



Weather Forecast

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



BALANCE SHEET MISSING BALANCE

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the Union Budget 2025 on February 1, paid tribute to renowned Telugu poet and playwright Gurujada Apparao. She quoted his iconic words, "Desamante matti kaadoyi, desamante manushuloyi," meaning "A country is not just its land and soil, but its people." This line, from the classic poem Desamunu Preminchumanna, highlighted the government's focus on people-centric policies and national development.

Sitharaman created history by delivering her eighth consecutive Union Budget, setting a clear roadmap for India's growth towards becoming a developed nation (Viksit Bharat) by 2047. The budget introduces key economic reforms, targeting agriculture, manufacturing, MSMEs, infrastructure, and investment to accelerate national progress.

Fiscal Deficit Target Set at 4.4% of GDP by FY26

The government has set an ambitious target to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.4% of GDP by FY26. This move reassures investors about India's economic stability and long-term growth trajectory. Maintaining a balance between fiscal prudence and development, the government aims to strengthen India's macroeconomic foundation.

₹20,000 Crore Boost for Startup Fund

With an additional ₹10,000 crore infusion into the Fund of Fund Scheme (FFS), taking its total allocation to ₹20,000 crore, the government is reinforcing its commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship. Launched in 2016, the FFS has successfully mobilized investments of over ₹91,000 crore through 151 Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), fueling growth in the startup sector.

To enhance ease of doing business, the government has formed a High-Level Committee for Regulatory Reform. This committee will review existing financial regulations and eliminate bureaucratic hurdles, encouraging faster investment and fostering a more competitive business environment.

MSME Investment Limits Increased by 2.5 Times

Recognizing the role of MSMEs in economic development, the budget significantly increases investment and turnover thresholds by 2.0 to 2.5 times, allowing more businesses to qualify for government-backed benefits. Additionally, the credit guarantee scheme has been expanded, ensuring better access to financing for small businesses.

50 Tourist Destinations to Get Infrastructure Boost

The government has launched an initiative to develop India's top 50 tourist destinations in collaboration with state authorities. The plan includes enhancing infrastructure, accessibility, and amenities to attract both domestic and international tourists. Additionally, to support small-scale tourism enterprises, Mudra loans will be extended to homestay operators, promoting local and heritage tourism.

120 New Airports to Cater to 4 Crore Passengers

The enhanced UDAN scheme aims to connect 120 new airports over the next decade, improving regional connectivity and making air travel more accessible. The initiative is expected to facilitate the movement of 4 crore passengers, with special focus on remote and hilly regions. Bihar will benefit from new greenfield airports alongside an expansion of Patna airport. With a clear vision for economic growth, financial stability, and inclusive development, the Union Budget 2025 lays a strong foundation for India's future. The government's focus on tax relief, infrastructure, entrepreneurship, and regional development ensures a progressive pathway towards Viksit Bharat by 2047.

"This budget is a force multiplier that will increase savings, investment, consumption, and growth rapidly. It fills the pockets of citizens rather than the government treasury, ensuring that common people drive the mission of Viksit Bharat."

- PM Narendra Modi



"This budget is designed to empower every Indian by ensuring economic stability, fostering innovation, and creating opportunities for all. Our vision for Viksit Bharat by 2047 is driven by strategic reforms, sustainable growth, and a strong commitment to inclusive development."

- FM Nirmala Sitharaman

₹12 Lakh Tax-Free Income

A major announcement in the budget was the exemption of income tax on earnings up to ₹12 lakh. This bold reform, raising the previous threshold from ₹7 lakh, has been widely celebrated, especially among the middle-class workforce. The move is expected to enhance disposable income, stimulate consumer spending, and bolster economic growth.

100% FDI in Insurance....

In a significant policy shift, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the insurance sector in the Union Budget 2025. This move aims to attract global capital, enhance competition, and improve insurance penetration in India. The government expects this reform to bring more investment into the sector, improve efficiency, and expand insurance coverage, benefiting both businesses and consumers.

10 MLAs Hold Secret Meeting

Secret Meeting Creates Political Ripples

MLAs Express Discontent Over Ministers

CM Calls for Emergency Talks

Congress Faces Internal Unrest?

Local Body Elections Add Pressure

KCR's Warning Sparks Speculation

Political Turmoil in Telangana Congress



PAGE 2

"KCR Means History, Revanth Means Lottery": KTR

TPN Correspondent | Telangana

BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) launched a sharp attack on Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, claiming that his governance is built on corruption. He remarked, "KCR means history, Revanth means lottery," accusing the CM of coming to power by chance rather than merit. KTR took a dig at Revanth Reddy, saying, "Ask your former teacher what it would be like if



PAGE 2

What did we ask... what did you give?



TPN Correspondent | Telangana

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Union Budget, questioning the Centre's neglect of the state. Chairing a high-level meeting at the Command

Control Center in Hyderabad, he discussed the issue with Deputy Chief Minister Malu Bhatti Vikramarka, state ministers, and finance department officials.

PAGE 2



Budget 2025: What's Cheaper and What's Costlier

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2025-26, marking her eighth consecutive budget. The second full budget of the Modi 3.0 government focuses on ten broad areas, including agriculture, manufacturing, employment, MSMEs, rural development, and innovation.

Items That Got Cheaper

Essential medicines: 37 additional medicines, including 36 cancer and rare disease drugs, are exempted from Basic Customs Duty (BCD).

Fish products: BCD on fish pasteurii reduced from 30% to 5%, and on fish hydrolysate for aquatic feed from 15% to 5%.

Chemical compounds: BCD on pyrimidine and piperazine-based compounds cut from 10% to 7.5%.



Food & beverage industry: Synthetic flavouring essences now taxed at 20% instead of 100%.

Technology & minerals: Exemptions granted on cobalt products, LED, zinc, lithium-ion battery scrap, and 12 critical minerals.

Jewelry & metals: BCD on platinum findings reduced from 25% to 6.4%.

Shipbuilding: BCD exemption on raw materials for ship manufacturing extended for 10 years.

Leather industry: Wet blue leather and crust leather export duty reduced to 0%.

Electronics & telecom: Duty on wired headset components, microphones, USB cables, and ethernet switches reduced.

Motorcycles: BCD on bikes (≤1600 CC) cut to 40% from 50%, and for larger bikes (≥1600 CC) to 30% from 50%.

Items That Got Costlier

Knitted fabrics: BCD increased to 20% or ₹115/kg (whichever is higher).

Interactive flat panel displays: Duty raised from 10% to 20% to fix inverted duty structure.

Customs assessments: A new two-year time limit for provisional assessments introduced.

The budget underscores the government's focus on structural reforms, supporting key industries while addressing trade imbalances.

Exxeella Education Group Hosts Exclusive Event in Hyderabad with South University



• Exxeella hosted an event with South University in Hyderabad.

• Over 150 agents received recognition certificates.

• Collaboration aims to ease U.S. admissions for Indian students.

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Exxeella Education Group, a leading global education consultancy, hosted a prestigious event in Hyderabad in collaboration with South University. The event witnessed the presence of Dr. Alisa Krouse, Vice Chancellor of South University, and Mr. Joseph Castro, International Admission Director, who engaged with associate partners.

South University, known for its academic excellence and student-centric approach, offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs tailored to industry demands. The collaboration between Exxeella Education Group and South University aims to streamline the admission process for Indian students, ensuring a seamless transition to higher education in the U.S.

During the event, Dr. Krouse and Mr. Castro reiterated the university's commitment to providing quality education aligned with evolving industry needs. Over 150 agents attended the event and received recognition certificates from South University delegates for their contributions.

Highlighting the significance of the event, Exxeella Education Group Chairman Aravind Arasavilli and CEO Sowjanya Rasamsetty stated, "Our collaboration with South University reflects our dedication to providing Indian students with world-class educational opportunities. This event will serve as a gateway for students to gain insights into South University's programs and the support available for their academic journey."

The Hyderabad event marked a key milestone in strengthening educational ties between India and the U.S., reinforcing Exxeella Education Group's commitment to facilitating global opportunities for Indian students.

No tax up to ₹12 lakh... A golden future for salaried workers

TPN Correspondent | Telangana

Union Minister of State Bandi Sanjay welcomed the Union Budget 2025-26, highlighting its major relief for salaried workers and the middle class. Taking to social media, he stated that individuals earning up to ₹12 lakh annually would be exempt from paying income tax, marking a significant step toward economic empowerment. He emphasized that there would no longer be deductions in salaried workers' accounts, only policies designed to ensure their financial stability and growth.



Bandi Sanjay described the budget as a landmark initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling it a roadmap for a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India). He asserted that the budget was not merely a tally sheet of allocations but a comprehensive plan aimed at prosperity, self-reliance, and sustainable

growth. He praised the government for addressing key sectors, including agriculture, startups, women's empowerment, and infrastructure development.

"This is not just a budget; it is a ray of happiness in every Indian household," he said, adding that the government has taken decisive steps to uplift the poor, the middle class, and the salaried workforce. He credited Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for designing an inclusive and forward-looking budget. Bandi Sanjay further stated that the budget provides a balanced approach, offering relief to taxpayers while encouraging investments. He claimed that the Modi government's focus on strengthening the economy would lead to long-term benefits for all sections of society. He thanked PM Modi and Sitharaman for ensuring financial security and growth opportunities for every Indian.

"Burglar Opens Fire at Gachibowli Pub, Cop Injured in Shootout"

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

A police constable was injured when a wanted criminal opened fire to evade arrest at Prism Pub in Gachibowli's Financial District on Saturday night. The accused, identified as Battula Prabhakar, a notorious burglar involved in multiple house break-in cases, fired at the police using a country-made pistol.

According to police sources, the Madhapur Central Crime Station (CCS) team had been tracking Prabhakar's movements and pursued him to the pub. Around 8 PM, as the officers moved in to apprehend him, he suddenly drew a firearm and shot at the police. Head Constable Venkatrami Reddy sustained a gunshot wound to his thigh during the altercation.

Following the gunfire, Gachibowli police immediately arrived at the scene and managed to overpower and arrest Prabhakar. He was taken into custody and shifted to the police station for further interrogation. Meanwhile, the injured constable was rushed to Continental Hospital, where he is reported to be in stable condition. Authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the shooting, including how Prabhakar acquired the weapon and whether he had any accomplices. Senior police officials have reviewed the incident and assured strict action against the criminal.

"Union Budget is for the nation, not just Telangana" –Kishan Reddy

• Some are questioning Telangana's share, but this is a national budget

• A dream budget for the poor and middle class

• Telangana will benefit from central schemes and interest-free loans



TPN Correspondent | Telangana

Union Minister Kishan Reddy defended the Union Budget, stating that it is a national budget, not a state-specific one. Responding to criticism, he emphasized that Telangana will benefit from various central schemes. "Some are questioning what Telangana got, but this is not a state budget," he remarked. Calling it a "dream budget for the poor," Kishan Reddy highlighted its focus on poverty eradication and infrastructure development. He stated that the Modi government has given major relief to the middle class by

exempting income tax up to ₹12 lakh. "This is the first step towards Vikasit Bharat," he asserted. He pointed out that Telangana will have a share in every scheme implemented by the Centre, including the ₹1.50 lakh crore allocation for MSMEs over five years. "A ₹10,000 crore special program has been set up for startups, which will also benefit Telangana," he said. He further mentioned that the state will gain from the 50-year interest-free loans and ₹10,000 crore allocations for urban development under the Amrut scheme.

1st Page Cont..

"What did we ask... what did you give?"

