delhi, following the party's decisive victory in the February 5 Assembly elections. The BJP's promises during the campaign, including financial assistance for women, have been a key point of contention as AAP seeks accountability from the ruling party.

As the opposition leader, Atishi has vowed to hold the BJP accountable for its election promises and ensure that the women of Delhi receive the benefits they were promised.

Mamata Announces Salary Hike for Doctors Amid Ongoing Controversies in West Bengal

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

Six months after the shocking RG Kar rape and murder case in Kolkata, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has announced a salary hike for state government doctors. The announcement came during a medical conclave in Kolkata on Monday, where the Chief Minister detailed the pay raise. Senior doctors will receive a Rs 15,000 increase, while junior doctors, interns, house staff, and post-graduate trainees will see their salaries rise by Rs 10,000 each.

In addition to the salary hike, Banerjee allocated Rs 2 crore in funds for cultural activities at medical colleges across the state, aiming to promote a positive environment for both students and staff.

During the event, Banerjee expressed her condolences for the victim of the RG Kar case, a postgraduate trainee who was brutally raped and murdered in August 2024. She assured the victim's family of her government's



commitment to securing justice. "I pay my sympathies to the family of my sister who lost her life. We want proper punishment for the culprits," she stated, emphasizing her personal involvement in advocating for justice.

The Chief Minister also touched on a recent incident at Midnapore Medical College and Hospital, where a pregnant woman died after allegedly being administered expired saline. Four other women were also reportedly affected. Banerjee confirmed that an investigation was underway and announced the revocation of the suspensions for all junior doctors involved in the case, highlighting her stance on medical negligence.

The RG Kar rape and murder case remains a focal point of controversy. The police arrested a civic volunteer, Sanjay Roy, in connection with the crime after identifying him through a Bluetooth earphone found near the victim's body. CCTV footage also placed Roy at the scene, further implicating him in the crime.

Trouble For AAP Government In Punjab? Opposition Leader Claims Collapse, Blames BJP



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Punjab's Leader of the Opposition, Congress's Pratap Singh Bajwa, has claimed that over 32 MLAs from the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) are in contact with him, suggesting that the Bhagwant Mann-led government may be on the brink of collapse. Bajwa further implied that other AAP members could be in touch with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), pointing to growing discontent within the state government.

However, Bajwa emphasized that the Congress party would not be respon-

sible for bringing down the government. "The BJP will do that," he said, speaking in an exclusive interview with NDTV. He clarified that while there were several AAP ministers and prominent leaders dissatisfied with the government, the Congress would not destabilize the ruling party. "We want the AAP government to complete its full five-year term so that the people can witness the kind of government they voted for," he added.

Bajwa also alleged that AAP leaders were frustrated with the misuse of money under the party's rule. He claimed that significant amounts of money, originating from the liquor trade and land use changes, had been funneled through hawala channels to countries like Australia. "The Delhi model is about bringing in experts in looting," Bajwa said.

In response, AAP accused Bajwa of

planning to join the BJP, with AAP leader Neel Garg asserting that Bajwa had already met senior BJP leaders in Bengaluru. Garg also suggested that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi should keep an eye on Bajwa's potential shift to the BJP.

The Bhagwant Mann government has faced increased pressure from the opposition, especially following AAP's poor performance in the Delhi elections earlier this month. In response to growing opposition criticism, the Punjab government has launched a large-scale anti-corruption drive, fulfilling a pre-poll promise. Recently, 52 police officers, including constables and inspectors, were dismissed over corruption charges. Additionally, Varinder Kumar, a 1993 batch IPS officer, was removed as the Chief Director of the Vigilance Bureau, while an inquiry was ordered against Sri Muktsar Sahib's Deputy Commissioner, Rajesh Tripathi.

Priyanka Gandhi Slams Centre's Conditional Relief For Wayand Landslide

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, expressing strong concerns over the central government's "inadequate and conditional relief package" for the landslide-affected areas of Chooralmala and Mundakkai in Kerala's Wayanad district. These regions have been struggling to recover from a devastating landslide in July last year.

In her letter, Ms. Gandhi Vadra, who represents Wayanad in the Lok Sabha, voiced her dissatisfaction with the Rs 529.5 crore aid package, which she said had only been disbursed after "continuous urging from

Kerala's MPs." She emphasized that the relief package was not only insufficient but also came with two harsh conditions: first, the funds would be provided as a loan rather than a grant, and second, the money must be utilized by March 31, 2025.

These conditions, Ms. Gandhi Vadra argued, were "immensely unfair" and showed a "shocking lack of sensitivity" towards the people of Chooralmala and Mundakkai, who had already endured significant losses due to the landslide. She also reminded PM Modi that his visit to the affected areas in August had raised hopes for substantial financial assistance from the central government, a promise she believes has not

been fulfilled.

She also pointed out that the refusal to declare the disaster a "national disaster" was a major disappointment, and that the delayed acknowledgment of the event as a "disaster of severe nature" appeared to be a reluctant step in the right direction. However, the announcement of the conditional relief package left the people of Wayanad disappointed and disheartened.

This letter follows the Modi government's recent decision to grant Rs 529.5 crore as a loan, to be repaid over the next 50 years, for rehabilitation and recovery efforts in the landslide-hit district.



Railways Conduct Successful Trial for Crowd Control at New Delhi Station



- Ashwini Vaishnaw test crowd control after Delhi station stampede
- Unreserved passengers restricted to one platform for safety
- Special Maha Kumbh trains to depart from Platform 16

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In response to last week's tragic stampede at New Delhi Railway Station, the Railways conducted a trial for crowd control measures on Saturday, restricting unreserved passengers to a single platform.

This initiative, aimed at preventing overcrowding, also included the scheduling of all special Maha Kumbh trains from the same platform based on demand.

The trial was prompted by a deadly incident on the previous Saturday between 8

and 9 PM, where 18 passengers lost their lives, and many others were injured. Following the stampede, the Railway Ministry decided to implement immediate changes, including the creation of a temporary holding area for passengers. Furthermore, it was determined that all special trains bound for Prayagraj would now depart from Platform No. 16, located at one end of the station, to streamline operations.

The trial run was supervised by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, with guidance from Railway Board Chairman and CEO Satish Kumar, along with other key officials. The Railways monitored the process closely from the War Room at Rail Bhawan, ensuring all measures were executed effectively.

Vaishnaw later announced that the trial was successful. By limiting unreserved passengers to a single platform, the risk of overcrowding on other platforms was minimized, allowing for a smoother and safer transition for passengers heading to special trains for the Maha Kumbh. The trial's success was seen as an essential step in improving crowd management and ensuring the safety of the millions of passengers traveling during this busy period.

Delhi's Temperature to Drop as Western Disturbance Approaches



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi's temperature is set to drop by two to three degrees Celsius in the coming days, as a Western disturbance approaches North India, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The weather pattern will bring a change after several days of sunny, pleasant weather, which Delhi residents have enjoyed.

On Monday morning, Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 10.7 degrees Celsius, which is one degree below the season's average. The air quality index (AQI) was noted at 169, falling under the "moderate" category.

IMD scientist Dr. Soma Sen Roy explained that the approaching Western disturbance is expected to bring increased rainfall to the Western Himalayan region. Heavy rainfall is predicted from February 26 to 28, with the most intense showers expected on February 27. Due to the rainfall, an "orange" alert will be issued for Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh during this

period.

In addition to the Western Himalayan region, rainfall is expected in the plains of Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, and northern Rajasthan on February 27. Thunderstorms are also anticipated in the hilly regions on February 28.

Initially, the maximum temperature across North India is expected to rise over the next two days. However, as clouds begin to form and rainfall activity picks up, temperatures will begin to drop. For Delhi, the maximum temperature is forecasted to increase over the next two days, but it will fall by two to three degrees after the drizzle begins.

Meanwhile, in the northeast, a cyclonic circulation is causing light to moderate rainfall in sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, and several other regions, including Assam and Meghalaya, on February 24 and 25. These weather changes will bring relief from the current dry conditions, providing much-needed rainfall in the region.

MCD announces house-tax waiver for Delhi residents



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has unveiled a new house-tax waiver scheme, providing relief to Delhi residents by allowing them to clear their dues for the financial year 2024-25 while having previous pending taxes written off. The announcement was made on Monday at a press conference by MCD Mayor Mahesh Khichi, Deputy Mayor Ravinder Bhardwaj, Leader of the House Mukesh Goel, and senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh.

The initiative, proposed by the AAP-led civic body, is aimed at easing the financial burden on residents and curbing corruption in tax collection. The proposal is set to be passed in the MCD House on Tuesday.

Under the new scheme, properties up to 100 square yards, including residential shops, will be completely exempt from house tax starting from the next financial year. Properties measuring between 100 and

500 square yards will receive a 50% waiver, while 1,300 housing societies that previously did not qualify for any exemptions will now benefit from a 25% rebate.

At the press conference, Mayor Mahesh Khichi emphasized that the AAP government has always honored its promises, with this latest decision being a significant step towards alleviating the financial pressures on homeowners in Delhi. He also mentioned that the MCD is taking further steps to improve employee welfare, including plans to regularize 12,000 contractual employees, in addition to the 8,000 workers who were made permanent in the past two years.

This move is expected to provide substantial relief to many Delhiites, particularly in light of the economic challenges faced by residents in recent years. The house-tax waiver scheme aims to ease financial hardships, make tax payments more manageable, and ensure greater transparency and fairness in the tax system.

Decide Engineer Rashid's bail plea expeditiously: Delhi HC to NIA court

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Monday directed the court hearing National Investigation Agency (NIA) cases to expeditiously decide on the bail plea of Jammu and Kashmir Member of Parliament (MP) Abdul Rashid Sheikh, also known as Engineer Rashid, who is currently jailed in connection with a terror funding case.

Justice Vikas Mahajan emphasized the urgency of the matter, stating, "The ASJ-03, Patiala House Court is requested to dispose of the bail application of the petitioner expeditiously." Rashid, a former MLA turned MP, has been in detention since 2019, following his arrest by the NIA under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in relation to a 2017 terror funding case.

The court was addressing Rashid's plea, which claimed that after his election as MP, the NIA court left him in a state of uncertainty regarding his bail application. The MP's counsel expressed concern that there had been no resolution, leaving him in

legal limbo despite his elected status.

Justice Mahajan also noted that the high court had previously clarified on the administrative side that the NIA court would continue to hear the case. As a result of this clarification, Rashid's legal team sought to withdraw the plea from the Delhi High Court, as the matter was now under the jurisdiction of the NIA court.

Rashid, who represents the Baramulla constituency, is facing charges of funding separatist groups and terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir. Despite his detention, he was granted temporary custody parole on two occasions, including a brief release in February 2025, allowing him to attend Parliament sessions on February 11 and 13.

The ongoing legal proceedings highlight the complexity of Rashid's case, as his bail plea remains under review while he continues to challenge the allegations in the terror funding investigation.



India's Got Latent row: Ranveer Allahbadia, Ashish Chanchlani to record statements



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Popular YouTube personalities Ashish Chanchlani and Ranveer Allahbadia have approached Maharashtra Cyber Cell officials, expressing their intent to record statements in connection with the ongoing investigation into the controversial remarks made during the "India's Got Latent" show. The Mumbai police have summoned the duo as part of the probe, seeking their accounts on the matter.

The controversy erupted when Ranveer Allahbadia, the podcaster and founder of the YouTube channel Beer Biceps, made a shocking "join parents in sex" comment on comedian Samay Raina's show. The remark, which quickly went viral, sparked widespread outrage and was even raised in Parliament, with MPs calling for stricter regulations on online content.

Though Allahbadia issued a public apology for his inappropriate comment, the contro-

versy only intensified. Samay Raina, who was abroad at the time, later took to social media platform X, stating that he had deleted all episodes of "India's Got Latent" from his YouTube channel in response to the backlash.

The issue has now drawn attention from the highest levels of the judiciary. Last week, the Supreme Court condemned Allahbadia's behavior, stating that such vulgar language and disrespectful actions must be unequivocally denounced. The Court expressed its disapproval, saying that popularity should not shield individuals from accountability. "Is there anyone on earth who would like this language? There is something very dirty in his mind which has been vomited. Why should we protect him?" the Court remarked, according to Bar and Bench.

As the investigation continues, Chanchlani and Allahbadia are expected to assist law enforcement by providing their statements regarding the case. The ongoing scandal highlights the growing concern over the regulation of online content and the responsibility of digital influencers to maintain a certain standard of discourse.

CM MK Stalin launches 1,000 pharmacies across Tamil Nadu



- TN opens 1,000 low-cost pharmacies
- Medicines up to 75% cheaper
- Boosts jobs, eases healthcare costs

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

On Monday, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated a network of 1,000 pharmacies, named Mudalvar Marundhagam, aimed at providing affordable healthcare solutions to the public. These pharmacies will offer a wide range of generic and branded medicines, nutraceuticals, and Indian medicines at prices up to 75% lower than the market rate, with the goal of reducing the financial burden on those seeking treatment at private hospitals across the state.

Stalin highlighted that health and education are top priorities for the government, citing various initiatives introduced post-COVID-19 to ensure the availability of quality services. "We ensure we implement

schemes that guarantee access to quality education and healthcare, despite the financial challenges posed by the Centre," he said.

The Chief Secretary, N. Muruganandam, pointed to findings from the STEPwise approach to surveillance (STEPS) study, which revealed alarming rates of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the population, including hypertension in nearly 30% and diabetes in 18%. "Many people spend significant amounts on medications to manage these conditions. These pharmacies aim to ease this financial burden," he added.

NCDs are responsible for almost 75% of all deaths in Tamil Nadu, according to the health department. With this in mind, the state government

has set up these pharmacies to not only provide affordable medicines but also create employment opportunities for pharmacy graduates in Tamil Nadu. Entrepreneurs running the pharmacies will receive government subsidies, including Rs 3 lakh in cash and medicines, while co-operative societies will be offered a Rs 2 lakh loan.

The Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation will oversee the bulk procurement and storage of the medicines, ensuring a streamlined supply to district warehouses. These warehouses, maintained by the co-operatives department, will distribute the medicines to the pharmacies, ensuring a steady supply of affordable drugs to residents across the state.

Tamil Nadu Fishermen Protest Over Arrests by Sri Lankan Navy



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Fishermen in Tamil Nadu launched an indefinite strike on Monday, involving the crew of 700 mechanized deep-sea trawlers, at the state's largest fish landing center in Rameswaram. The strike was triggered by the Sri Lankan Navy's arrest of 32 fishermen and the seizure of their fishing vessels the previous day.

The Sri Lankan Navy apprehended the fishermen from Rameswaram and surrounding areas on Sunday, accusing them of poaching and violating the international maritime boundary along the Palk Straits. The seizure included five fishing trawlers, further escalating tensions between India and Sri Lanka. In response, fishermen's or-

ganizations organized protests along the Tamil Nadu coastline on Sunday and Monday. They issued a warning that they would continue their indefinite strike unless the Indian government took decisive action to resolve the issue.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin reached out to India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, urging him to convene the India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group on Fisheries. Stalin requested the immediate release of the detained fishermen and their boats. He also pointed out that since January, the Sri Lankan Navy had apprehended 119 fishermen and seized 16 boats. This recurring issue has sparked widespread frustration among Tamil Nadu's fishing community.

Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) leader Anbumani Ramadoss criticized the repeated arrests and seizures, calling them an attack on India's sovereignty. He emphasized that such incidents not only affect the livelihoods of the fishermen but also raise significant concerns over national security. In October, the India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group had recognized the issue as both a humanitarian and livelihood matter for Tamil Nadu's fishermen, yet the situation persists without a permanent solution.

The fishermen's ongoing protests underline the urgency of addressing the issue and finding a long-term resolution to prevent further escalation in the tense India-Sri Lanka maritime relations.

Bihar At The Bottom. Why? Tejjashwi Yadav's 15 Questions Before PM's Visit

TPN Correspondent | Bihar

Tejjashwi Yadav, the leader of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), launched a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, asking 15 critical questions regarding Bihar's ongoing issues. His questions came ahead of Prime Minister Modi's visit to the state, where he is set to release the 19th tranche of direct cash transfers for farmers. The visit holds significance as Bihar prepares for its upcoming Assembly elections later this year.

Yadav raised concerns over the state's low literacy rates, unemployment, lack of industrial growth, and poor infrastructure, while also criticizing the government's failure to grant Bihar the coveted 'special status' that would bring additional funds from the central government. He questioned the effectiveness of the 'double-engine' government, referring to the alliance between Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (Unit-



ed) (JD(U)), which has been in power for several years.

"The people of Bihar gave them a chance to run the 'double-engine' government. Narendra Modi has been the Prime Minister for 11 years, and Nitish Kumar has been Bihar's Chief Minister for 20 years. The people now want to know the truth, not empty promises and rhetoric," Yadav said. He criticized the current state of Bihar, pointing out that it ranks lowest in per capita income, investment, farmer income, and is the highest in unemployment, migration, and poverty.

Yadav also took aim at Modi's frequent visits to Bihar, claiming that the Prime Minister only comes before elections, making empty promises about reviving the state's industries. He reminded the public of Modi's 2017 promise to restart the Motihari sugar mill, joking that the Prime Minister still hadn't fulfilled his promise to drink tea made from its sugar. He also questioned the delay in the reopening of the jute mill in Katihar.

With Bihar gearing up for elections, Yadav's questions highlight ongoing discontent with the ruling government's performance in the state.

After 75 Years: Chhattisgarh Village Votes For 1st Time Since Independence



TPN Correspondent | Sukma

Kerlapenda, a village in the Sukma district of Chhattisgarh, has witnessed a historic moment as residents cast their votes for the first time since India's independence. This significant event occurred during the third phase of voting on Sunday, marking a new chapter for the villagers who had previously been excluded from the electoral process.

For many of Kerlapenda's residents, this was the first time they had the opportunity to vote. One villager shared, "I have voted for the first time. We had never voted before." Another resident expressed the

excitement of the moment, saying, "Voting is taking place after 75 years here. People from the nearby villages are also reaching out to cast their votes. I'm happy that we will move towards development. This is the first time we got a chance to raise our demands in front of the leaders."

The milestone follows similar positive trends seen in the second phase of the Panchayat Elections in nearby Bijapur district, which was once a stronghold for insurgents. Villagers from areas affected by Naxal violence, particularly those in the National Park area, also actively participated in the election process. These areas,

considered the safest zones for insurgents, have recently seen major security successes, including the elimination of 31 CPI (Maoist) cadres by security forces.

Despite the challenges posed by dense forests, rivers, and remote locations, voters from several villages under the National Park area, including Sendra, demonstrated their commitment to democracy. Hundreds of villagers traveled up to 70 kilometers to cast their ballots in Bhopalpatnam, disregarding the looming threat of violence and insurgency.

"We want employment opportunities, road connectivity, electricity, pension, and other basic facilities from the government," said Kawre Shankar, a resident of one of the affected villages, after voting. The enthusiastic participation of the villagers signals their desire for progress and a break from the era of violence and fear. Their involvement in the election reflects growing confidence in the democratic process and a hope for greater development in the region.

RG Kar case: CBI to submit fresh progress report on probe

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is set to submit a fresh progress report on the ongoing investigation into the R.G. Kar rape and murder case at a special court in Kolkata on Monday. This report comes after the court sentenced Sanjay Roy, the prime convict in the case, to life imprisonment. The court had earlier directed the CBI to submit a detailed update after the victim's parents expressed concerns over the lack of periodic updates on the investigation's progress.

The special court had previously concluded its jurisdiction over the conviction and sentencing of Roy. However, the fresh progress report is expected to shed light on ongo-

ing investigations into potential tampering and alteration of evidence during the initial stages of the case.