During the meeting, Revanth Reddy reportedly criticized the budget presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, highlighting Telangana's economic contributions and the lack of corresponding allocations. Discussions also focused on the state's economic policies and strategies to mitigate the impact of the budget. Minister Sridhar Babu also voiced his frustration, stating that despite Telangana's significant contribution to the country's GDP, the Centre had sidelined the state. "The share of funds due to Telangana must come. BJP leaders here must answer why the state was ignored," he said.

"KCR Means History, Revanth Means Lottery": KTR

KTR takes you on, and ask your current teacher Rahul Gandhi's mother." He credited KCR with achieving Telangana by forcing national leaders to concede, emphasizing that those who had faced KCR in the past could explain his political strength.

• "Revanth should rule without commission"

He accused Revanth Reddy's government of failing to implement promises and claimed that corruption was rampant. "KCR stands strong without a stick, but Revanth should first learn to rule without a commission," he said, alleging that governance under Congress is driven by vested interests.

• "Congress, BJP MPs failed Telangana"

KTR criticized Telangana's Congress and BJP MPs for failing to secure funds for the state in the Union Budget. He demanded that they apologize to the people, stating, "With eight MPs each, Congress and BJP have brought zero to Telangana."

He further alleged that funds were diverted to other states while Telangana was ignored due to a secret deal between Revanth Reddy and the BJP. "The budget didn't come even for the second time because Revanth struck a dark deal with the BJP," he claimed, asserting that despite visiting Delhi 30 times, the CM failed to bring any funds for the state.

Political Turmoil in Telangana Congress

PARDHU | TPN

Hyderabad, Feb 02: The political atmosphere in Telangana has heated up, with growing speculation of unrest within the ruling Congress party. Reports suggest that ten Congress MLAs recently held a secret meeting, fueling discussions across political circles. The meeting allegedly took place at a farmhouse near Hyderabad, raising concerns within the party.

Secret Meeting and Dissatisfied MLAs??

Sources indicate that these MLAs expressed dissatisfaction with the working style of two cabinet ministers. The group reportedly includes leaders from the erstwhile Warangal and Mahabubnagar districts: Naini Rajender Reddy, Bhupathi Reddy, Srinivas Reddy, Murali Nayak, Kuchukulla Rajesh Reddy, Sanjeev Reddy, Anirudh Reddy, Lakshmikanth, Dothi Madhav Reddy, and Beerla Ailayya. Among their grievances, it is reported that MLAs from Warangal district, including Dothi Madhav Reddy, Naini Rajender Reddy, and Murali Nayak, are unhappy with Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, the district's in-charge. Similarly, MLAs from Mahabubnagar district have expressed dissatisfaction with Minister Jupally Krishna Rao. Their concerns over these two ministers' leadership styles are believed to have prompted the secret meeting.

CM's Emergency Meeting

Following the reports of this secret gathering, Chief Minister Re-

vanth Reddy convened an emergency meeting at the Command Control Center. Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Uttam Kumar Reddy, Ponnam Prabhakar, Tummala Nageswara Rao, and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy attended the meeting. Notably, officials were reportedly instructed not to attend, further intensifying speculation within the Congress party.

As news of the secret meeting surfaced, CM Revanth Reddy reportedly took the matter seriously. With local body elections approaching, such internal discord could harm the party's prospects. The Chief Minister is keen on addressing the discontent among MLAs before it escalates further. Meanwhile, opposition leader and BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) recently made a strong statement, warning that his actions would not be "ordinary" if provoked. His remarks, coinciding with the Congress MLAs' secret meeting, have added further intrigue to the unfolding political developments.

New Twist in Telangana Politics

The secret meeting has sparked intense discussions in Telangana's political circles. The key questions now are: What decisions will these dissatisfied MLAs make about their political future? How will the Congress leadership handle this internal rift? With growing tensions, Telangana's political landscape is set for further twists and turns in the coming days.

"BJP discriminating against Telangana for political gains" – Mahesh Kumar Goud

• BJP government is politically damaging Telangana

• FM Nirmala Sitharaman ignored Telangana

• Huge allocations for Bihar, but nothing for Telangana



TPN Correspondent | Telangana

TPCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud alleged that the BJP government at the Centre is deliberately discriminating against Telangana for political reasons. Speaking on the Union Budget, he criticized that the allocation for Telangana was "zero" and accused Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman of failing to support the state despite being a "Telugu daughter-in-law." He alleged that the BJP government made massive allocations to Bihar, where assembly elections are approaching, purely for polit-

ical advantage. "The Centre ignored Telangana's needs but prioritized Bihar for electoral gains," he said. Goud questioned what happened to the promises made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP leaders during the Telangana elections. He stated that despite repeated appeals from Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, state ministers, and MPs, the Centre has not responded to Telangana's demands. He urged the Union government to extend necessary cooperation to the state.

Telangana Assembly to Hold Special Meeting on Caste Census Report

- Telangana cabinet to discuss caste census report on February 5
- Special assembly session scheduled to present findings
- SC classification and census report under government review



Reddy confirmed that the cabinet sub-committee would receive the caste census report tomorrow. He further stated that after the sub-committee's review, the report would be submitted for cabinet approval during the meeting on February 5. Once approved, the report will be presented in the assembly for further discussion. The special assembly meeting has been called specifically to address this crucial issue.

The caste census has been a significant subject in Telangana politics, with various social groups and political parties awaiting its results. The government's approach to the findings and its implementation strategies will be closely observed.

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

The Telangana government has scheduled a special assembly session on February 5 to discuss the caste census report and SC classification. The state cabinet will first meet on the same day to deliberate on the findings before presenting them in the assembly.

A meeting chaired by Cabinet Sub-Committee Chairman and Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy was

held to finalize the caste census report. Other ministers participated in the discussion, reviewing key aspects of the report. Uttam Kumar

Reddy confirmed that the cabinet sub-committee would receive the caste census report tomorrow. He further stated that after the sub-committee's review, the report would be submitted for cabinet approval during the meeting on February 5. Once approved, the report will be presented in the assembly for further discussion. The special assembly meeting has been called specifically to address this crucial issue.

Rs 54.18 lakh crore collected from middle class in 10 years: Kharge

AICC President slams Union Budget for failing to address key issues

TPN Correspondent, New Delhi

AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge has strongly criticized the Union Budget for betraying the people of India, accusing the Modi government of collecting a staggering Rs 54.18 lakh crore in taxes from the middle class over the past decade. He pointed out that while this massive collection has occurred, the government now offers tax exemptions only up to Rs 12 lakh, questioning the fairness of such measures.



Kharge further accused the BJP of trying to take the path of devotion after committing numerous "sins." He expressed outrage over the Modi government's failure to address the pressing issues of inflation and unemployment while focusing on promoting the budget itself. The claim that an average of Rs 80,000 could be saved annually

through tax exemptions was dismissed by Kharge as hollow, given the dire economic conditions faced by the people.

The AICC President also slammed the budget for its lack of provisions for the youth, women empowerment, and farmers, particularly their promised goal of doubling farmers' income. Kharge criticized the absence of steps to encourage private investment and accused the Centre of attempting to mask its failures by highlighting issues like exports and tax slabs instead of concrete solutions.

Congress party graduate MLC candidate name finalized

V. Narendra Reddy to contest from Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Karimnagar



TPN Correspondent, Hyderabad

The Telangana Congress has officially finalized V. Narendra Reddy as its graduate MLC candidate for the Medak-Nizamabad-Adilabad-Karimnagar region. This marks a significant step as the state prepares for elections to three MLC seats. The regions involved encompass 42 assembly constituencies and 6 parliamentary constituencies, totaling 3.41 lakh graduate voters.

Historically, this area has been a stronghold of the BRS; however, the BRS has chosen to stay away from these elections, which is notable. The election process will begin with the issuance of a notification on February 3, followed by scrutiny of nominations on the 11th, and withdrawal of nominations by the 13th. Polling is scheduled for February 27, with the results to be announced on March 3.

BJP's insincerity towards Telangana has become clear: Kavitha

TPN Correspondent, Hyderabad

BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has strongly criticized the BJP government over its lack of sincerity towards Telangana, particularly in the Union Budget presented. Expressing her dismay, Kavitha pointed out that despite both BJP and Congress having eight MPs each from the state, Telangana has failed to secure any significant benefit.

Kavitha called out the BJP for allocating no funds for Telangana's key issues in the budget. She highlighted the neglect of vital irrigation projects, which were not granted national status, and the Sammakka-Sarakka Jatara, which also missed national recognition. The MLC further demanded that Revanth Reddy, the Congress leader, push the Centre to provide Rs 1.50 lakh crore in interest-free loans to Telangana. The establishment of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in the state, a long-standing demand, was also ignored, much to Kavitha's frustration. She also lamented the insufficient allocation of funds for public



welfare, agriculture, women's empowerment, and the lack of support for education, with only 2.5 percent of the budget allocated to the sector. Kavitha's anger was especially focused on the lack of funding for the Turmeric Board, a vital body for farmers in Nizamabad, despite the BJP's claim of having set it up. She pointed out that similar boards like the Spices, Tea, Coffee, and Rubber Boards received funding, while the Turmeric Board was left out, leaving Telangana's farmers unassisted.

Manda Krishna Issues Ultimatum to CM Revanth Reddy

Demands decision on SC categorization by February 7 or face massive agitation

TPN Correspondent, Suryapet

Manda Krishna Madiga, founder-president of the Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS), has issued a strong ultimatum to the Telangana government led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy regarding the long-awaited categorization of Scheduled Castes (SC). Speaking at the preparatory meeting for the "Laksha Dappulu, Vela Gon-thulu" (One Lakh Drums, Thousands of Voices) protest held at Sumangali Function Hall in Suryapet district, Manda Krishna announced that the agitation against the Congress government was set to begin.

Manda Krishna made it clear that the Telangana government had until February 7 to take a definitive stance on SC categorization, as promised by the Chief Minister. He warned that if the government failed to act by the deadline, a "Madiga tsunami" would be unleashed in Hyderabad, which would have a profound impact on the state's leadership.

The MRPS leader criticized CM Revanth Reddy for not honoring his promise made in the Telangana Assembly, where he had pledged that the state would be the first to implement SC categorization, despite a Supreme Court ruling. Manda Krishna pointed out that, five months after the promise, no concrete steps



had been taken, and this delay had spurred the need for the upcoming protest.

"If the government takes action before February 7, there will be no need for this protest. However, if they continue to ignore the issue, the consequences will be severe," Manda Krishna warned. He also emphasized that several other states had already implemented SC categorization, while Telangana lagged behind, resulting in unemployment and hardship for many Madiga youth.

He further accused leaders from the Mala community of pressuring the government to delay the categorization process and warned that those obstructing the implementation would face dire consequences. Manda Krishna made it clear that if the government continued to bow to such pressures, the Revanth Reddy administration could face a collapse.

South India has been a neglected area for BJP since the beginning

TPN Correspondent, Hyderabad

BRS leader Harish Rao has criticized the BJP government for consistently neglecting South India, particularly Telangana, in the allocation of medical colleges and Postgraduate (PG) medical seats. Speaking about the issue, Harish Rao pointed out that while the Centre established 142 medical colleges across the country, not a single one was allotted to Telangana. He emphasized that this lack of allocation reflects the BJP's indifference towards the southern states.

Rao further condemned the BJP for its failure to ensure a local quota in medical college seats. He argued



that the state governments in South India, including Telangana, have been investing heavily in building and running medical colleges and hospitals. Despite these efforts, the Centre has denied these states a fair share of medical education op-

portunities. "The denial of local quotas in medical college seats is a grave injustice to the people of Telangana and South India. How can it be justified that our state is running these institutions with its own funds, yet students here are not given a fair chance?" Harish Rao questioned.

He also highlighted the issue with the distribution of PG medical seats, reiterating that Telangana has not received its due share, leaving local students at a disadvantage. Rao called on the Centre to rectify these disparities and ensure fair access to medical education for students in Telangana and other southern states.

Where are the Municipality Officials?

Private individuals remove banners in Thorur Municipality instead of municipal officials

TPN Correspondent, Mahabubabad
In a peculiar turn of events, private individuals have taken it upon themselves to remove election-related banners in Thorur Municipality of Mahabubabad district, raising questions about the absence of municipal officials. Despite media reports highlighting that the banners have not been removed even after the election code came into effect, it was noted that the removal was carried out by private individuals, not by the municipal authorities.

This has sparked a debate among locals and media on the whereabouts of the municipality officials responsible

for overseeing such activities. The delay in removing the banners, coupled with the fact that private individuals were stepping in to fulfill the role of the municipal officials, has left many questioning the accountability and efficiency of the local administration.

Local residents have expressed their concerns, pointing out that it is the duty of the municipality officials to ensure that such violations of the election code are addressed in a timely manner. With elections around the corner, the lack of action from the municipal authorities has only added to the confusion and frustration among the public.



Counterfeit Currency Maker Arrested in Hyderabad, Over ₹10 Lakh Seized

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

The Hyderabad City Police arrested a man involved in counterfeiting Indian currency on Saturday, February 1. The accused, Pabbati Murali Krishna (38), a native of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, was apprehended near Sri Ganesh Tiffin Centre, Bazar Ghat, under Nampally police station limits.

Police seized fake currency worth ₹11,10,500 in ₹500 denominations, along with printing materials and other incriminating evidence.

According to the police, Murali Krishna, who has expertise in graphic design, used his skills to manufacture counterfeit notes and circulate them in metro cities with the help of associates.

This is not his first offense—he had been arrested thrice previously for similar crimes, including by the Kavali police in Andhra Pradesh and Begum Bazar police in Hyderabad. However, he managed to secure release each time on surety bonds. Murali Krishna was reportedly exchanging fake notes worth ₹1 lakh in return for



₹14,000 from unsuspecting individuals. The police have registered a case and launched further investigations to trace his network and identify other accomplices involved in the racket.

Hyderabad Hosts 11th EME Corps Reunion, Honours Veterans and Veer Naris



TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

The 11th EME Corps Reunion was held from January 30 to February 1, bringing together over 3,500 serving personnel and veterans of the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) from across the country.

The three-day event celebrated the spirit of unity, honour, and pride that defines the Corps. The reunion commenced with a solemn wreath-laying ceremony to pay tribute to EME soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation. In a heartfelt gesture, Veer Naris, the wives of fallen soldiers, were honoured for their strength and resilience.

Veterans played a key role in the event, sharing their experiences and insights with serving personnel, providing valuable lessons drawn from their distinguished service. The gathering not only strengthened bonds between the past and present members of the Corps but also reaffirmed their commitment to duty and excellence. The event concluded with a renewed pledge to uphold the values and traditions of the Corps of EME.

Telangana BJP Protests Sonia Gandhi's Remark on President Murmu

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

The Telangana Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) staged protests on Saturday, February 1, condemning senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's remarks about President Droupadi Murmu.

A video surfaced on social media where Sonia Gandhi, after President Murmu's address to Parliament, was heard telling her children Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi, "The poor lady, the President, was very tired by the end... she could hardly speak, poor thing."

This remark sparked outrage among BJP leaders, who accused her of disrespecting India's first tribal woman President.

As part of the protest, BJP workers in Telangana burnt effigies of the former Congress president and raised slogans against her and Rahul Gandhi.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan issued a statement condemning Sonia Gandhi's words as "unacceptable and in poor taste", stating that they "hurt the dignity of the high office" of the President.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also slammed the Congress leader, saying that her statement was an insult to those who rise from marginalized backgrounds to leadership roles.

Reactions from Leaders

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Manjhi, who belongs to a tribal community, said Sonia Gandhi's comments were demeaning to the Santhal community and the people of Odisha.

BJP leaders across the country criticized the Congress, claiming that the remarks exposed the party's elitist mindset.

The controversy continues to escalate, with political reactions pouring in from various quarters.

A Policeman and a Pub bouncer were injured in a shooting incident At Gachibowli Pub

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

A police operation to apprehend a notorious property offender turned violent on Saturday evening at a pub in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, after the suspect opened fire, injuring a policeman and a bouncer.

Acting on specific intelligence, a police team reached the pub to arrest the suspect. However, when an officer attempted to apprehend him, the accused pulled out a weapon and fired, hitting both the policeman and the bouncer.

Despite the attack, the remaining officers overpowered and arrested the accused, who is reportedly involved in multiple criminal cases.

Both the injured individuals were rushed to a nearby hospital for medical treatment.

The police have taken the suspect into custody and further investigations are underway.

Telangana Private Degree Colleges Protest Over Fee Reimbursement Dues

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

The Telangana State Private Degree and PG Colleges Management Association (TPDMA) staged a massive protest at Dharna Chowk on Saturday, demanding the clearance of long-pending fee reimbursement dues. Around 400 college managements participated in the dharna and rally, warning of indefinite closure of colleges and cancellation of exams if their demands are not met within the next 10 days.

The association claims that the State government has failed to pay fee reimbursement dues for the past 16 months, leading to severe financial distress. Many institutions are struggling to pay staff salaries, building rents, and loan interests due to the delayed payments.

Despite Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka's assurance in December 2024 that the dues would be cleared, the managements say they have received less than five percent of the total amount.

"If the government fails to respond within 10 days, we will be forced to take stringent actions, including shutting down colleges and not conducting exams," said Dr. B Suryanarayana Reddy, president of TPDMA.

Elderly Passenger Dies of Cardiac Arrest in RTC Bus

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

A 63-year-old man died of a suspected cardiac arrest while traveling in a TGSRTC bus from Mehdiapatnam to Shankarpally on Saturday.



The deceased, identified as Shetty Balaraju, a farmer from Janwada in Ranga Reddy district, was seated at the back of the bus when he suddenly collapsed. Fellow passengers noticed his condition and alerted the driver, who immediately drove the bus to the nearest hospital. However, doctors declared him dead upon arrival.

Authorities have been informed, and an investigation is underway. The incident has left fellow passengers in shock, as Balaraju appeared normal when he boarded the bus.

Hyderabad Cybercrime Police Arrest Five in Job Fraud Case



TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

The Hyderabad Cybercrime police have arrested five individuals for allegedly deceiving job seekers by offering lucrative part-time task-based jobs and extracting large sums of money from them. The accused have been identified as P. Devakrupa, V.V. Shiva Shankar, Balaraju, Prajwal Reddy, and C. Vijay Sagar.

According to officials, the fraudsters created multiple bank accounts and impersonated representatives of reputed companies, luring job aspirants with promises of high returns on investments. Using their well-planned strategy, they convinced victims to invest in fake employment schemes, ultimately defrauding them of several lakhs.

A recent complaint led to the unearthing of the scam, prompting the police to take swift action. The investigation is ongoing, and authorities are urging the public to be cautious while responding to online job offers.

Task Force and CCS Officials Nab Fraudster in Investment Scam

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

In a coordinated operation, Task Force (North) and Central Crime Station (CCS) officials arrested Kaswaraju Hiranmahee (59), a resident of Gandhi Nagar, who had been absconding in an investment fraud case. The accused allegedly deceived multiple investors by promising lucrative returns through a fraudulent business venture. Hiranmahee had launched a company named 'Ration Bio Products,' claiming to produce bio enzyme-based floor and wash-room cleaning liquids free from chemicals. He lured investors with the promise of an annual turnover of ₹100 crore by 2024 and convinced them to invest substantial amounts in 2021.

Despite securing significant investments, he failed to deliver the promised shareholding or returns, leading investors to file complaints. Following multiple grievances, authorities registered a case, and after an investigation, he was apprehended. The police have urged the public to remain cautious before investing in such schemes.

Rachakonda Police Arrest Youth for Drug Peddling, Seize Marijuana Worth ₹5 Lakh

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

The Rachakonda Police arrested a 25-year-old youth involved in drug peddling in Rampally, Keesara, on Saturday. The accused, identified as K Srikanth, was found in possession of marijuana worth ₹5 lakh. According to officials, Srikanth had previously been arrested for similar offenses and was jailed. During his time in prison, he befriended another drug peddler, Shiva, and upon release, the duo resumed illegal drug activities. Acting on a tip-off, the police apprehended Srikanth, while efforts are ongoing to locate and arrest Shiva. Authorities stated that Srikanth was involved in drug peddling to earn quick money and lead a luxurious lifestyle. His arrest is part of an intensified crackdown on drug-related activities in the region. The police have urged the public to report any suspicious activities related to drug trafficking to help curb the growing menace in Hyderabad.

Four-Year-Old Killed as Speeding Car Crashes into House in Hyderabad

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

A tragic accident claimed the life of a four-year-old boy after a speeding car lost control and crashed into a thatched house at Parvathapur in Medipally on the city outskirts during the early hours of Saturday.

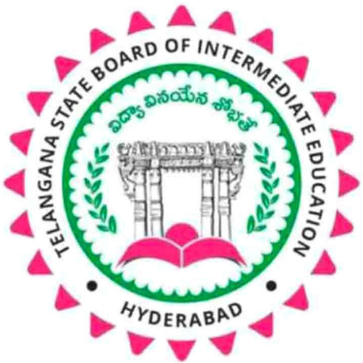
According to the police, the incident occurred around 1 am when the car was traveling from Ghatkesar towards Uppal. The driver, reportedly driving at high speed, lost control near Parvathapur, first crashing into an electric pole before veering off the road and ramming into the house.

The impact severely injured K Akshith (4), who was inside the house at the time. He was rushed to a private hospital but succumbed to his injuries later in the day.

The Medipally police have registered a case and launched an investigation. The driver abandoned the vehicle at the scene and fled. Efforts are underway to identify and apprehend the culprit.

Telangana private junior colleges to cooperate with BIE

Private colleges agree to support practical exams after assurances from Board authorities



TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 02

The Telangana State Private Junior Colleges Management Association (TPJMA) has decided to cooperate with the Telangana Board of Intermediate Education (TG BIE) for the upcoming practical exams, scheduled to begin on February 3. The decision came after the private colleges were assured by Board authorities that necessary permissions, including exemptions from penalties and accom-

modations for mixed-occupancy colleges, would be sought from Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

The private colleges had been at odds with the Board over practical exam centers and the installation of CCTVs. However, following the assurances from the Board, the colleges have now committed to conducting the exams as per the prescribed schedule.

“As of now, we are cooperating with the Board and will hold the exams as per the schedule,” said Gouri Satish, president of TPJMA.

Farmers Attempt Suicide Over Bypass Land Survey in Nagarkurnool

TPN Correspondent
Nagarkurnool, Feb 02

Tension prevailed in Tadur, Nagarkurnool district, when two farmers attempted suicide in protest against land acquisition for a bypass road. They accused authorities of sparing lands owned by influential landlords while acquiring fertile farmland belonging to small farmers.