The CBI's handling of the case followed allegations of significant mishandling by the Kol-



kata Police during the early investigation. The body of the woman doctor, who was tragically raped and murdered, was found on August 9 last year in a seminar hall at the state-run R.G. Kar Medical College. The Kolkata Police initially led the

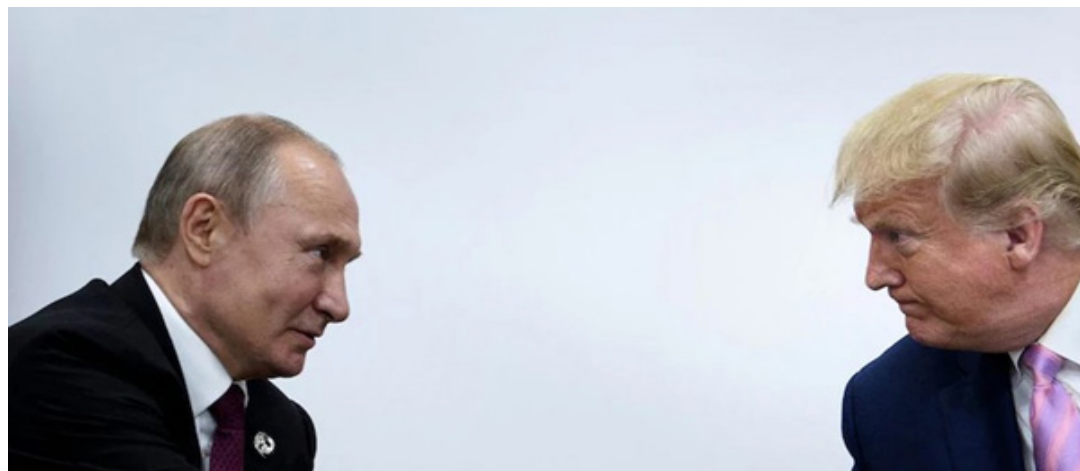
investigation but faced severe criticism for alleged evidence tampering. Following a directive from the Calcutta High Court, the CBI took over the investigation.

In addition to Roy, the CBI arrested Sandip Ghosh, the former principal of R.G. Kar, and Abhijit Mondal, the former SHO of Tala Police Station, on charges related to evidence tampering. However, both Ghosh and Mondal were granted "default bail" after the CBI failed to submit a supplementary charge sheet within the mandated 90-day period. While Mondal is currently out on bail, Ghosh remains in judicial custody due to a parallel investigation involving financial irregularities at R.G. Kar Medical College.

The Ukraine Conflict: A Global Power Struggle and Lessons for India

The ongoing Ukraine conflict, which has been a focal point of global geopolitics, has created significant shifts in alliances and tensions, particularly between Europe, the US, and Russia. Amidst these developments, Ukraine has found itself excluded from key diplomatic conversations. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, feeling sidelined, has declared that Ukraine will not honor any agreements reached without its participation. This discontent was further exacerbated when the Trump administration pressed Ukraine for a bilateral agreement that would provide preferential access to its natural resources in exchange for the \$500 billion of American aid to sustain its war against Russia. However, Zelenskyy rejected this proposal, insisting on security guarantees for Ukraine instead.

The political tensions were heightened when President Trump, in his second term (Trump 2.0), labeled Zelenskyy a "modestly successful comedian" and blamed him for starting the war. Zelenskyy, in turn, accused Trump of being influenced by Russian misinformation. These sharp exchanges and the calls for a new direction in the US foreign policy towards Russia have rattled European NATO members, who have long relied on American support to counter Russian aggression. The swift shift by Trump 2.0 towards repairing relations with Russia, without consulting NATO allies, has left Europe uneasy, especially as they continue to support Ukraine militarily and financially. This friction between the US and Europe is compound-

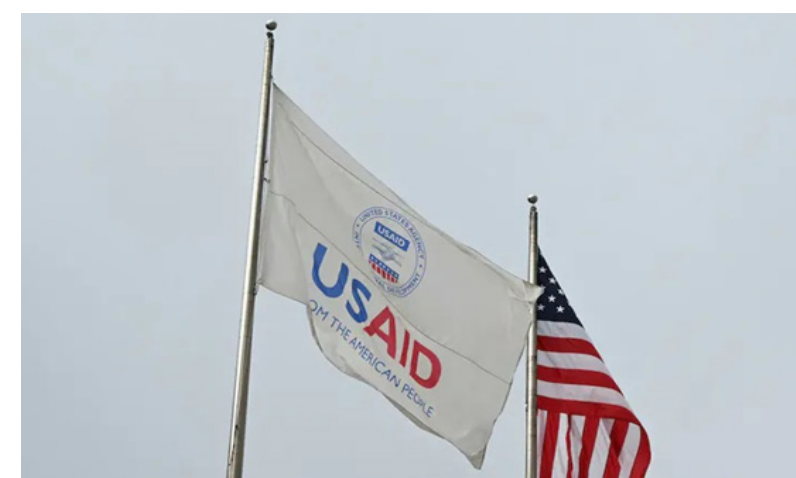


ed by Trump's criticism of European policies, particularly their approach to immigration and defense spending. Trump has pressured European NATO members to meet higher defense spending targets, further deepening the divide. Many European countries, especially those in Eastern Europe facing Russia directly, fear the erosion of NATO's collective security guarantee and the possibility of Ukraine being forced into a "Finlandization" scenario—where it would retain independence but be neutralized in terms of NATO membership.

Russia, meanwhile, has made it clear it will not make territorial concessions and continues to escalate its military campaign, hoping to exploit NATO's divisions. As the war drags on, the devastating human and economic costs for both Russia and Ukraine are mounting, with losses in the hundreds of thousands and profound economic setbacks for both nations.

The war's broader impact has led to global economic disruptions, including higher inflation and supply chain issues, particularly in hydrocarbons and precious metals. The conflict has also driven political polarization, with many countries reluctant to be forced into choosing sides.

For India, the conflict presents an opportunity to recalibrate its foreign policy. A resolution would allow India to strengthen its relations with both Russia and the US, lifting Western sanctions and improving economic interactions. Most importantly, the conflict underscores the importance of India's campaign for "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India), particularly in areas critical to national security and economic stability. The lessons from the Ukraine crisis highlight the vulnerabilities in global supply chains and the necessity for India to build resilience against such geopolitical shocks.



USAID and Its Role in India's Electoral Processes: Whose Interests Are Being Served?

The involvement of USAID in India's electoral processes raises serious questions about its motivations and the interests it serves. Ahead of the 2014 parliamentary elections, USAID funneled large sums into initiatives targeting voter turnout among marginalized communities in India. This sparked concerns about the true objectives of this funding and whose interests were being advanced.

US President Donald Trump criticized USAID's actions, arguing that the agency was not promoting democracy in India but rather undermining it. Trump's statement highlighted the US government's potential influence in shaping political outcomes in foreign countries. USAID's Democratic Elections and Political Processes (DEPP) programme allocated over \$318,000 annually to India-specific projects, with disbursements peaking during election years. In FY2014, a staggering \$21 million was spent on "voter awareness" campaigns, coinciding precisely with India's national election period. The funding dropped drastically after May 2014, suggesting that the primary goal was electoral rather than institutional.

In 2019, a similar pattern emerged, with \$486 million allocated regionally, though Indian agencies blocked some of these funds due to concerns over violations of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). This raised suspicions that USAID's efforts might align with political agendas rather than genuine democratic objectives.

Furthermore, USAID awarded funds to programs like a \$750,000 initiative aimed at "alleviating loneliness among migrant garment workers" in India. The vague nature of this program and the lack of clear beneficiaries call into question whether these initiatives truly serve the communities they claim to support or if they have ulterior motives.

Another contentious issue is the 2012 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India's Election Commission (ECI) and the US-based International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). While former Chief Election Commissioner S.Y. Quraishi insists that no USAID funds were received directly by the ECI, leaked audits suggest that USAID's focus was on increasing voter participation in marginalized communities, which some critics argue aligns with specific political agendas.

The funding from USAID and its alignment with election cycles, as well as the involvement of organizations like IFES and private tech giants, raises concerns about foreign influence on India's democratic processes. With transparency lacking, these revelations call for a deeper investigation into how foreign interests may be shaping the nation's electoral landscape.

India Must Read the Fine Print in Trump's F-35 Fighter Jet Offer

The recent offer by U.S. President Donald Trump to sell India the advanced F-35 fighter jet has raised a crucial question: will the Indian Air Force (IAF) soon sport U.S. F-35s? While the F-35 is a cutting-edge fifth-generation stealth fighter, the IAF's decision to acquire it must be carefully considered in light of several challenges and potential conditions.

During his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the White House on February 13, Trump announced that the U.S. was willing



to negotiate an F-35 deal with India. This aircraft, already in service with key U.S. allies like Israel, the United Kingdom, and Japan, offers significant advantages, such as stealth technology and advanced combat capabilities. For India, the offer comes at a time when the IAF is grappling with a shortage of fighter aircraft. With only 31 active squadrons, well below the sanctioned 42, the IAF is eager to modernize and replenish its fleet. The MRFA (Multirole Fighter Aircraft) program, aimed at adding 114 fighters, has been delayed for over seven years, leaving India's defense forces in need of immediate solutions.

Given the growing threat posed by China's increasing fleet of fifth-generation J-20 fighters and Pakistan's acquisition of stealth J-35 jets, the IAF urgently needs advanced aircraft to maintain an edge. The F-35 could potentially fill this gap. However, before rushing into a deal, India must consider the complex conditions surrounding the F-35 offer. The U.S. has previously shown more interest in selling its F-21 aircraft, a variant of the F-16, to India, which is tailored to Indian needs but comes with more modest capabilities. The offer of the F-35 could be part of a transactional strategy, possibly requiring India to first purchase the F-21.

The Waning India-Pakistan Cricket Rivalry: A Battle of Unequals



The India-Pakistan cricket rivalry, once a fierce, breathless contest, has lost much of its intensity and significance over time. While the nostalgia of past moments — such as Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag's exploits during the 2003 World Cup, or Javed Miandad's iconic last-ball six in Sharjah in 1986 — still lingers in the minds of fans, the stakes of these encounters have changed significantly. What once was a do-or-die spectacle now feels less consequential, both in terms of the cricket field and the geopolitics that once revolved around these matches.

In the past decade, India has dominated their cricketing contests with Pakistan. Out of 10 ODI encounters since 2015, India has triumphed in eight, with Pakistan securing just one win in the 2017 Champions Trophy at The Oval. The two nations have also met in seven T20 internationals, with India winning five of those and Pakistan two. The last Test between them was back in 2007. These

figures reflect a one-sided rivalry, where India begins every contest as the overwhelming favorite, and Pakistan's sporadic victories are increasingly seen as rare surprises.

A key factor behind the shift in this rivalry is the stark contrast in the political and economic trajectories of both nations. India, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, has experienced political stability and economic growth. With Modi at the helm for three consecutive terms, India has become the world's fifth-largest economy and is on track to become the third-largest in the near future. The country has made remarkable strides in areas such as space exploration, with ISRO recently completing its 100th launch, and boasts 117 unicorns in the tech sector. Indian citizens today rarely discuss the prospect of war with Pakistan, focusing more on security concerns along the Chinese border.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's situation has be-

come increasingly dire. With mounting debt and an economy teetering on the brink, the country relies heavily on loans from China and the IMF. Its finance minister recently acknowledged Pakistan's lost credibility in the international arena. The country has been plagued by political instability, with no Prime Minister completing a full term in recent years, and the former Prime Minister, Imran Khan, now imprisoned. Internal insurgencies and rising sectarian violence continue to destabilize the nation, further exacerbating its economic and social woes.