During a survey conducted by revenue officials for the National Highway 167 bypass, one farmer, Gunashekhar, attempted to consume pesticide, while another, Kurumaiah, doused himself with petrol and tried to set himself on fire. Locals and police intervened in time and prevented them from taking the extreme step.



Farmers strongly opposed the survey, arguing that it would deprive them of their livelihoods. They alleged that officials ignored previously identified survey numbers and maps, instead selecting a route that unfairly impacted small farmers while favoring landlords.

Despite their protests, authorities continued with the survey, leading to heated arguments. The attempted suicides underscored the distress among affected landowners, raising concerns about the fairness of the land acquisition process. The situation was brought under control, but tensions remain high.

Construction Worker Electrocuted in Medak

TPN Correspondent
Medak, Feb 02

A construction worker lost his life after being electrocuted while working on an under-construction building at IB Junction in Alladurg mandal headquarters. The victim, identified as Balaraju (32), was a resident of R Itikyal in Regode mandal.

The incident occurred when Balaraju accidentally came in contact with live overhead electric wires while on duty. Despite immediate efforts to rush him to the government hospital in Jogipet, he succumbed to his injuries on the way.

Local authorities registered a case and initiated an investigation. His body was sent to the government hospital for a postmortem examination. The tragic accident highlights the risks faced by construction workers and the need for stringent safety measures at work sites.

Auto Driver Narrowly Escapes as Coal Tipper Rams Vehicle in Kothagudem



TPN Correspondent
Kothagudem, Feb 02

Kothagudem witnessed a shocking accident on Saturday when a coal-laden tipper lost control and rammed into an auto-rickshaw, crushing it into a mangled heap. The incident took place at Rudrampur on the Kothagudem-Vijayawada national highway when the tipper, traveling from Sathupalli to Kothagudem, veered off course.

The auto driver, Jafar, had a miraculous escape, sustaining only minor injuries despite the severe impact. A two-wheeler parked on the roadside was also damaged in the accident. The collision caused coal to spill onto the road, disrupting traffic for a considerable time before authorities managed to clear the obstruction.

Cleanup Drive at Indira Park Yields 40kg of Discarded Manja



TPN Correspondent
Sangareddy, Feb 02

A large-scale cleanup drive at Indira Park on Saturday resulted in the collection of 40 kg of discarded nylon manja from trees. The effort was led by 40 volunteers from the Animal Warriors Conservation Society (AWCS), Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), and HCL Foundation.

During the three-hour-long drive, volunteers managed to clear manja from 60 trees. However, despite their efforts,

they could only clean around 10 percent of the park, according to Santoshi Nair, a member of AWCS. She stated that another clean-up drive is planned for next Sunday, with a larger number of volunteers joining the effort.

To assist with the cleanup, GHMC officials provided multiple boom lift vehicles to help volunteers reach higher branches. The initiative was a joint effort involving the forest department, GHMC, AWCS, and HCL Foundation. The urgency of the cleanup was underscored by the fact that AWCS had rescued 28 birds entangled in manja during January alone.

Thousands of Tribals Gather at Keslapur for Nagoba Jatara in Telangana

TPN Correspondent

Adilabad, Feb 02: The seven-day-long Nagoba Jatara, a major religious and cultural event for the Mesram clan, witnessed a massive turnout at Keslapur village in Indervelli mandal on Saturday. Around 50,000 tribals from Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and other parts of the country congregated at the temple to offer prayers and participate in rituals.

From early morning to midnight, devotees formed long queue lines at the Nagoba temple, arriving by various means of transport. The Mesram clan performed sacred rituals, including Betal Puja and Mandagajling Puja. Raj Gond elders, believed to be possessed by the Betal god, showcased their fighting skills by spinning large sticks representing the deity. As part of the tradition, the clan mem-



bers vacated Keslapur and proceeded to Shyampur village in Utnoor mandal to worship Budumdevata. The festival will conclude on Monday. A key highlight was the Bheting ceremony, where over 100 newlywed women were introduced to the deity and received clay pots as part of the ritual. Nagoba Jatara is the second-largest tribal congregation in Telangana after the Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara.

Debt-Ridden Farmer Dies by Suicide in Sircilla

TPN Correspondent

Sircilla, Feb 02: A tenant farmer, Thipparaveni Srinivas (40), tragically ended his life in Nakkapeta village of Illan-thakunta mandal, Rajanna-Sircilla district, on Saturday. Unable to repay mounting debts, he consumed pesticide, as per statements from his family.

Srinivas cultivated crops on two acres of leased land in addition to his own 20 guntas. To support his family, he also ran a chicken centre and worked in a marriage band service. Despite his relentless efforts to sustain his livelihood, the financial burden continued to weigh him down, pushing him into despair.

His untimely demise has left his wife Devalakshi and two children devastated. Family members and villagers expressed grief over his death, citing the growing challenges faced by farmers due to financial instability and unpredictable agricultural returns.

Authorities have been informed, and further investigation is underway. The incident has once again highlighted the plight of farmers struggling with debt and uncertain income, urging the need for stronger financial support for the agricultural community.

Man Found Dead Under Suspicious Circumstances in Sangareddy

TPN Correspondent
Sangareddy, Feb 02

A 45-year-old man was found dead under mysterious circumstances at Kalivemula village in Kandi mandal on Saturday. The deceased, identified as Ashamgari Raju, was a resident of Velimela in Ramachandrapuram mandal. The Indrakaran police, who arrived at the scene, discovered liquor bottles near the body, raising suspicions about the cause of death. After an initial examination, authorities were unable to determine whether it was a case of murder or suicide. The body has been sent to the government hospital in Sangareddy for a postmortem examination. Police have launched an investigation to uncover the circumstances surrounding Raju's death.

SCCL to Expand Mining Operations to Meet Growing Coal Demand

TPN Correspondent
Telangana, Feb 02

With rising power demands as summer approaches, the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) is set to increase daily coal production and transportation to ensure a steady supply of 2.6 lakh tonnes to thermal power stations. To achieve this, SCCL Chairman and Managing Director N Balaram emphasized the necessity of removing at least 1.7 million cubic meters of overburden daily to enhance coal output.

During a special review meeting via video conference from Singareni Bhavan, Balaram addressed area General Managers, instructing them to ramp up production systematically. He stressed that coal supply to Karnataka Power Corporation Limited must be maintained at a minimum of 11 rakes per day to meet demand. Coordination with the Railway Division was also highlighted as a crucial factor in ensuring smooth transportation.

The CMD praised the Kothagudem area for its exceptional production performance while urging other areas lagging behind their targets to improve. He reiterated the importance of maintaining both quality and safety in coal production, insisting that only high-quality coal should be supplied to customers. Additionally, he emphasized worker safety awareness and urged SCCL officials to operate responsibly while ensuring high production standards.



Union Budget 2025: Is the Gender Budget on the Right Track?

Assistant Professor of Economics at the School of Social Sciences & Humanities, VIT-AP University, Amaravati.

The Gender Budget Statement for FY 2025-26 marks a significant milestone in India's commitment to gender-responsive governance, witnessing an impressive 20% increase in allocations compared to the previous fiscal year. With a total outlay of ₹4,49,028.68 crore, constituting 8.86% of the Union Budget, this represents a 466.54% rise from FY 2015-16. The hike signals a progressive shift towards women's development and empowerment, aligning with the government's vision of women-led growth. However, beneath these promising figures lie critical concerns regarding the effectiveness and targeting of these allocations. The Evolution of Gender Budgeting in India

Gender budgeting was formally introduced at the central level in 2005-06 following the recommendations of the Ashok Lahiri Committee Report (2001). Unlike a separate budget for women, it integrates gender-responsive allocations within existing schemes to ensure equitable resource distribution. Over the past two decades (2005-25), gender budgeting has been institutionalized across national and sub-national levels, contributing to improvements in women's empowerment, safety, health, and economic inclusion.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) serves as the nodal agency, with gender budgeting housed under the Samarthya sub-scheme of Mission Shakti. The categorization of gender budgets into Part A (100% women beneficiaries), Part B (30-99% women beneficiaries), and Part C (less than 30% women beneficiaries) enables a structured approach to fund allocation.

The Good: Notable Increases in Allocations

The Samarthya sub-scheme under Part A has witnessed a remarkable 150% hike, rising from ₹953.74 crore (FY 2024-25, Revised) to ₹2,396 crore (FY 2025-26). Similarly, overall Part A allocations grew by 30%, Part B by 16%, and Part C by 15%, reinforcing a commitment to gender-sensitive spending.

Some sectoral ministries have also seen substantial increases. For instance, allocations under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and the Ministry of Power have surged, reflecting an effort to in-



Dr. Ashraf Pulikkamath

tegrate gender considerations into traditionally male-dominated sectors. However, whether these funds are backed by robust gender-disaggregated data and effective implementation frameworks remains an open question.

The Concerns: Stagnation in Crucial Areas

Despite the rise in total allocations, stagnation in key sectors raises concerns. The Ministry of Labour and Employment's gender budget saw a marginal increase from ₹908.25 crore (FY 2024-25) to ₹922.16 crore (FY 2025-26)—a 1.5% rise, failing to address women's low labor force participation. Similarly, allocations under the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) rose modestly from ₹2,466.57 crore to ₹2,821.08 crore, despite MSMEs being a critical pathway for women's entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has not seen a proportionate increase, raising concerns about

whether women's upskilling is receiving adequate attention.

The Grey Areas: Expanding Gender Budget to Broad Schemes

The inclusion of Part C allocations, now amounting to ₹16,821.28 crore, expands gender sensitivity across broader budget lines. However, a major share of this category goes to PM Kisan Samman, which, while benefiting women farmers, does not directly empower them economically.

Moreover, the categorization of certain large-scale schemes as gender-focused is questionable. For instance, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)—which rose from ₹15,170 crore to ₹23,294 crore under Part A—prioritizes women but is not exclusively women-centric. Similarly, the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) under Part B lacks detailed gender-based targeting.

Conversely, some programs like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) appear underreported in the gender budget. The ₹40,000 crore allocated under Part B accounts for 46% of total MGNREGA funds, while government data indicates 60% of beneficiaries are women—suggesting a possible discrepancy in gendered reporting.

The Underlying Challenge: Practical Needs vs.

Transformative Change

While the gender budget continues to focus on practical gender needs, it remains aligned with the Women's Development paradigm, rather than the women-led development approach announced in 2024. The allocations largely prioritize basic survival, safety, and welfare, reinforcing women's roles within existing social structures rather than enabling structural transformation. While this approach aids poverty alleviation and economic inclusion, it risks limiting women to passive beneficiaries instead of empowered participants in economic and social change.

A Step Forward, But Is It Enough?

The Gender Budget 2025-26 demonstrates a commendable financial commitment to women's development, with rising allocations and broader inclusion of gender perspectives across schemes. However, stagnation in critical sectors, questionable scheme categorization, and the dominance of welfare-based allocations highlight the gaps between intent and impact.

For gender budgeting to truly foster empowerment, it must move beyond incremental increases in funds and towards a transformative framework—one that prioritizes economic autonomy, leadership, and gender mainstreaming at all levels of policymaking.

Shifts in South Asian Geopolitics: India-China Thaw and Pakistan-Bangladesh Revitalization



The geopolitical landscape of South Asia has seen notable developments in recent days, with potential shifts in relations between key regional players. Two significant changes have emerged: a thaw in India-China relations after years of tensions, and an apparent revival in diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh. These developments could reshape the region's dynamics and open doors for enhanced cooperation.