Today, the India-Pakistan cricket encounter feels more like a contest between two unequally matched teams, with India's well-paid, confident squad facing a Pakistan team that is struggling amidst a battered economy and fractured political landscape. The intense rivalry that once captivated the imagination of millions has faded, leaving behind a sense of nostalgia for what was once a fiercely contested battle on and off the field.

PM Modi Transfers Rs 22,000 Crore to 9.8 Crore Farmers Under PM Kisan Scheme

- 19th PM Kisan installment boosts agricultural support
- Bihar event highlights rural and infrastructure growth

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday transferred over Rs 22,000 crore directly into the bank accounts of 9.8 crore farmers across India, marking the release of the 19th installment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. The event took place in Bihar, where the PM also inaugurated several developmental projects, furthering the government's commitment to strengthening infrastructure and promoting growth in the state.



Accompanied by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, several Union ministers, MPs, MLAs, and officials from both state and central ministries attended the event. The PM's visit aimed to highlight the government's ongoing efforts to uplift the agricultural sector, particularly focusing on the well-being of farmers across the nation.

During the event, Prime Minister Modi expressed the government's pride in India's 'annadatas' (farmers) and reiterated the govern-

ment's dedication to improving their lives. In a post shared on the social media platform X, responding to a thread by MyGovIndia, the PM reaffirmed, "We are proud of our annadatas and our commitment to improve their lives."

The PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, launched in 2018, aims to provide financial assistance to farmers to support their agri-



cultural needs and enhance their livelihoods. This installment will continue to benefit millions of farmers, who receive direct cash transfers to support their farming activities and reduce financial burdens. The government's ongoing push to aid farmers aligns with its broader objective of enhancing rural development and promoting agricultural growth.



Omar joins Modi's anti-obesity relay campaign, ropes in Supriya Sule too

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam asserted that tariffs do not protect countries, and India needs to reduce them for its own benefit, regardless of external pressures. Speaking at the 69th Foundation Day of the All India Management Association (AIMA), Subrahmanyam emphasized that being open to global markets should be one of India's top priorities if it aims to become a developed nation.

He highlighted the need for India to finalize trade agreements with key economies such as the European Union and the United Kingdom to facilitate tariff reductions. Subrahmanyam further stressed the importance of deregulation at both the central and state levels to integrate India into global supply chains.

Subrahmanyam also observed that while there is global interest in India, many investors are choosing to explore other countries instead. He pointed to nations like Indonesia, Vietnam, and Turkey, which have benefitted from the "China plus one" strategy adopted by global companies seeking alternatives to China.

The NITI Aayog CEO argued that India's entry into global value chains requires more than just initiatives like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI); it also demands deregulation and a focus on skill development. He expressed concern about the bureaucratic red tape involved in business operations, which he claimed is stifling growth, particularly for MSMEs.

Subrahmanyam shared that NITI Aayog is working on integrating India into global supply chains across various sectors, including electronics, auto components, chemicals, textiles, and footwear. He also mentioned that the Aayog is awaiting Cabinet clearance for its recommendations on the electronics component supply chain and is preparing to launch a national manufacturing mission within three months.

In addition to manufacturing, Subrahmanyam identified education and agriculture as critical areas for India's development. He stressed the need to transform agriculture by shifting focus away from traditional crops like rice and wheat toward horticulture, floriculture, and dairy production. He also emphasized that states must be open to enterprises from other regions to stimulate growth, with a free-flowing enterprise environment being key to progress.

Subrahmanyam concluded by underscoring the effectiveness of the state rating system in encouraging reforms and highlighting the importance of fiscal health and efficient budget management for states.

Those who got Muslim votes could not stop riots: Bihar CM Nitish Kumar

TPN Correspondent | Patna

On Monday, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar criticized the opposition JRD-Congress alliance, accusing them of seeking Muslim votes without taking any substantial action to prevent communal clashes. Kumar made the remarks during a function in Bhagalpur, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Governor Arif Mohammad Khan.

The event took place in Bhagalpur, a region historically remembered for the devastating communal riots of 1989, which resulted in the loss of nearly 1,000 lives. Speaking about the situation in Bihar when his government took over in 2005, Kumar highlighted the prevailing law and order problems. He emphasized that, under the previous administration, people were afraid to step out after dark due to the frequent Hindu-Muslim clashes. Without directly naming any party, he stated that those who relied on Muslim votes did nothing to stop these conflicts, but things started to improve only after his government assumed power.



Kumar, who is also the president of the JD(U), has often pointed to the trial and punishment of those responsible for the Bhagalpur riots as one of his government's key achievements. He has long claimed that during the 15-year rule of the JRD, the guilty parties were not punished because many of the accused were close to the party. At the event, Kumar expressed gratitude towards Prime Minister Modi for the financial assistance provided to the state by the Union government. He praised the latest budget for Bihar, which included several announcements for the state's development.

Gautam Adani Unveils Rs 1.1 Lakh Crore Investment Plan for Madhya Pradesh

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani made a significant announcement at the Madhya Pradesh Global Investors Summit (GIS) 2025, revealing a new wave of multi-sectoral investments worth over Rs 1.1 lakh crore for the state. Speaking at the event on Monday, Adani outlined a comprehensive investment blueprint of Rs 2.1 lakh crore, which is expected to generate more than 1.2 lakh jobs in Madhya Pradesh by 2030.

The announcement comes as part of Adani Group's ongoing efforts to contribute to the economic development of Madhya Pradesh, with a focus on infrastructure, energy, manufacturing, and other key sectors. The massive investment will help boost the state's industrial growth and attract more global investors, positioning Madhya Pradesh as an attractive hub for business and innovation.



Adani emphasized that the investments would have a long-term impact on the state's economy, contributing to job creation, skill development, and overall industrial modernization. With the planned investments, Adani Group aims to foster new opportunities across various sectors and ensure sustainable growth for Madhya Pradesh.

India, UK Aim To Triple Bilateral Trade In 10 Years. Leaders Meet In Delhi

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the United Kingdom resumed today after a months-long pause. The meeting between UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathan Reynolds, and India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in New Delhi marks a significant step towards a mutually beneficial trade deal.

The proposed agreement aims to drastically increase bilateral trade between the two nations, currently valued at \$20 billion annually. Mr. Goyal described the potential FTA as "pathbreaking," emphasizing its potential to triple this trade within the next decade. While negotiations are advanced, he refrained from committing to a fixed timeline, stressing that the process should be thorough and focused on long-term benefits for both countries. He added, "Speed is important, but haste is not, as this agreement will benefit citizens for years to



come." Reynolds echoed the sentiment, calling the FTA a top priority for the UK

government and highlighting its long-term significance for both economies. A joint statement following the

meeting confirmed the resumed talks, noting the goal of a balanced, forward-looking deal that will strength-

en trade ties and unlock opportunities for businesses and consumers on both sides.

In addition to the FTA, the two ministers discussed parallel negotiations on a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) and a Double Contribution Convention Agreement, which aim to further cement economic cooperation. When asked about immigration, Mr. Goyal made it clear that it has never been part of trade negotiations, while Mr. Reynolds emphasized the UK's welcoming stance on Indian professionals, students, and business mobility.

The India-UK FTA talks began on January 13, 2022, with the goal of eliminating or reducing tariffs and customs duties on goods traded between the nations. In 2023-24, bilateral trade between India and the UK rose to \$21.34 billion, up from \$20.36 billion in the previous year. The UK remains one of India's top investors, with \$35.3 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) since 2000.

Conservative Merz set to be new German Chancellor

- Merz set to be Germany's next chancellor
- Far-right AfD surges to second place in historic result
- Coalition talks uncertain as parties avoid AfD tie-up

TPN Correspondent | Berlin

In a national election on Sunday, opposition leader Friedrich Merz of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) emerged poised for a victory, while the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) achieved a historic surge in support. Projections from ARD and ZDF public television show Merz's conservatives leading with a modest win, while the AfD nearly doubled its support, marking its strongest showing since World War II.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz of the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) conceded defeat, calling it a "bitter election result" as his party finished in third place with its worst postwar performance in a national election.

Merz, who had led the CDU opposition, vowed to act swiftly in forming a coalition government. However, uncertainties remain regarding the coalition-building process, as no mainstream parties are keen on partnering with the AfD due to its far-right positions. This complicates the formation of a stable majority in the Bundestag, and the path to a functional government remains unclear.



The election was called seven months earlier than scheduled after Scholz's coalition government, which had been marked by internal conflicts, collapsed in November. His tenure had been characterized by growing discontent among voters, with little enthusiasm for any of the main political leaders. The dramatic rise of the AfD has set alarm bells ring-

ing across Europe, as it reflects a broader shift toward far-right populism in the region. Despite the setback for Scholz's SPD, the outcome of the election highlights the volatile political climate in Germany, with the focus now shifting to Merz's ability to navigate complex coalition talks and address the growing influence of the far-right.

Will have to create NATO within Ukraine: Zelenskyy continues to bid for Kyiv's seat



TPN Correspondent | Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy continues to advocate for Ukraine's NATO membership, emphasizing that it is the "simplest and most logical solution" to end the ongoing war with Russia. In a post marking the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Zelenskyy argued that NATO membership is the most cost-effective way to prevent further conflict, warning that without joining the alliance, Ukraine would have

to "create a NATO within" itself.

Zelenskyy, who has been vocal in his push for NATO membership, outlined a strategy where Ukraine would be forced to build and maintain its own strong military, finance it, produce weapons, and work with international partners to deter Russian aggression. He highlighted the necessity of securing comprehensive security guarantees, including military, economic, and political support, in the absence of NATO membership.

In a bold move, Zelenskyy recently expressed his willingness to resign from office if it would lead to Ukraine's accession to NATO. "If there is peace for Ukraine, if you really need me to leave my post, I am ready... I can exchange it for NATO," he stated during a press conference. His willingness to step down underscores the high stakes Ukraine faces in its ongoing struggle against Russian forces.

Despite facing criticism from the Donald Trump-led U.S. administration, Zelenskyy remains firm in his stance, thanking those who continue to support Ukraine's quest for real security. Tensions have escalated between Zelenskyy and Trump, who has made disparaging remarks about the Ukrainian president, even calling him a "dictator." Trump, however, has expressed confidence that peace talks with Russia could soon resolve the conflict, even as Zelenskyy insists that NATO remains Ukraine's best path forward. Zelenskyy's calls for NATO membership continue to be a central focus in Ukraine's strategy to bolster its defenses and seek international support as the war with Russia grinds on.

Indonesia's Prabowo Subianto officially establishes new sovereign wealth fund

TPN Correspondent | Jakarta

President Prabowo Subianto of Indonesia officially launched the nation's new sovereign wealth fund, "Danantara Indonesia," on Monday, marking a significant step toward economic growth and development. The fund, which is modeled after Singapore's Temasek, is set to manage government stakes in state-run enterprises and is expected to play a crucial role in driving the country's economic future.



Danantara Indonesia will focus on investing in high-impact, sustainable projects in several key sectors, including renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, food production, and downstream industries. The fund will oversee all government holdings in state companies currently managed by the State-Owned Enterprises Ministry, which includes major financial institutions such as Bank Mandiri, Bank Rakyat Indonesia, and Bank Negara Indonesia.

This strategic move aims to stimulate Indonesia's economy, create jobs, and support the government's long-term development goals. By leveraging the wealth generated from state-owned companies, Danantara Indonesia will promote sustainable investments and help fund projects that are essential for the country's growth. The fund's establishment is part of a broader effort to modernize Indonesia's economic infrastructure and attract global investors.

Danantara Indonesia is seen as a pivotal tool in Indonesia's efforts to diversify its economy and achieve sustainable growth, as it will help fund critical sectors that are vital for the country's future. With its vast financial backing, the fund is expected to make a significant impact on Indonesia's economic trajectory, providing the necessary capital for development while ensuring that resources are managed efficiently for long-term prosperity.

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif's Big Claim On India Might Cost Him His Name



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has found himself embroiled in controversy after making a bold claim during a public rally in Dera Ghazi Khan. Known for his animated speeches, Sharif went beyond his usual rhetoric, stating that his name will cease to exist if Pakistan does not surpass India in terms of economic development and progress.

Sharif, visibly passionate during the rally, was seen gesturing fervently, raising his fist in the air, and occasionally jumping on the podium. In an emotional outburst, he assured the crowd that his government was working tirelessly to improve the nation's situation. However, it was his following statement that stirred controversy: "My name won't be Shehbaz Sharif if due to our efforts Pakistan does not leave India behind in development and progress."

Sharif further emphasized his commitment by swearing on his elder brother, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's life, saying, "I am Nawaz Sharif's fan, his follower. I swear on his blessed life that we will work together to take Pakistan to greatness and defeat India."

The statement quickly spread across social media, triggering widespread mockery and criticism. Critics accused Sharif of making "tall promises" without offering any substantial evidence of progress on the ground. Many questioned his ability to fulfill such lofty claims, given Pakistan's ongoing economic and financial struggles.

Just weeks earlier, Sharif had called for dialogue with India, but India has made it clear that any talks must first address the issue of terrorism emanating from Pakistan. With this latest inflammatory remark, Sharif's rhetoric has only added fuel to an already complex diplomatic situation.

Sharif's visit to Dera Ghazi Khan, during which he announced new infrastructure projects, was intended to assure locals that his government was addressing their concerns. However, his ambitious statements seem to have overshadowed his promises of development and economic recovery.

People Tired Of: Trump Hails Conservative Wave In German Election



TPN Correspondent | Berlin

In a landmark national election, Germany's conservative alliance emerged victorious, with Friedrich Merz set to become the next Chancellor. According to exit polls, the result marks a major shift in Germany's political landscape, with the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) achieving record gains, securing second place. US President Donald Trump praised the election results, stating that the German people had rejected the "no common sense" policies of the Olaf Scholz-led centre-left government, particularly in energy and immigration. Trump expressed his belief that this was a "great day for Germany."

Meanwhile, Merz, 69, vowed to strengthen Europe's independence from the United States, criticizing Washington's influence. While he previously supported transatlantic ties, Merz declared his intention to help Europe become "real independent" from the US. He called for unity within Europe, citing external pressures from both Russia and the US. He even questioned the future of NATO in its current form.

Despite his victory, Merz faces complicated coalition talks. His Christian Democratic Union (CDU/CSU) bloc emerged as the largest group, but it secured its second-worst post-war result, making it unclear whether Merz will need one or two coalition partners to form a majority. The surge of the far-right AfD, which garnered 20.5% of the vote, complicates coalition possibilities, as mainstream parties have ruled out working with the AfD due to its far-right stances.

The election also saw a decline for Chancellor Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD), which achieved its worst result since World War II, securing only 16.5% of the vote. The Greens and the far-left Die Linke party also saw reduced support, while the pro-market Free Democrats (FDP) and new party Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) struggled to reach the 5% threshold for parliamentary representation. Voter turnout was a high 83%, with male voters leaning right and female voters showing more support for left-wing parties.

Stock Markets Face Heavy Losses Amid Mixed Global Signals, Nifty and Sensex Decline



Domestic stock markets endured significant losses on Monday, as investor sentiment was weighed down by mixed signals from international markets, weak US consumer data, and continued selling by Foreign In-

stitutional Investors (FIIs). The indices opened lower and struggled throughout the session, with the Nifty and Sensex both closing deep in the red.

The day began with a gap down open-

ing as global market indicators were less than favorable. The lackluster data from the US, coupled with earnings downgrades by rating agencies for some companies, added to the negative sentiment. While sectors such

as auto, FMCG, and pharma showed some resilience, sectors like IT, media, metal, and realty saw mixed performances. The selling pressure pushed the Nifty to a loss of 242 points, ending at 22,555, significantly lower than the 200-day exponential moving average (DEMA).

The BSE Sensex opened at 74,893 and went on to touch an intraday low of 74,387 before peaking at 74,907. Eventually, it closed at 74,454, down 856 points from the previous session's close of 75,311. Meanwhile, the NSE Nifty started at 22,609, hitting a low of 22,518, and managed a high of 22,668 before closing at 22,555. The Nifty Bank, a key indicator of the banking sector's performance, fell 329 points to end at 48,561.

Out of the 50 stocks in the Nifty50 index, only 12 gained, while 38 experienced declines. Some of the top gainers included Mahindra & Mahindra, Dr. Reddy's, Eicher Motors, Hero MotoCorp, and Nestle India. On the other hand, major losers included Wipro, HCL Technologies, TCS, Infosys, and Bharti Airtel. While the Auto, FMCG, and pharma sectors posted slight

gains, the overall market breadth favored the sellers, with a significant number of stocks declining.

Market data revealed a clear dominance of selling pressure on the NSE, with 775 stocks advancing against 2,097 decliners. Notably, 20 stocks hit 52-week highs, while 214 touched 52-week lows. In terms of market movements, 82 stocks reached their upper circuit limits, and 177 stocks hit lower circuits.



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The rupee closed flat at 86.70 against the US dollar. On the corporate front, notable developments included Adani Green Energy's launch of a 250 MW solar power project in Rajasthan, Rail Vikas Nigam's bid for a Rs 156.35 crore project in South Western Railway, and Bharti Airtel increasing its stake in Airtel Africa. India's crude oil imports reached an eight-month high in January, and economists are predicting a cut in the repo rate to 5.75% by mid-2025 due to ongoing growth concerns. Additionally, IRFC secured a bid to finance NTPC Renewables' Rs 7,500-crore project, while Varun Beverages and Power Finance Corporation saw notable trading volumes.

ICRA Predicts 7-8% Revenue Growth for India Inc in Q4

Domestic rating agency ICRA projected that Indian companies are likely to see a 7-8% revenue growth during the March quarter of the current fiscal year, driven by a revival in rural demand and increased government spending. However, the agency also highlighted that the private capital expenditure (capex) cycle is expected to remain subdued due to geopolitical uncertainties and a relatively weak outlook on merchandise exports from India.

ICRA noted that despite these challenges, certain sectors, particularly those receiving government support through production-linked incentive schemes, will continue to thrive. These include sunrise industries such as electronics, semiconductors, and electric vehicles (EVs), which are set to see increased investments. The agency further mentioned that the recovery in operating profit margins (OPM) for India Inc. observed in the past quarter is likely to be sustained, with expectations of margins staying between 18.2-18.4%. This growth will be support-



ed by rising demand, bolstered by improved consumer sentiments.

ICRA also emphasized the outlook for rural demand, which is expected to remain robust in the first half of CY2025. This will be supported by strong output from the kharif crops and a favorable forecast for the ongoing rabi season. However, the outlook for agriculture will depend on the arrival of a normal and well-distributed monsoon in 2025.

Urban demand, which has been weak in recent quarters, is anticipated to improve. This recovery will be driven by factors such as the significant income-tax relief in the Union Budget for 2025, monetary easing by the Reserve Bank of India, and expectations of a moderation in food inflation, which would aid discretionary consumption, according to Kinjal Shah, Senior Vice President and Co-Group Head of Corporate Ratings at ICRA.

Retail inflation eases slightly to 4.61% for farm workers, 4.73% for rural labourers

Inflation rates for agricultural and rural labourers in India have eased slightly, as the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) dropped in January 2025. According to the government data released on Monday, CPI-AL stood at 4.61 percent, while CPI-RL was recorded at 4.73 percent. These figures showed a decline from December 2024, when the inflation rates were 5.01 percent for CPI-AL and 5.05 percent for CPI-RL.