On the India-China front, the past few years have been marked by strained relations, particularly following the People's Liberation Army's incursions in eastern Ladakh in 2020. However, recent signs suggest a gradual de-escalation of tensions between the two nations. An editorial in *The Nation* posits that India and China should not view each other as adversaries, particularly since both countries stand to gain immensely from peaceful resolution of their border disputes. The editorial also warns India about the potential pitfalls of its growing alliance with the United States, cautioning that such an arrangement may be short-lived, citing Pakistan's past experience. The relationship between the US and Pakistan, once seen as a strategic alliance, faltered when Pakistan's strategic utility diminished, leaving it sidelined.

Meanwhile, diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh have taken a positive turn, with high-level engagements signaling a possible shift from historical animosities to a more collaborative future. *The Daily Times* highlights that both countries are in a unique position to move beyond their historical grievances and embrace economic and cultural cooperation. The editorial stresses the importance of fostering bilateral trade and people-to-people exchanges to ensure shared prosperity. Economic collaboration, the piece argues, can create jobs, improve stability, and uplift communities, while cultural exchanges can strengthen the bond between the two nations, united by centuries of shared history.

In another area of concern, Pakistan remains deeply worried about the security implications of Afghanistan's role in regional stability. *Dawn* reports that 2024 witnessed the highest civilian and military casualties in a decade, largely due to terrorism. The editorial emphasizes that Pakistan must refine its counterterrorism policies and apply diplomatic pressure on the Afghan Taliban to prevent their soil from being used by anti-Pakistan actors. Additionally, *The Daily Times* points to the Taliban's public display of American military hardware as a source of growing concern, especially given the evidence of these weapons being used in attacks in Balochistan.

As the geopolitical landscape in South Asia continues to evolve, these shifts offer opportunities for cooperation, but also pose significant challenges that need careful navigation.

Congress Revives Its Campaign in Delhi: A Resurgence Amidst Political Uncertainty

The Congress party's campaign in Delhi is showing signs of a strong comeback, increasing uncertainty ahead of the upcoming state elections. This revival of the party has led to speculation that it may perform well in its traditional strongholds, where it has prominent candidates and the electorate appears to be regaining interest in the party. However, potential Congress supporters are grappling with a crucial question: will voting for the party inadvertently help the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)?

Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister of Delhi, has attempted to sway voters away from Congress by labeling the party as a "vote cutter," warning people not to waste their votes on Congress. This remark is particularly contentious given Kejriwal's own role in contributing to BJP victories in Goa, Gujarat, and Uttarakhand in 2022 through similar tactics.

Despite Kejriwal's accusations, there are several compelling rea-



sons why voting for Congress in Delhi might be a wise choice. First, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), despite its promises during the 2020 elections, has largely failed to deliver on key issues. Second, unlike AAP, Congress has shown a readiness to challenge the BJP's majoritarian and authoritarian approach, as well as its polarizing politics in Delhi. The notion that Congress merely acts as a "vote cutter" is also overly simplistic, as the party could very well attract disillusioned AAP voters, potentially reducing BJP's vote share in the process. Lastly, unlike the pre-

vious Sheila Dikshit government, which focused on infrastructural development, AAP has underfunded vital capital projects, such as the expansion of hospitals and sewage treatment plants.

At its core, AAP promotes an anti-political, middle-class sensibility, with Arvind Kejriwal positioning himself as a populist leader akin to Narendra Modi or Donald Trump. He casts himself as an individual crusading against a corrupt system, with elected officials and civil servants portrayed as distractions.

Ram Bharose at the Kumbh: A Political Lesson for the Opposition

The recent tragedy at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, where 38 lives were lost in a stampede during Mauni Amavasya, has drawn attention to the stark realities of political dynamics in Uttar Pradesh. Despite the tragic deaths, the overwhelming sentiment among pilgrims is a fatalistic acceptance: "Chalo, ho gaya," as many devotees deem these incidents part of the spiritual experience. However, a closer look reveals a deeper issue within the political landscape of Uttar Pradesh.

While the deaths at the Kumbh were tragic, the state's leadership, particularly Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has faced minimal political fallout. PM Modi's reassurances and statements from religious figures like VHP global chief Alok Kumar, who called it the "will of god," have reinforced the public perception that such incidents are beyond human control. However, this narrative is also indicative of a political culture where accountability is diluted by devotion and an ingrained acceptance of suffering.

The political opposition, including leaders like Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi, have attempted to capitalize on the trage-



dy, questioning the government's handling of the situation. Yet, their critiques are not resonating with the masses, as they lack a credible alternative to the current regime. The opposition leaders are seen more as distant figures disconnected from the realities of the common people. As the situation in Uttar Pradesh demonstrates, any political anger against Yogi will likely be felt in a faceless manner, from the devotees themselves, rather than from organized political opposition.

The recent incident in Prayagraj highlights the failure of the opposition to offer a viable alternative. Rahul Gandhi's photo-op on the Yamuna and the Congress's refusal to collaborate with AAP in the Haryana elections exemplify the party's disarray.

People's Budget, force-multiplier: PM Modi on Union Budget 2024-25

- PM Modi calls Union Budget a "people's budget" for growth.
- Budget boosts youth empowerment for development.
- Focus on infrastructure & innovation for sustainability.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, describing it as a "people's budget" aimed at empowering citizens and boosting the nation's economy. Modi highlighted that the budget focuses on putting more money in the hands of people, which will, in turn, spur investment and foster long-term growth.

In his televised remarks, Modi emphasized the significance of the government's focus on creating a growth-oriented environment by investing in critical sectors that directly benefit the people. He explained that the budget prioritizes investments in key areas, which will lead to increased opportunities for employment, development, and prosperity. According to Modi, the policies outlined will act as a

"force-multiplier," accelerating India's trajectory toward becoming a developed nation.

A key highlight of the budget, Modi pointed out, is the opening up of multiple sectors to the youth, who are envisioned to play a central role in realizing the mission of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India). He underscored the importance of youth empowerment and their ability to drive the country forward in various fields. The prime minister also mentioned how the budget reflects the government's commitment to enhancing infrastructure, supporting innovation, and promoting a green economy, all while ensuring that the welfare of citizens remains at the forefront.

Through this strategic approach, Modi believes the budget will create a positive cycle of growth and job creation, benefiting not only the youth but also the broader population. The prime



minister's remarks reflect the government's optimism regarding the long-term impact of the budget, particularly in driving India's development agenda.

Man Flees To US Without Passport, Top Court Says "We Are Amazed"



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a rare and unusual case, the Supreme Court has ordered an inquiry and the arrest of a man who faces contempt proceedings but fled to the United States, despite his passport being held in court custody. The bench, consisting of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Prashant Kumar Mishra, expressed surprise over how the man was able to leave India without his passport and directed the additional solicitor general, K M Nataraj, to investigate how the escape occurred.

"We are amazed as to how the alleged contemnor/respondent left for the USA or any other country without a passport, as his passport is in the custody of this court. Now, we have no choice but to issue a non-bailable warrant against him," the bench stated, ordering the arrest of the man.

The man is embroiled in a custody battle with his former wife over their 10-year-old child. The Supreme Court had previously issued orders regarding the child's custody, and the man's failure to comply with these orders led to contempt proceedings. Senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing the man, informed the court that his client had already left for a foreign country.

The court directed the Ministry of Home Affairs to take immediate action under the law to arrest the respondent and bring him back to India. The bench also ordered Nataraj to investigate how the man was allowed to leave the country without his passport and without permission from the court, instructing him to identify those involved in facilitating the escape.

No difference between PM Modi, Kejriwal; both are cowards, corrupt

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday accused them of being "cowards and corrupt," and criticized their failure to take responsibility for the country's challenges. Addressing a public meeting in Mustafabad, Priyanka Gandhi compared the two leaders, saying that while Modi blamed Jawaharlal Nehru for India's problems, Kejriwal blamed Modi, yet neither took responsibility for the issues they were facing.

Priyanka Gandhi's remarks came as she ramped up her campaign ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, first leading a roadshow in Nangloi Jat for Congress candidate Rohit Chaudhary, and then campaigning for Ali Mehdi in Mustafabad. Priyanka Gandhi said that both Modi and Kejriwal had shifted the focus away from real issues, instead indulging in personal attacks and finger-pointing. "They talk about corruption and who built bigger 'mahal' but are silent on the issues that actually matter to the people," she said.

She accused both leaders of using divisive tactics, highlighting how the BJP and AAP were more concerned with framing each other as corrupt than addressing the real concerns of citizens like roads, clean water, quality education, jobs, and business growth. Priyanka Gandhi pointed out that both parties have failed to focus on these basic needs. "They are trying to divide people by focusing on trivial matters like insults and political squabbles, instead of the things that really matter," she said.

Furthermore, Priyanka questioned the AAP's rise under Kejriwal, originally built on an anti-corruption platform. "What has changed? Kejriwal blames Modi, Modi blames Nehru, but neither is taking responsibility," she added. She contrasted Modi's approach of blaming the past and Kejriwal's constant shift of blame to the central government, highlighting that both were avoiding responsibility.

Union Budget 2025: New Income Tax Bill and Major Relief for Middle Class

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Saturday that the government will introduce a new Income Tax bill in Parliament next week. This bill aims to simplify the existing tax structure while focusing on transparency and ease for taxpayers.



In her Budget 2025 speech, Sitharaman shared that the new Income Tax bill will embody the "trust first, scrutinize later" approach. The revamped bill will be significantly reduced in volume, with clearer and more direct language to make it easier to understand and comply with. This is part of the government's ongoing effort to reform the Income Tax Act, 1961, a process that was first initiated with a comprehensive review announced in July 2025.

Over the past decade, the government has made several key reforms, such as the introduction of faceless assessments and greater digitalization of tax processes, to streamline the system for taxpayers. The new Income Tax bill is expected to further simplify the law, reducing disputes and litigation while offering greater certainty for taxpayers.

Sitharaman also highlighted the introduction of a taxpayers' charter, which will provide better clarity on taxpayer rights and responsibilities. The government has implemented a faster returns process, with nearly 99 percent of income tax returns now being self-assessed by taxpayers. This is part of an ongoing effort to reduce administrative burden and improve the efficiency of tax filing.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has set up an internal committee to oversee the review process, with the goal of making the Income Tax Act concise and clear. Additionally, 22 specialized sub-committees have been formed to review various aspects of the Act in detail.

Bonanza For Bihar, Andhra Pradesh Cruelly Ignored: Congress' Jab Over Budget

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress

spokesperson Jairam Ramesh sharply criticized the Union Budget 2025, claiming that Bihar received significant benefits while Andhra Pradesh was "cruelly ignored." Ramesh made these remarks shortly after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget speech, accusing the government of prioritizing Bihar ahead of its upcoming Assembly elections.



Ramesh sarcastically noted that the sops given to Bihar were expected, considering the elections are scheduled later in the year. However, he questioned why Andhra Pradesh, another key member of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), had been left out. "It is natural since an election is due there later in the year. But why has the other pillar of the NDA, namely Andhra Pradesh, been so cruelly ignored?" Ramesh posted on X, a social media platform.

In a series of tweets, Ramesh also criticized the overall economic direction presented in the budget, highlighting issues such as stagnant real wages, lack of consumption growth, sluggish private investment, and a complicated GST system. He added that while the budget provided relief to income taxpayers, its broader impact on the economy remained uncertain.

Manish Tewari, another Congress leader, echoed Ramesh's sentiments, questioning whether the budget was designed for the whole country or was tailored specifically for Bihar. "Did you hear the name of another state in the entire speech of the Union Finance Minister?" Tewari asked.