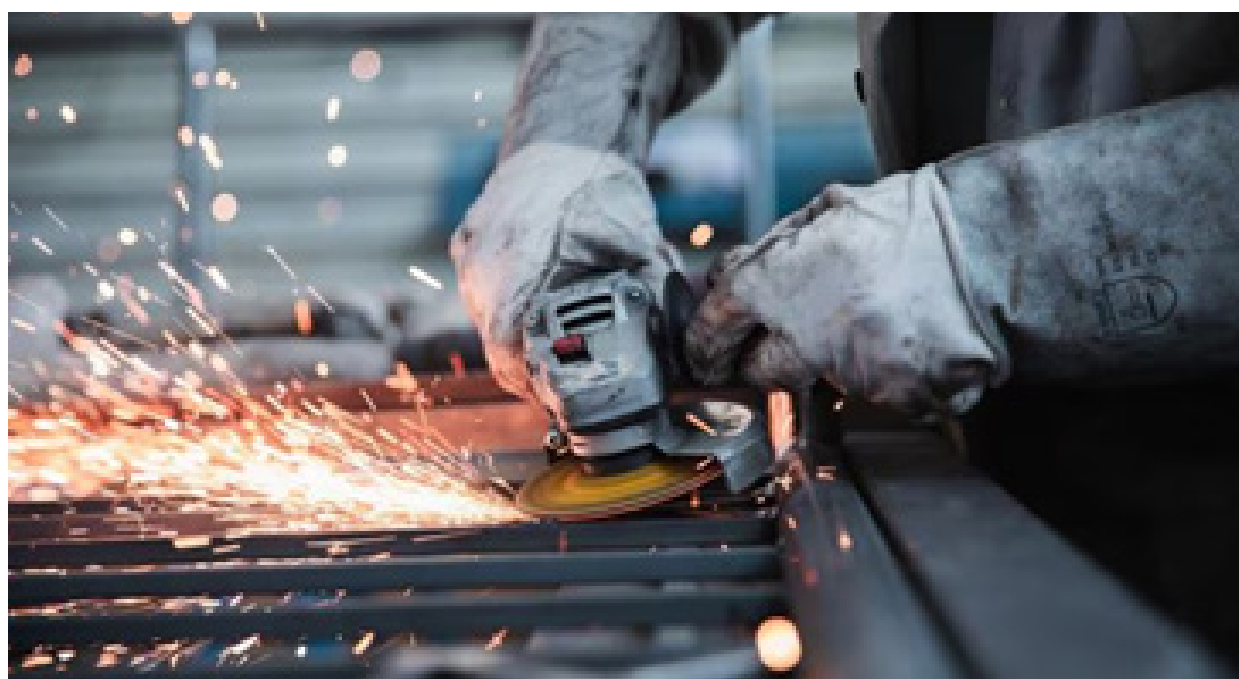
The All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) decreased by 4 points and 3 points, respectively, for January 2025, reaching 1,316 points and 1,328 points. In comparison, the CPI-AL and CPI-RL were at 1,320 points and 1,331 points, respectively, in December 2024.

In terms of year-on-year inflation, the figures for January 2025 showed a significant reduction in the inflation rates compared to the same month in the previous year. CPI-AL inflation fell from 7.52 percent in January 2024 to 4.61 percent in January 2025, while CPI-RL inflation dropped from 7.37 percent to 4.73 percent during the same period.

The CPI-AL and CPI-RL are important indicators of the cost of living for agricultural and rural workers in India, reflecting the price changes for essential goods and services. The decline in inflation is likely to bring some relief to these workers, as the cost of basic goods such as food, fuel, and household items has seen a slowdown in price increases.

The decrease in inflation also comes amid efforts by the government to control rising prices and ensure economic stability, particularly in rural areas where a large proportion of India's population depends on agriculture and manual labour for livelihood.

India's PMI Shows Strong Growth in February, Driven by Services Sector



India's private sector growth showed a notable uptick in February, as the Composite Flash Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 60.6, significantly higher than the previous month's reading of 57.7, according to an HSBC report. This increase follows three consecutive quarters of softening in the PMI, indicating a positive shift in the current quarter. The rise was primarily driven by a sharp acceleration in services sector activity, though the manufacturing sector also saw a healthy, albeit slower, expansion.

The report highlights that January and February data combined suggest that after a period of decline, the PMI composite index is likely to show an upward trend this quarter. The global restocking process continues to fuel India's new goods export orders, while a depreciation of the currency is expected to boost the country's rapidly growing services exports sector.

HSBC further noted that easing input prices have helped improve profit margins for businesses. Given the favorable economic indicators, the report anticipates a 25 basis point rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the upcoming April monetary policy meeting.

The flash PMI figures provide an early preview of the final manufacturing, services, and composite PMI data for the month. These flash readings, typically based on 80-90% of survey responses, are released about a week ahead of the final PMI figures, offering valuable insights into the health of India's economy.

Overall, the February PMI data suggests a positive outlook for the private sector, with growth momentum in both manufacturing and services continuing to strengthen.



Flying Car Worth Rs 2.5 Crore Rules The California Sky, Internet Say It 'Looks Fake'

Alef Aeronautics, a US-based company, has taken a major leap toward the future of transportation by releasing a video of its concept flying car, the Alef Model Zero, executing a vertical take-off. Priced at approximately \$300,000 (around Rs 2.6 crore), the futuristic vehicle has quickly gone viral, thanks to its impressive design and capabilities. In the video, the car is seen cruising down a California road before lifting off vertically and soaring over an SUV, creating a scene straight out of a science fiction movie.

The vehicle in the video is a special ultralight version of the Alef Model Zero. The test flight was conducted on a closed-off road for safety reasons. Powered by distributed electric propulsion with propeller blades hidden beneath the car, the vehicle successfully demonstrated its ability to transition from road travel to flight. Alef Aeronautics CEO Jim Dukhovny compared this breakthrough to the Wright Brothers' first flight, saying, "This drive and flight test represents an important proof of technology in a real-world city environment."

Alef Aeronautics is also working on a commercial version of the flying car, called the Alef Model A. This two-seat-

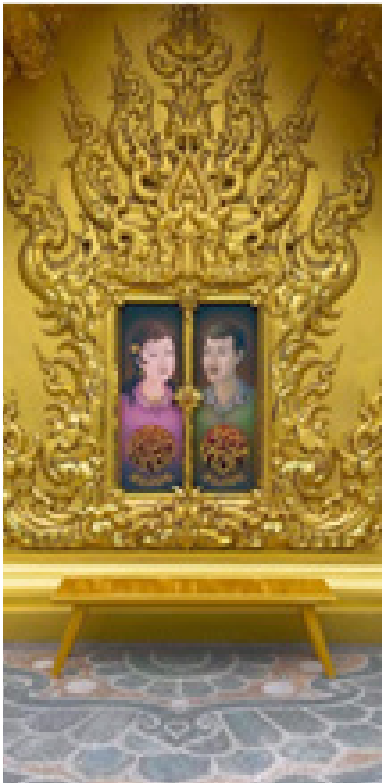
er vehicle is designed for both road and air travel and will feature a flying range of 110 miles and a driving range of 200 miles. Additionally, it will come equipped with autopilot flight capabilities. The company has already received 3,300 pre-orders for the electric flying car, signaling significant interest in the innovative vehicle.

The concept has sparked a flurry of reactions on social media, with users ex-

pressing excitement about the potential of flying cars. Some compared it to the animated series *The Jetsons*, while others raised concerns about safety and practicality. One user even warned, "Air traffic is going to be our next worry!" Despite these concerns, the Alef Model Zero has generated widespread attention, marking a significant step towards transforming transportation as we know it.



Lavish Washroom in Thailand Resembling a Palace Stuns Social Media Users



A lavishly designed washroom in Thailand has taken the internet by storm, leaving social media users in complete disbelief. The video, shared on Instagram by user Krishangi, has gone viral, capturing the extravagant design of the restroom.

The video opens with Krishangi saying, "I never thought I would make a video about a washroom, but today I could not stop myself. I mean look at this." The camera then pans to reveal a massive bathroom in cool tones, featuring intricate design details throughout. The sheer grandeur of the space is enough to astonish viewers, but what truly adds to its opulence is a garden outside the restroom,

further elevating its luxurious atmosphere.

Since being posted, the video has amassed over 4 million views and garnered more than 62,000 likes. The stunning visuals have led to an outpouring of amazement in the comments section, with many users expressing their astonishment at the level of detail and luxury in the washroom's construction.

One user commented, "Such a royal washroom!!!!!! Man, I want to go here, dress up nicely, and take so many pictures outside. The design on this is so beautiful, I am mesmerized." Another user jokingly wrote, "I'm going to sleep there no matter who says what. That's a whole palace."

Some users even shared background information about the washroom's location. One Instagram user revealed, "This (Wat Rong Khun) is in the Wat Rong Khun, which is popularly known as the White Temple of North Thailand's Chiang Rai. Had the opportunity to meet the owner Chalermchai in a programme."

The video continues to capture the attention of viewers around the world, with many commenting on how "amazing" and "beautiful" the washroom is. Others simply expressed awe at the opportunity to witness such a luxurious space. This viral post has shown just how far design innovation can go, even for something as everyday as a bathroom.

Japanese Police Academy Introduces Makeup Training for Male Cadets



A police academy in Japan has introduced a unique course teaching male cadets the basics of makeup application, which has garnered significant attention. In January, 60 police cadets, including those nearing graduation, started a beauty training program at the Fukushima Prefecture Police Academy in Fukushima Prefecture. The initiative quickly became a topic of online discussion.

The course focuses on essential beauty techniques such as applying primers, moisturising the skin, using eyebrow pencils, styling hair, and trimming eyebrows. To ensure a professional approach, the academy partnered with Shiseido, a leading Japanese cosmetics brand, for the training.

According to Takeshi Sugiura, the vice-principal of the academy, the goal is for police officers to maintain a clean and professional appearance as they frequently interact with the public. He explained that "as both members of society and future police officers, maintaining a proper appearance is crucial."

One of the male cadets who

participated in the course expressed his thoughts, saying, "I have never worn makeup before. I believe that being a police officer means often being in the public eye, so I want to ensure that I present myself well before going to work."

The introduction of the makeup training course has sparked mixed reactions on Japanese social media. Some users joked about the initiative, with one commenting, "Now they can throw loose powder into the suspects' eyes to catch them!" while others supported the idea, saying, "This may seem absurd, but isn't it a good idea for both men and women to take the make-up course?"

Traditionally, police academies in Japan have focused on legal and physical training, but the introduction of beauty courses is seen as a move to encourage more polite and courteous interactions with the public. In addition to Fukushima, a similar program is also being implemented at a police academy in Yamaguchi, where male cadets are even taught proper facial cleansing techniques.

Chinese Influencer Gu Xixi Earns ₹35 Lakh in One Day by Lying in Bed



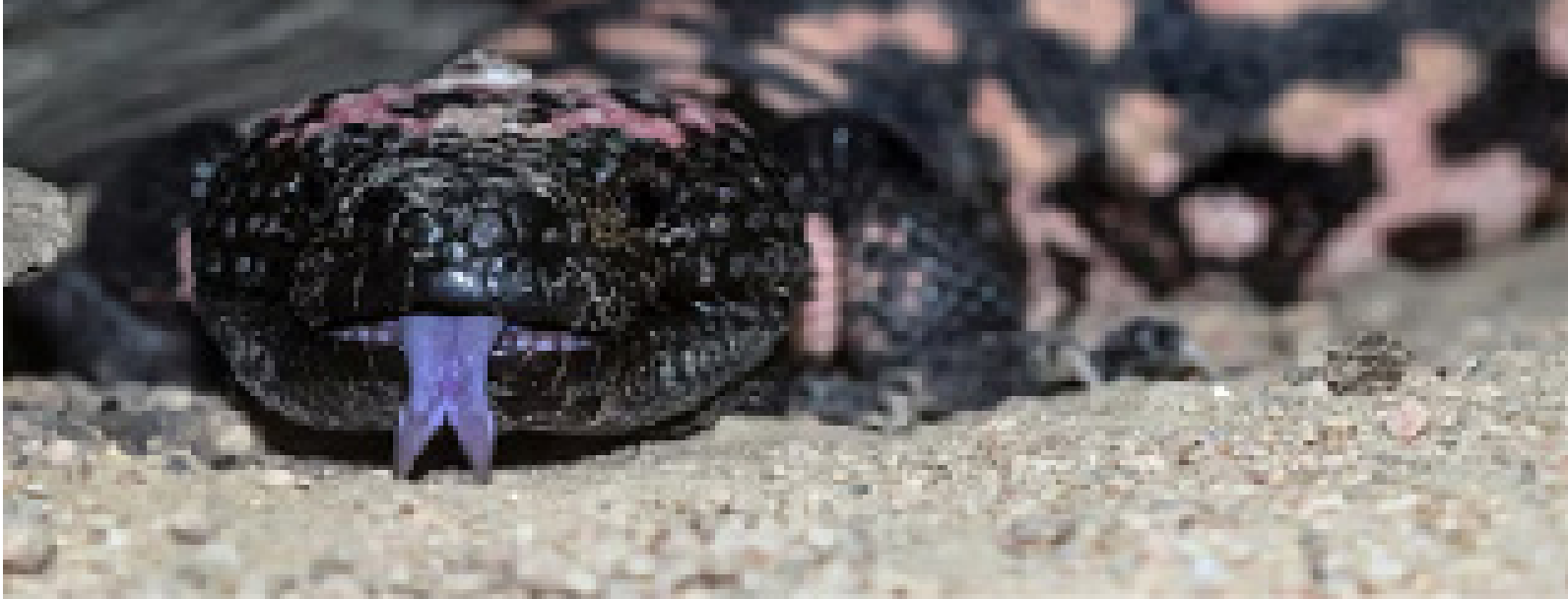
following, made it clear that she doesn't just aim to earn a few hundred thousand yuan monthly. Her goal is far more ambitious: earning that much every single day. "It is not about earning hundreds of thousands of yuan per month; it is about earning hundreds of thousands of yuan per day. Understand?" she added.

Her unorthodox approach to business and success has garnered both admiration and criticism. While some are impressed by her entrepreneurial skills, others argue that such claims perpetuate unrealistic expectations. Regardless, Gu Xixi's rise in the influencer world demonstrates the growing power of social media platforms, where individuals can generate enormous income with innovative approaches.

Chinese influencer Gu Xixi is making waves after revealing that she earned a staggering 3.03 lakh yuan (approximately Rs 35 Lakh) in a single day—all by simply lying in bed.

The 25-year-old influencer, who operates a shop on Douyin (the Chinese equivalent of TikTok), shared the details of her impressive earnings between February 8 and 16. Over that period, Xixi raked in a total of 1.039 crore yuan (approximately Rs 12 Crore) on one platform, with a commission of around 27.9 lakh yuan (approximately Rs 3 Crore). On another platform, her sales reached 89.4 lakh yuan within a week.

Ozempic: How The Venom Of A Lizard Paved Way For Popular Diabetes Drug



The venom of the Gila monster, a lizard known for its toxic bite, has led to groundbreaking discoveries in medicine, particularly in the development of GLP-1 agonists like Ozempic and Wegovy, used for treating diabetes and obesity. Science Alert reports that while the Gila monster's venom is dangerous, it contains vital components that have led to life-changing treatments.

At the turn of the 20th century, endocrinologist Daniel Drucker sought a hormone that could mimic the appetite-suppressing and blood sugar-regulating effects of human GLP-1, but without breaking down too quickly. His research led him to endocrinologists John Eng and Jean-Pierre Raufman, along with biochemist John Pisano, who discovered

proteins in Gila monster venom that resembled human GLP-1.

Drucker and his team obtained a Gila monster from a zoo breeding program to investigate further. Their findings revealed that the venom of the Gila monster contained Exendin-4, a protein similar to GLP-1 but more stable in the body. This discovery eventually led to a synthetic version of the protein, which became an FDA-approved treatment for type 2 diabetes in 2005. The same compound has since been used for obesity management. The Gila monster is not the only animal to inspire medical advancements. Lisinopril, one of the world's top-selling drugs for heart failure and hypertension, originates from the venom of the Brazilian viper. Similarly, the Caribbean sea sponge

produces nucleosides that led to the chemotherapy drug cytarabine, which effectively treats leukemia and lymphoma.

Even scorpion venom has been used for cancer treatment. In 2004, oncologist Jim Olson discovered chlorotoxin, a peptide from the deathstalker scorpion, which specifically targets brain tumor cells. This discovery led to the development of Tozuleristide, a fluorescent dye that illuminates cancerous cells during surgery. These discoveries highlight the invaluable contributions of nature's most dangerous substances to modern medicine. However, as we continue to unlock these medical marvels, it is vital to protect the biodiversity that makes such life-saving innovations possible.

Virat Kohli: King of the Chase, Marks Milestone in India's Win Over Pakistan



In a thrilling India vs Pakistan Champions Trophy match on Sunday, Virat Kohli led India to a six-wicket victory with a brilliant 100* off 111 balls. His knock, which included only seven fours, was marked by intelligent running between the wickets, focusing on quick singles and doubles. The win nearly secured India's spot in the semifinals while pushing Pakistan to the brink of elimination. Kohli's performance was not just about the match-winning hundred. He also crossed a major milestone, becoming only the second Indian and third overall to reach 14,000 ODI runs. He achieved the feat in just 287 innings, faster than both Sachin Tendulkar and Kumar Sangakkara, who took more in-

nings to reach the mark. Kohli's remarkable consistency has made him the fastest to 13,000 and 14,000 ODI runs. Reflecting on his approach, Kohli explained his game plan—taking on pacers and being cautious against spinners. He credited his teammates, including Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, and Shreyas Iyer, for their contributions. Kohli also set a record for the most catches by an Indian fielder, surpassing Mohammad Azharuddin with his 158th catch during Pakistan's innings. As Kohli's form continues to shine, his impact on Indian cricket remains invaluable.

Ahlawat Struggles in Kenya Open, Benzema Shines in Saudi Pro League



Veer Ahlawat had a challenging third round at the Kenya Open, carding an 8-over 79 to slip to T-67 on the leaderboard. The Indian golfer's round included a nightmare 11 on the par-5 seventh hole, as well as four bogeys and just two birdies. Ahlawat had earlier posted rounds of 70 and 72. South Africa's Jacques Kruyswijk took the lead with a 7-under round, moving one stroke ahead as he aims for his first DP World Tour title. In France, Indian Grandmaster P Niyan finished as runner-up at the 41st Cappelle La Grande International Open Tournament. Niyan scored 7.5 points, including

six wins and three draws, but lost in the tie-breaks to French IM Mahel, who emerged victorious after nine rounds. Meanwhile, in Riyadh, former France striker Karim Benzema helped Al-Ittihad secure a dominant 4-1 win over Al-Hilal in the Saudi Pro League. Benzema sealed the win with a stunning goal, extending Ittihad's lead to seven points, while also continuing his strong scoring form with 16 goals in the league. Lastly, cricket legend Ian Chappell retired from journalism after five decades, marking the end of an era of insightful writings and stories from his playing days.

Barcelona Reclaims Top Spot with 2-0 Win Over Las Palmas



Barcelona secured a vital 2-0 win against Las Palmas on Saturday, returning to the top of the LaLiga table. Dani Olmo and Ferran Torres came off the bench to seal the victory, which sent Barca back to the summit with 54 points, tied with Real Madrid and one ahead of Atletico Madrid. The match was a dull affair for much of its duration, with both teams struggling to create meaningful chances. Barcelona finally broke the deadlock in the

62nd minute when Olmo scored from inside the box. Torres added a second in added time, capitalizing on a defensive error by Las Palmas to score from close range. Olmo expressed his satisfaction after the match, acknowledging the importance of the three points in the title race. "We had to be patient," he said. "Las Palmas defended very well, and in the second half, we found more chances and secured the win."

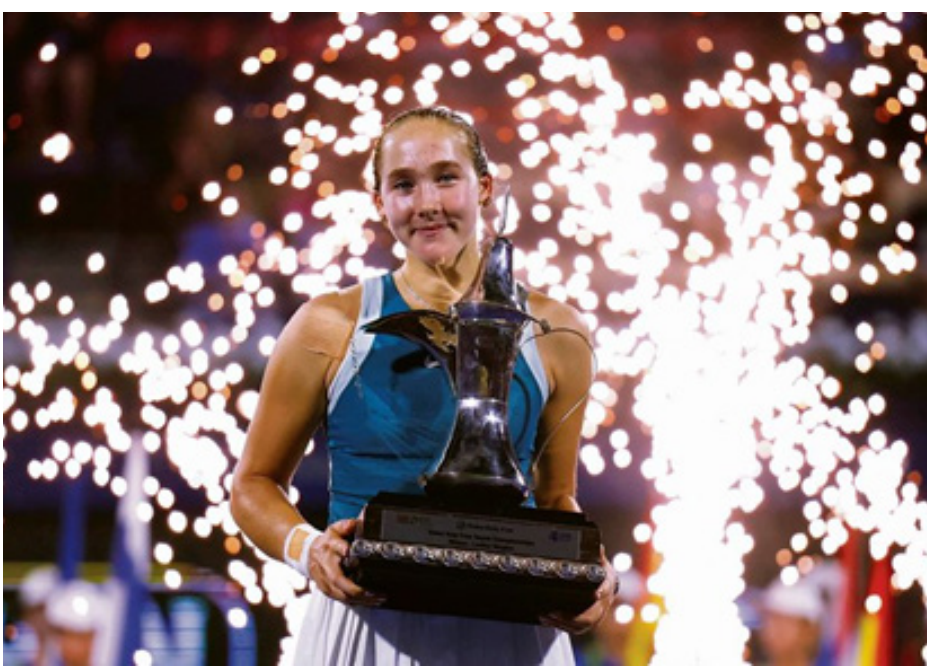
SFI Announces 2025 National Surfing and Stand-Up Paddle Event Calendar



The Surfing Federation of India (SFI) has revealed its 2025 National Surfing and Stand-Up Paddle (SUP) Event Calendar, aiming to further elevate the country's position in global surfing. After a historic 2024, where India secured its first-ever quotas for the 2026 Asian Games in Japan, the SFI is focusing on increasing ocean time and competitive exposure for the nation's top surfers. The 2025 calendar includes nine national-level events across Surfing and SUP, with competitions scheduled across key coastal regions to enhance training and provide valuable experience for Indian athletes. The season kicks off in February with the Varkala Surfing Championship in Kerala, followed by the Indian Open of

Surfing in May. The East Coast Pro Tour will feature stops in Pondicherry, Mahabalipuram, and Covelong in August, while SUP events will be held in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala throughout the year. SFI President Arun Vasu emphasized that these events are crucial for maintaining momentum from India's impressive international performances, including a 5th-place ranking in Asia. The support from local governments and international partners is key to India's rapid progress in the sport. India's surf scene continues to gain global recognition, with upcoming international events and growing support from the International Surfing Association.