The budget included several proposals benefiting Bihar, such as the establishment of a makhana (fox nut) industry and special benefits for farmers through central government schemes.

Union Budget 2025: FM Sitharaman twins with President Droupadi Murmu

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, draped in a white and red saree, arrived at the Rashtrapati Bhavan for the presentation of the Union Budget 2025, carrying her signature 'bahi-khata'. President Droupadi Murmu, who was already present, also chose a white and red ensemble, creating a striking coordinated look. At first glance, their sarees appeared almost identical, but upon closer inspection, subtle differences became apparent.



Both women wore sarees that featured similar red and white tones, but the shades and details of their outfits set them apart. Sitharaman's blouse was a deeper maroon hue, while Murmu's was a vibrant vermilion red. Additionally, the white in Sitharaman's saree leaned more towards a cream or off-white, while Murmu's was a pure white.

Their blouses also displayed differences in the golden borders. Sitharaman's golden border was wider, while Murmu's had a more delicate border. Sitharaman's saree was made from handloom silk, adorned with intricate

fish-themed embroidery and a dull golden border, while Murmu's saree was a regional tribal woven piece, characterized by a broader red and golden border.

This year, Sitharaman's saree was a tribute to Madhubani Art, with the design created by Padma Shri awardee Dulari Devi, a Bihar-based Dalit artist. Dulari Devi, known for her distinctive Madhubani art styles—'Kachnhi' (line sketching) and 'Bharni' (colored)—gifted the saree to Sitharaman, requesting her to wear it during the Budget presentation. In another customary gesture, President Murmu offered 'dahi-cheeni' (yogurt and sugar) to Sitharaman, a symbol of good luck before her departure to present her eighth consecutive Union Budget.

Trudeau Warns of "Forceful but Reasonable" Response to Trump's Threatened Tariffs

US Moves Ahead with 25% Tariffs on Canadian and Mexican Goods

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has firmly stated that Canada will respond "purposefully but reasonably" if U.S. President Donald Trump goes ahead with his threat to impose 25 percent tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico. Speaking to reporters before a meeting with his advisory council on Canada-U.S. relations, Trudeau said that Canada's response would be immediate and strategic.

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has firmly stated that Canada will respond "purposefully but reasonably" if U.S. President Donald Trump goes ahead with his threat to impose 25 percent tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico. Speaking to reporters before a meeting with his advisory council on Canada-U.S. relations, Trudeau said that Canada's response would be immediate and strategic.



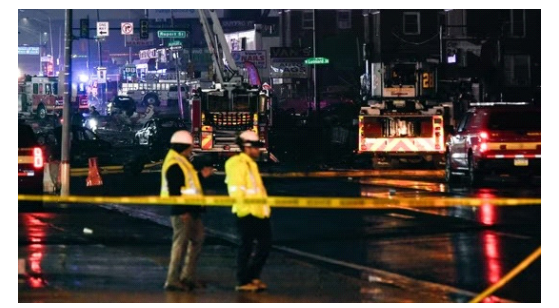
tion and the fentanyl crisis, issues he claims Canada and Mexico have failed to address sufficiently.

The tariffs, which could be imposed as early as February 1, are seen as a way for Trump to push back against

what he perceives as a trade imbalance, with both Canada and Mexico being significant trade partners to the U.S. However, Trudeau has expressed that such measures would not only harm Canada but also the U.S. economy, undermining the

shared security and prosperity between the two nations.

In a defiant statement, Trudeau added, "If the tariffs are implemented against Canada, we will respond. We won't relent until tariffs are removed and, of course, everything is on the table." This sets the stage for potential economic repercussions, as Canada has pledged to make its case on the benefits of the long-term relationship, highlighting key sectors like steel, aluminum, critical minerals, and clean energy. As of now, Trump remains resolute in his plan, indicating that Canadian oil may also face tariffs, although this remains uncertain. The situation continues to unfold as both sides prepare for the economic and political consequences of these potential measures.



Plane Crashes In US Neighbourhood, Trump Says Innocent Souls Lost

TPN Correspondent | Washington

At least six people are feared dead after a small private plane crashed in a built-up neighborhood in northeast Philadelphia on Friday. The crash occurred just two days after a devastating collision between a passenger jet and a military helicopter near Washington's Reagan National Airport, which killed all 67 people onboard.

Here are the key details surrounding the Philadelphia crash:

The plane, a Jet Rescue Air Ambulance, was carrying six people, including four crew members, a pediatric patient, and the patient's escort. The aircraft took off from Northeast Philadelphia Airport and was headed to Springfield-Branson National Airport in Missouri. The passengers were identified as Mexican nationals, according to the country's foreign ministry. Social media footage, including a dashcam and a house doorbell camera, captured the moment of the crash. The crash occurred near Roosevelt Mall, but officials have not yet confirmed the number of deaths on the ground or in the plane. Weather conditions at the time of the crash were cold and rainy, with low visibility, which may have contributed to the incident. Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker confirmed that several houses and cars were engulfed in flames after the crash.

The city's Office of Emergency Management declared the event a "major incident" and advised the public to avoid the area. Several roads near Roosevelt Mall were closed. First responders were quickly on the scene, with dozens seen outside the strip mall near the crash site, assisting with rescue efforts.

US President Donald Trump expressed his sorrow, stating on Truth Social, "So sad to see the plane go down in Philadelphia. More innocent souls lost. This tragedy follows the earlier crash of an American Airlines jet and a US Army Black Hawk helicopter over Washington, marking the deadliest aviation accident in the United States since 2009. Investigations are underway to determine the cause of both incidents."

Trump to Impose Tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China, Targets More Industries

TPN Correspondent | Washington

At least six people are feared dead after a small private plane crashed in a built-up neighborhood in northeast Philadelphia on Friday. The crash occurred just two days after a devastating collision between a passenger jet and a military helicopter near Washington's Reagan National Airport, which killed all 67 people onboard.

Here are the key details surrounding the Philadelphia crash:

The plane, a Jet Rescue Air Ambulance, was carrying six people, including four crew members, a pediatric patient, and the patient's escort. The aircraft took off from Northeast Philadelphia Airport and was headed to Springfield-Branson National Airport in Missouri. The passengers were identified as Mexican nationals, according to the country's foreign ministry. Social media footage, including a dashcam and a house doorbell camera, captured the moment of the crash. The crash occurred near Roosevelt Mall, but officials have not yet confirmed the number of deaths on the ground or in the plane.

Weather conditions at the time of the crash were cold and rainy, with low visibility, which may have contributed to the incident. Philadelphia



Mayor Cherelle Parker confirmed that several houses and cars were engulfed in flames after the crash. The city's Office of Emergency Management declared the event a "major incident" and advised the public to avoid the area. Several roads near Roosevelt Mall were closed. First responders were quickly on the scene, with dozens seen outside the strip mall near the crash site, assisting with rescue efforts. US President Donald Trump expressed his sorrow, stating on Truth Social, "So sad to see the plane go down in Philadelphia. More innocent souls lost."

This tragedy follows the earlier crash of an American Airlines jet and a US Army Black Hawk helicopter over Washington, marking the deadliest aviation accident in the United States since 2009. Investigations are underway to determine the cause of both incidents.

Trump and Putin Could Take 'Significant' Step Towards Ending Ukraine War

TPN Correspondent | Washington

US President Donald Trump indicated on Friday that he and Russian President Vladimir Putin might soon take a "significant" step toward ending the ongoing war in Ukraine. Trump mentioned that the US has already held "very serious" discussions with Russia regarding the conflict.

Since assuming office on January 20, Trump has been vocal about his desire to bring an end to the Russia-Ukraine war. In a brief exchange with reporters in the Oval Office, Trump suggested that a major move could be on the horizon. "We will be speaking, and I think we will perhaps do something that'll be significant," he said. Trump also claimed that the war would not have started if he had been president, hinting that his leadership might have prevented the conflict.

However, Trump refrained from providing specifics about the ongoing US-Russia talks, particularly whether he had directly communicated with Putin. His remarks come amid ongoing global concern over the war's toll and the US's involvement in the conflict.

Trump has been a staunch critic of the Russia-Ukraine war and the role the US has played in it. He previously stated that the war could have been avoided if he had remained in office, a sentiment echoed by Putin. In interviews, Putin has often praised Trump, calling him a pragmatic and trustworthy leader. "We always had a business-like, pragmatic but also trusting relationship with the current U.S. president," Putin said, adding that if Trump had been president, the crisis in Ukraine in 2022 might have been avoided.

The relationship between Trump and Putin has raised eyebrows, especially after the 2016 US election, which was marred by allegations of Russian interference. Reports suggested that Russia's actions were intended to boost Trump's chances of winning.



Hamas hands over 2 Israeli hostages in southern Gaza

TPN Correspondent | Palestine

Hamas released two hostages to the Red Cross in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday as part of a ceasefire agreement with Israel. The hostages, Yarden Bibas, 35, and French-Israeli Ofer Kalderon, 54, were handed over in a well-coordinated, orderly exchange. Both individuals had been abducted during the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, which triggered the ongoing conflict.



the Gaza Strip, a region devastated by the war.

The fragile ceasefire has been in place for nearly two weeks, marking a brief respite in the deadliest and most destructive war fought between Israel and Hamas. The deal, which is part of an ongoing effort

to resolve the conflict, involves the exchange of 33 Israeli hostages for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners over the truce's initial six weeks. However, Israel has been informed by Hamas that eight of the hostages had either been killed during the October 7 attack or have died while in captivity.

On Saturday, Red Cross vehicles arrived in Khan Younis, a city in southern Gaza, to collect the released hostages. The ceasefire, while delicate, has paused the fighting after more than 15 months of war, providing a brief window for humanitarian relief and negotiations to continue.

Congress Restricts Use of Chinese Chatbot DeepSeek Over Security Concerns

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

Congressional offices have been warned against using DeepSeek, a Chinese chatbot that has recently gained attention in the US AI market. As AI technology rapidly evolves, Congress has faced growing challenges related to security and administration, prompting the House's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to take proactive steps. According to a notice obtained by Axios, the CAO stated that DeepSeek is currently under review and unauthorized for use on official House devices. The notice emphasized concerns about the risks associated with the chatbot, particularly regarding how "threat actors" have already exploited DeepSeek to deliver malicious software and compromise devices.

In response, the House has implemented security measures to limit DeepSeek's functionality on all House-issued devices, including phones, computers, and tablets. Staffers are explicitly prohibited from installing or using the chatbot on these devices to safeguard against potential cyber threats.

Stock Market Ends Flat After Union Budget, Mixed Reactions to Announcements

The Indian stock market ended flat on Union Budget day, signaling a neutral market response to the announcements made by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Despite initial optimism, the enthusiasm faded as the Budget speech progressed.



The Sensex opened at 77,637 points, reflecting a gain of 200 points from its previous close on Friday. Similarly, the Nifty started strong, opening 47 points higher at 23,296. However, both indices quickly lost ground after the government revised its capital expenditure (capex) estimates for FY25 downward and announced a modest increase of less than 1% in capex for FY26.

By noon, the market had reversed its initial gains, with the Sensex falling by 350.20 points, or 0.45%, to 77,150.37, while the Nifty dropped by 101.15 points, or 0.43%, to 23,407.25. The market breadth was mixed, with 1,685 stocks advancing

and 1,660 declining, indicating a divided sentiment among investors.