Mirra Andreeva Clinches Dubai Championship Title



Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva claimed the biggest title of her career on Saturday, defeating Clara Tauson 7-6(1) 6-1 in the Dubai Championships final. The win will propel Andreeva into the top-10 of the WTA rankings for the first time in her career next week, making her the youngest player to achieve this feat since Nicole Pietrangeli in 2007. It was a remarkable week for the 17-year-old, who had previously secured impres-

sive victories over 2023 Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova, five-time Major winner Iga Swiatek, and 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina. With this achievement, Andreeva becomes the youngest player to defeat three Major champions at a single event since Maria Sharapova's 2004 WTA Finals performance. Andreeva's strong performance throughout the tournament signals the rise of a promising talent in women's tennis.

Savita Punia Reaches 300 International Caps; Hockey India Extends Congratulations

Indian women's hockey team goalkeeper Savita Punia achieved a remarkable milestone on Monday, earning her 300th international cap during India's match against the Netherlands in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 at Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. This achievement places her in an elite club, alongside Vandana Katariya as only the second Indian woman to reach this milestone. Savita is also the second In-

dian goalkeeper, after PR Sreejesh, to achieve this feat. Savita, who made her senior debut at 20, has been a cornerstone of Indian hockey, playing a crucial role in the team's historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics and in other key tournaments, including the 2016 Rio Olympics and the 2018 World Cup. She has captained India to significant successes, including a bronze medal at the 2022 Common-

wealth Games and back-to-back golds in the Women's Asian Champions Trophy (2023-2024). Honored with the Arjuna Award and multiple FIH Goalkeeper of the Year awards, Savita expressed gratitude for her journey. Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey and Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh both lauded her leadership and dedication, celebrating her as a source of inspiration for aspiring athletes.





'Hari Hara Veeramallu' Second Song Released: A Mass Beat That Will Win Fans' Hearts!



The makers of Hari Hara Veeramallu have released the second song from the film, titled "Kollagottinadhiro," just ahead of its theatrical release on March 28. This energetic track has already become a sensation among fans, thanks to its vibrant mass beat and catchy lyrics. Pawan Kalyan, who stars as the titular character, is shown in all his glory in this song, which praises the valiant heroism of the character Hari Hara Veeramallu. The song is composed by the Oscar-winning music director MM Keeravani, with lyrics by Chandrabose. Singers Mangli, Rahul Sipligunj, Ramya Behara, and Yamini Ghantasala have given life to this energetic anthem. Directed by Krish Jagar-

mudi and produced under the Mega Surya Productions banner, the film also stars Nidhi Agerwal as the lead actress, with Bollywood stars Bobby Deol, Nargis Fakhri, and Nora Fatehi playing key roles. Hari Hara Veeramallu promises to be an epic historical action film, and with Pawan Kalyan's powerful performance, it is set to create a storm in theaters worldwide. Directed originally by Krish, the film had a major shift in direction when Krish stepped down from the project midway, and Jyothi Krishna, the son of producer A.M. Rathnam, took over. Fans are eagerly awaiting the film's release, with anticipation building over this high-budget spectacle.

"Partners": Malayalam Movie Gaining Popularity on OTT!



Partners, a Malayalam film, is currently creating a buzz on OTT platforms. The movie, which was initially released in theaters on July 5 last year, is now streaming on the Saina Play OTT platform since January 31, and it has been receiving remarkable feedback from viewers. Directed by Naveen John and produced by Dinesh, Partners revolves around a fake bank and the intriguing events surrounding it. The story follows a protagonist who starts working as a cashier in a small private bank. As he observes the bank's operations, he begins

to suspect something unusual. His suspicions grow when he realizes that everyone working at the bank has a criminal record, and he uncovers that the bank itself is a fraudulent operation. The film features performances by Dhyana Srinivasan, Sanju Sivaram, Kalabhavan Shajon, and Rony David Raj in pivotal roles, with music composed by Prakash Alex. While the film initially received positive responses in theaters, its content has found a strong audience on OTT platforms, bringing in more attention.

'HIT-3' Teaser Released: Nani as a Fierce Mass Cop!



On the occasion of Natural Star Nani's birthday today, the makers of HIT-3 released the highly anticipated teaser of the

film. The teaser, packed with unexpected shocks, has already left viewers excited and curious for more.

In this crime thriller, Nani is seen in the role of a tough, mass police officer, Arjun Sarkar. The teaser hints at a series of shocking murders in Srinagar and how the police officer investigates and solves these gruesome crimes. Nani's intense and powerful performance as a no-nonsense cop adds a gripping element to the teaser.

The visuals of HIT-3 are spine-chilling, with Mickey J. Meyer's background score taking the intensity to another level. Although a

few key characters like Rao Ramesh are revealed, the teaser deliberately keeps other important roles under wraps, building suspense.

The film, set to release on May 1, also stars Sreevidya Shetty alongside Nani. Directed by Sailesh Kolanu, the film promises to deliver a violent, edge-of-the-seat narrative, continuing the HIT Universe saga. After Nani's Dasara, HIT-3 seems to take the visuals to a whole new, thrilling level. Fans are eagerly awaiting this action-packed thriller.

Katrina Kaif Visits Maha Kumbh 2025 with Mother-in-Law Veena Kaushal



Bollywood actress Katrina Kaif visited the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj with her mother-in-law, Veena Kaushal, making a spiritual journey to the sacred event. Katrina, dressed in a powder pink Indian attire, was seen interacting with spiritual leaders Swami Chidanand Saraswati and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati. Photos from her visit have gone viral, showcasing her connection with the event.

Parmarth Niketan, a spiritual ashram led by Pujya Swami Chidanand, shared a tweet highlighting Katrina's presence at the Maha Kumbh. The tweet emphasized how her visit blended spirituality with entertainment, inspiring youth to recon-

nect with their roots.

Katrina Kaif is among several Bollywood personalities who visited the Maha Kumbh, including Akshay Kumar, Sonali Bendre, Vidhut Jambwal, and Vicky Kaushal, her husband. These stars participated in the holy dip, adding to the spiritual significance of the event.

In related news, Katrina recently praised her husband Vicky Kaushal's performance in Chhaava. She lauded his portrayal of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, calling him "outstanding" and sharing her admiration for the film's brilliance. Katrina also congratulated the entire team, including director Laxman Utekar, for their efforts.

IIFA Digital Awards 2025: Celebrating Digital Cinema and Creativity



The International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) is set to mark a special milestone in 2025, celebrating 25 years of showcasing Indian cinema globally. This year, IIFA introduces a new highlight—the Sobha Realty Presents IIFA Digital Awards, Co-Presented by NEXA, a unique addition to the iconic event. The awards, which will take place in Jaipur, Rajasthan, aim to recognize the rapidly growing world of digital and OTT entertainment, shining a spotlight on talented storytellers who are shaping the future of

cinema.

Scheduled for March 8, the Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards will honor the best in digital content across various categories, including Best Film, Best Series, Best Performance in a Leading Role (Male & Female), Best Director, Best Reality or Non-Scripted Series, Best Docuseries/DocuFilm, and Best Music/Soundtrack. These awards will celebrate the creativity and innovation that define digital entertainment and its growing impact on the entertainment industry.

The event will be hosted by Vijay Varma, Abhishek Banerjee, and Aparshakti Khurana, ensuring an engaging atmosphere throughout the evening. Performances by music legends like Sachin-Jigar, Shreya Ghoshal, and Mika Singh will add to the excitement.

The nominations for the IIFA Digital Awards are out, with Panchayat leading with 10 nominations, followed by Amar Singh Chamkila and Heeramandi, each receiving 6 nods.

Chiranjeevi Celebrates India's Win with Cricketers Tilak Varma and Abhishek Sharma

Chiranjeevi took to Instagram to share a few pictures and glimpses from the high-energy India vs Pakistan Champions Trophy match that took place on Sunday, where India registered a stunning six-wicket victory over arch-rivals Pakistan. The match was especially thrilling as Virat Kohli scored his 51st ODI ton, guiding India to a remarkable win in Dubai.

In the pictures, Chiranjeevi can be seen interacting with fans and posing for a selfie with Indian cricketers Abhishek Sharma and Tilak Varma. GMR Chairman Srinivas Bommidala and Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur also made appearances in the photos. The megastar's excite-

ment was palpable, as he expressed his joy at witnessing the spectacular match live.

Chiranjeevi wrote on Instagram, "Hurrahhhhhh!!! India spectacularly triumphs over Pakistan!!! What a match!!!! Kudos to the Entire Team!!! Such a treat to watch the fireworks from the SENSATIONAL Virat Kohli. Bravo, Shreyas Iyer, Shubman Gill, Kuldeep Yadav & Captain Rohit Sharma and the entire team!!!"

He added, "It's been Absolutely Electrifying watching this Super Thrilling match Live with some dear friends Anurag Singh Thakur, Bommidala GMR, & young cricketer Tilak Varma among others!!! More power to India!!! Jai Hind!!!"