While some of the Budget's provisions were seen as positive, particularly for certain sectors, the reduced capex estimates and muted spending outlook for the coming fiscal year seemed to dampen investor confidence. As a result, the stock market closed flat, reflecting cautious optimism rather than a strong reaction, as market participants continued to assess the full impact of the Budget on the economy and individual sectors.

Government Projects Rs 2.56 Lakh Crore Dividend Income from RBI and PSUs in FY2025-25

The Indian government has projected a dividend income of Rs 2.56 lakh crore from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and public sector financial institutions for the fiscal year 2025-25, according to the Budget documents released on Saturday. This projection marks a significant increase from the current financial year's estimated receipts, which stand at Rs 2.34 lakh crore, approximately Rs 1,410 crore higher than earlier estimates.



The government's fiscal deficit is expected to be 4.4% of GDP for the next financial year, a key indicator of the country's economic health and budgetary priorities. To finance the fiscal deficit, the government plans to borrow Rs 11.54 lakh crore through net market borrowings from dated securities. The gross market borrowings for the year are estimated to be Rs 14.82 lakh crore.

The documents also indicate a rise in total central government receipts from dividends and investments in public sector enterprises, which are expected to reach Rs 3.25 lakh crore, up from Rs 2.89 lakh crore in the previous year.

In her Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the estimated total receipts for the central government, excluding borrowings, at Rs 34.96 lakh crore. She also outlined the total expenditure for the year at Rs 50.65 lakh crore. Additionally, the government's net tax receipts are projected to be Rs 28.37 lakh crore.

Sitharaman emphasized the government's commitment to managing the fiscal deficit in a manner that ensures the central government debt as a percentage of GDP remains on a declining trajectory. This strategic approach is part of the broader goal to maintain economic stability while investing in key sectors to support growth.

With these projections, the government aims to balance fiscal responsibility with continued investment in critical areas such as infrastructure, social welfare, and public services, ensuring that the economy remains on a sustainable growth path.

Union Budget Allocates Rs 2,000 Crore for IndiaAI Mission to Boost AI Infrastructure



In the Union Budget 2025-26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has approved a substantial allocation of Rs 2,000 crore for the IndiaAI Mission, marking nearly a fifth of the scheme's total outlay of Rs 10,370 crore. This funding is part of the government's strategy to enhance the country's artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities, as it seeks to position India as a global leader in AI innovation.

The new allocation comes at a time when the government has already shortlisted 10 companies that will supply nearly 19,000 graphics processing units (GPUs). These GPUs will be critical for setting up AI data centres across the country and developing foundational models for AI applications. This move is expected to significantly bolster India's AI infrastructure, enabling the nation to meet its growing demand for advanced AI technologies.

In the previous fiscal year, the IndiaAI Mission was allocated Rs 551.75 crore for 2024-25, but this amount was largely underutilised, with the revised allocation dropping to Rs 173 crore. The new allocation of Rs 2,000 crore for 2025-26 demon-

strates the government's renewed commitment to advancing AI technologies.

The sanctioned amount will be used for several key initiatives, as outlined in the outcome budget document. A portion of the funding will be directed towards setting up 20 AI curation units within various central ministries, as well as establishing 80 IndiaAI Labs across the country. These labs are expected to drive research and development in AI, fostering innovation in diverse sectors.

Additionally, the funding will support 25 deep-tech startups and finance three industry-led AI projects. The overall goal is to create a robust AI ecosystem in India that not only accelerates innovation but also fosters collaboration between industry leaders, academia, and government entities.

With this significant boost to the IndiaAI Mission, the government aims to lay a strong foundation for AI growth in India, positioning the nation to harness the full potential of emerging technologies in the coming years.

Budget 2025 will boost job creation, consumption in Indian economy: Piyush Goyal

Union Minister for Commerce Piyush Goyal has expressed confidence that the Union Budget 2025 will foster job creation across all sectors, contributing to the country's goal of becoming a Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047. Speaking shortly after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the budget, Goyal highlighted that the proposals would bring a significant boost to employment opportunities.

According to Goyal, sectors like leather and footwear will see substantial growth. He noted that the leather and footwear industries alone could generate 22 lakh new jobs, both directly and indirectly. The government has unveiled a "Focus Product Scheme" aimed at enhancing the productivity, quality, and competitiveness of India's leather and footwear sector. This initiative will support various aspects of production, including design capacity, component manufacturing, and machinery. The scheme is expected to drive a turnover of Rs 4 lakh crore and generate exports worth over Rs 1.1 lakh crore, along with



the creation of 22 lakh jobs.

The government is also taking steps to boost the cotton textiles and garments industry. Goyal emphasized that skill development programs, which were announced in the previous year's budget, would help equip young Indians with the skills needed to thrive in the job market. These initiatives are expected to improve

employability, increase incomes, and generate more job opportunities across various sectors.

Further, the budget introduces measures to promote the domestic production of technical textiles like agro-textiles, medical textiles, and geo-textiles. The government has proposed adding two more types of shuttle-less looms to the list of fully exempted textile machinery, and revising the Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on knitted fabrics. These changes aim to make India's textile industry more competitive.

The Union Budget also offers significant relief to taxpayers. With the new tax regime, individuals earning up to Rs 12 lakh will no longer need to pay income tax. For salaried taxpayers, this threshold increases to Rs 12.75 lakh, including a Rs 75,000 standard deduction. Goyal described the budget as a holistic approach that will not only benefit the middle class but also boost demand in the economy, setting the stage for India's development in the years to come.

GST Collections Show Strong Growth in January, Indicating Economic Resilience

India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections for January 2025 saw a robust increase, with net collections rising by 10.9% to ₹1.71 trillion, up from ₹1.54 trillion in the same month last year. The gross collection reached ₹1.95 trillion, the highest since the record ₹2.1 trillion in April 2024, signaling positive revenue trends despite fluctuations in previous months. This upward movement follows a drop in December, when collections had reached a three-month low.

The fiscal year-to-date (April-January) GST net collection stands at ₹16.16 trillion, reflecting an 8.7% growth over the same period last year. The steady pace of GST revenue growth, particularly a 9.4% rise compared to the previous year, indicates that the country is on track to exceed its Budget Estimates (BE) for FY25, assuming this trend continues through the final months of the fiscal year. M.S. Mani, partner at Deloitte India, highlighted that the notable 15% increase in tax refunds also reflects improved familiarity with refund processes, benefiting



both businesses and tax authorities.

January also saw a significant rise in tax refunds, with refunds for the fiscal year up by 15.7%, reaching ₹2.12 trillion. Refunds in January alone surged by 23.9%, totaling ₹23,853 crore. These figures suggest that the tax system is becom-

ing more efficient, boosting both business compliance and economic activity.

Regional performance varied, with states like Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra reporting a 20% and 14% increase in GST collections, respectively. Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat also saw growth of 11% each, while Telangana and West Bengal recorded a 10% and 7% rise, respectively. On the other hand, states such as Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, and Lakshadweep experienced a decline in revenue collection.

Abhishek Jain, indirect tax head and partner at KPMG, noted that the 12.5% year-on-year growth in GST collections in January, coupled with higher refunds, suggests an uptick in economic growth and sustained tax compliance. Jain also emphasized the efficiency improvements in refund processing, marking a significant step toward simplifying the business environment in India.



Can Two Men Have A Baby Without Needing A Woman? Chinese Scientists cover Breakthrough



A team of scientists in China has successfully created a mouse born without a biological mother, marking a significant breakthrough in reproductive science. Led by molecular biologist Zhi Kun Li from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), this groundbreaking experiment involved precise stem cell engineering and is being hailed as a major achievement. While similar experiments have been attempted before, this is the first time a mouse born from two fathers has survived until puberty.

In 2023, Japanese researchers managed to create a similar mouse, but its lifespan was short-lived. The Chinese study, however, showed promising results, as the mice, though unable to reproduce independently, appeared to exhibit better health than previous experimental animals. This success is seen as a step forward in understanding certain genetic disorders in humans, although the technology still requires considerable refinement.

The main challenge in such experiments lies in the issue of gene imprinting. In normal reproduction, when a sperm fertilizes an egg, half of the genes are silenced in a process that requires input from both male and female DNA. When two sperm cells are used to

create an embryo, this silencing mechanism often fails, leading to genetic abnormalities. This disorder is a key obstacle to achieving unisexual reproduction, where offspring are created from two individuals of the same sex.

To overcome this issue, Li and his team employed advanced genetic techniques such as gene deletion, region editing, and the manipulation of genetic base pairs. Their method addressed the imprinting challenge, allowing the successful creation of embryos that could develop into healthy mice.

While the breakthrough in China is significant, it also comes with limitations. The success rate of creating viable embryos remains low, with only 13% of embryos developing into live mice, and many did not survive to adulthood. Moreover, these animals cannot reproduce. Despite these hurdles, the researchers are optimistic that refining their approach will help address the challenges of genetic imprinting, bringing them closer to understanding how to create viable offspring from two male parents.

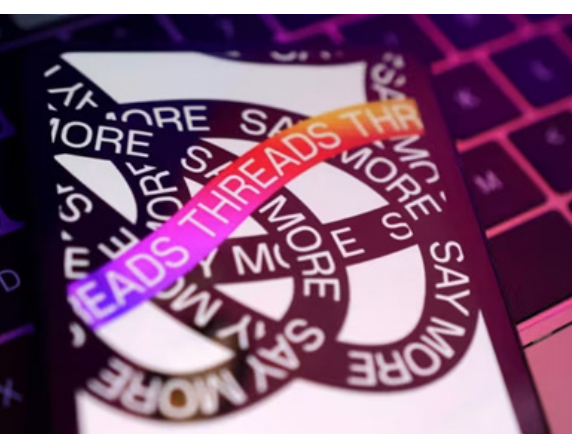
As of now, while these experiments offer valuable insights into genetic disorders and reproduction, applying this technology to humans remains a distant possibility.

Threads Introduces Media Tab, Markup Tool, and Photo Tagging Feature

Meta's microblogging platform, Threads, has launched several new features in its latest update for both iPhone and Android users. The most notable addition is the long-awaited dedicated media tab, which now allows users to view all photos and videos posted by someone in a single, easily accessible location. Previously, users had to scroll through a person's entire timeline to find media posts, with photos and videos mixed in with text-based content. Now, media posts are displayed in reverse chronological order, making it much easier to find and enjoy them.

Instagram head Adam Mosseri announced the arrival of the media tab, calling it a "long overdue request" from the community. Alongside this feature, Threads has introduced a photo tagging function, similar to Instagram, allowing users to tag others while sharing images. This update aims to enhance user interaction and make the platform more social, fostering connections between users who share visual content.

Another new feature rolling out to Threads users is the markup tool. This tool lets users highlight parts of another user's post when reposting it to their followers. The markup



tool includes several options, such as a pencil, highlighter, and arrow tools, allowing users to emphasize specific parts of a post. This feature, which was announced earlier this month, is now being widely implemented, enabling users to better customize and engage with content they share.

While the new media tab and markup tool are available in the latest Threads update, the photo tagging feature is still being gradually rolled out to users. These new additions are expected to make Threads a more engaging and interactive platform, enhancing the user experience and encouraging more dynamic content sharing.

Asteroid Sample Reveals Organic Compounds That May Hint at Life Beyond Earth

In 2023, NASA's OSIRIS-REX mission delivered a sample from the asteroid Bennu, providing groundbreaking insights into the fundamental molecules and minerals that could play a role in the origins of life. The analysis of this pristine sample, reported in *Nature** and *Nature Astronomy**, identified organic compounds such as amino acids, nucleobases, and ammonia, as well as minerals formed in saltwater. These findings suggest that the necessary conditions for life might have existed across the early solar system, potentially supporting the idea that life could have developed

elsewhere beyond Earth.

Among the key discoveries, 14 of the 20 amino acids essential for protein formation, along with all five nucleobases critical to DNA and RNA, were detected in the Bennu sample. The presence of ammonia and formaldehyde further supports the notion that complex organic molecules could form in space environments. These compounds, while previously found in meteorites, are now confirmed in an uncontaminated sample from space, bolstering the idea that asteroid material may have contributed to

the building blocks of life on Earth.

Additionally, the study revealed evaporite minerals, such as calcite, halite, and sylvite, indicating that water once existed on Bennu. These minerals, formed as saltwater evaporated over time, are similar to those observed on other celestial bodies, such as Ceres and Enceladus. This discovery is particularly significant, as it marks the first time a complete set of these evaporite minerals has been found in extraterrestrial material.

Despite these revelations, questions



remain, particularly regarding the molecular orientation of amino acids. While Earth's amino acids predominantly exhibit a left-handed orientation, Bennu's sample contained an equal mix of left- and right-handed forms. This raises intriguing ques-

tions about the chemistry of the solar system and the origins of life. Further studies are expected to deepen our understanding of these complex processes and the potential for life beyond Earth.

French Chef Cedric Grolet Redefines Apple Pie with Artistic Twist, Mesmerizing the Internet

In the world of culinary arts, where taste meets innovation, French pastry chef Cedric Grolet has become an icon for his hyper-realistic, edible creations. Known for transforming everyday desserts into visually stunning works of art, Grolet's latest masterpiece—a unique twist on the classic apple pie—has captivated food enthusiasts across the globe.



The viral video, which has already amassed over 22 million views on Instagram, shows Grolet's meticulous process of creating a one-of-a-kind apple pie. From the very beginning, it's clear that this isn't just any ordinary dessert. Grolet starts by peeling an apple, his skilled hands working with precision as curious onlookers watch. He then carefully washes the chopped apples and boils the peel in water, extracting its essence into a rich, flavorful liquid.

The magic happens when Grolet thickens this apple-infused concoction, adding butter, chopped apples, sugar, and milk. As the mixture bubbles and thickens, he incorporates a dollop of fresh cream and chocolate, creating a decadent blend of rich flavors. To add texture, Grolet mixes in cookie cream and apple crumble, giving the dessert depth and complexity. The *pièce de résistance*

comes when the glossy, apple-like pastry is dipped in red food coloring, transforming it into a stunning visual spectacle.

The final result is a dessert that not only looks like an apple but also captures the essence of the fruit in flavor and texture. Grolet's signature touch of artistic flair has left the internet in awe, with many commenting that the dessert is more of an art piece than just food.

Grolet's apple pie creation comes with a timely twist—it's presented as "An apple of Love for February 14, 2025," making it the perfect treat for Valentine's Day. With his culinary expertise and artistic vision, Cedric Grolet continues to blur the lines between food and art, turning each creation into a mesmerizing, one-of-a-kind experience for both the eyes and the palate.

Spider "Rain" in Brazil: A Natural Mating Phenomenon Stuns Locals

In an extraordinary event in São Thomé das Letras, a small town in Minas Gerais, Brazil, hundreds of spiders appeared to "rain" from the sky, leaving both locals and social media users stunned. The bizarre scene, which resembled snowfall but with eight-legged creatures descending from above, quickly captured the public's imagination and sparked widespread curiosity.



Despite the unsettling visual, experts have explained that this phenomenon is a natural occurrence. According to biologist Kayron Passos, the spider rain was a result of a mating ritual, during which numerous spiders were suspended in the air by a massive web. The spiders were not falling randomly; rather, they were part of a larger, coordinated event driven by instinctual behaviors.

Passos clarified that female spiders have an organ called the spermatheca, which allows them to store sperm from multiple males. This adaptation promotes genetic diversity, as the females can fertilize their eggs with sperm from different mates, ensuring stronger and more varied offspring. Even after laying eggs, these females may continue to collect sperm for future use.

Further insight into the spiders' behavior was provided by archaeologist Ana Lucia Tourinho, who noted that while most spiders are solitary creatures, certain species, such as *Stegodyphus* and *Anelosimus*, are known for their social behavior. These species form colonies that include several generations, often consisting of mothers and daughters. In these colonies, the spiders work together to capture prey, share food, and defend their territory.

The surreal spectacle in São Thomé das Letras was not a freak occurrence but rather a rare natural event linked to the spiders' mating practices. Still, it left many in awe of the complexities of nature and the behaviors of these often misunderstood creatures.

Sports and Youth Affairs Ministry Gets ₹3,794.30 Crore in Budget 2025, Khelo India Leads Allocation

New Delhi: The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports received a significant budgetary boost in the Union Budget 2025-26, with an overall allocation of ₹3,794.30 crore, marking an increase of ₹351.98 crore from the previous year. The Khelo India program emerged as the biggest beneficiary, securing ₹1,000 crore, a ₹200 crore hike from last year's ₹800 crore. Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya welcomed the budget, stating that the increased funds will "strengthen sports infrastructure, boost Khelo India, and empower the next generation of athletes and leaders."

Key Budget Highlights:

- **National Sports Federations:** ₹400 crore (up from ₹340 crore)
- **Sports Authority of India (SAI):** ₹830 crore (up from ₹815 crore)
- **National Dope Testing Laboratory:** ₹23 crore (up from ₹18.70 crore)
- **National Anti-Doping Agency:** ₹24.30 crore (up from ₹20.30 crore)
- **Sports Facilities in Jammu & Kashmir:**



- **National Sports Development Fund:** ₹18 crore (unchanged)
 - **Incentives for Sportspersons:** Reduced to ₹37 crore from ₹42.65 crore
 - **National Service Scheme (NSS):** ₹450 crore (₹200 crore hike)
- The Indian government's focus on sports development, despite no major international events in the coming year, reaffirms its commitment to strengthening grassroots and elite sports infrastructure.

Karnataka, Manipur, and Maharashtra Lead Medals Tally in Uttarakhand

The latest edition of National Games 2025, are being held from January 28 to February 14 in Uttarakhand, showcasing the incredible talent of over 10,000 athletes who competed across 32 disciplines. Organized under the auspices of the Indian Olympic Association, this event garnered attention not just for its athletic prowess but also for the spirited competition among states.



Karnataka, Manipur, and Maharashtra have emerged as the top contenders so far, dominating the medals tally and showcasing their depth in various sports. Maha state is the defending champion after winning the most number of gold medals in the 2023 edition. This year's games were more than just a contest for medals; they represented a platform for athletes to shine and represent their regions, all vying for the coveted Raja Bhalindra Singh Trophy.

For those who want to watch, live streaming of the National Games was available on the Prasar

Bharati Sports YouTube channel, offering fans an opportunity to support their favorite athletes. Additionally, the live telecast on the DD Sports TV channel ensures that sports enthusiasts across the nation could catch all the action from the games.

As we reflect on these exciting days of competition, one thing is clear: The National Games 2025 are not only highlighting the athletic caliber but also fostering a sense of unity and sportsmanship among diverse Indian states.

New Delhi Likely to Miss Out on D Gukesh vs Magnus Carlsen Showdown as Freestyle Chess Tour Faces Uncertainty

New Delhi's much-anticipated Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour event is now in doubt, with reports suggesting that the tournament is struggling to find takers. The India leg of the event was scheduled to take place in New Delhi from September 17-24, 2025, according to the Freestyle Chess' official website. However, ongoing conflicts between the Freestyle Chess Players Club (FCPC) and FIDE (International Chess Federation) have cast uncertainty over its execution. The Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour is set to begin its first leg in Weissenhaus, Germany, on February 7, 2025. The FCPC, which boasts some of the biggest names in the chess world, including D Gukesh, Magnus Carlsen, and Hikaru Nakamura, received official recognition from FIDE in December 2024. However, tensions between FIDE and FCPC have escalated rapidly. FCPC co-owner Jan Henric Buettner has ac-



cused FIDE of demanding \$500,000 for the rights to use the "World Championship" title, calling it an unjustified move and threatening legal action against the governing body. Meanwhile, FIDE CEO Emil Sutovsky has defended the federation's stance, asserting that FIDE has exclusive rights to the "World Championship" title and accused Carlsen of trying to disrupt the chess ecosystem. As the dispute continues, the possibility of witnessing an epic D Gukesh vs Magnus Carlsen clash in New Delhi remains uncertain. Chess fans now await clarity on whether the India leg of the tour will proceed as planned or be scrapped altogether.

Srihari Nataraj, Sajan Prakash Reset Goals at National Games

Haldwani: Indian swimming stars Srihari Nataraj and Sajan Prakash set new goals as they returned to competitive action at the 25th National Games. While Srihari won the 200m freestyle, Sajan dominated the 200m butterfly. Srihari, a two-time Olympian, has decided to focus on freestyle alongside his backstroke events. He broke the 200m freestyle national record at the 2023 Asian Games, finishing 10th overall with 1:49.05. Now, he aims to strengthen his performance in 50m, 100m backstroke, and 200m freestyle. "I had a great freestyle season in 2021 and was consistent in 2023. This season, I plan to execute my races better," he said. Winning the 200m freestyle in 1:50.57, Srihari



is eyeing the 2026 Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. Sajan, recovering from a shoulder injury, had a tough start, finishing third in the 100m butterfly (54.52s). However, he made a strong comeback, clinching gold in the 200m butterfly (2:01.40s). The 31-year-old

remains determined, aiming for a podium finish at the 2026 Asian Games. Both swimmers emphasized the need for new talent to step up. "We've maintained our dominance for years, but younger swimmers must push forward," Srihari noted.

India Set to Defend Women's U19 T20 World Cup Title Against South Africa



Benoni, South Africa: India's Women's U19 team will look to secure their second consecutive T20 World Cup title as they face South Africa in the final on Sunday. The Niki Prasad-led side has been in dominant form throughout the tournament, winning all six matches convincingly. India's journey to the final saw commanding victories over West Indies (9 wickets), Malaysia (10 wickets), Sri Lanka (60 runs), Bangladesh (8 wickets), Scotland (150 runs), and England (9 wickets) in the semifinal. Opener Gongadi Trisha has been India's top performer with the bat, scoring 265 runs in six innings at an average of 66.25, while G Kamalini has contributed

135 runs. However, India's middle order remains untested, as the top-order has shouldered most of the responsibility. On the bowling front, Vaishnavi Sharma (15 wickets) and Aayushi Shukla (12 wickets) have been outstanding, leading the wicket-taking charts. Their spin will be crucial on Benoni's slow and turning tracks. South Africa, playing their first-ever U19 Women's T20 World Cup final, will look to challenge India after their thrilling five-wicket win over Australia in the semifinal. The final is set to begin at 12:00 PM IST on Sunday, with India entering as clear favorites to lift the trophy once again.

Yuvraj Singh Returns to Cricket, Joins India Masters in International Masters League

New Delhi: Former Indian cricket star Yuvraj Singh is set to make his return to competitive cricket, representing India Masters in the inaugural season of the International Masters League (IML). The tournament, featuring legendary cricketers, will be held from February 22 to March 16, 2025. Yuvraj, a two-time World Cup winner, was instrumental in India's 2007 ICC T20 World Cup triumph, famously smashing six sixes in an over against England's Stuart Broad. He was also the Player of the Tournament in India's historic 2011 ICC ODI World Cup win. Expressing his excitement, Yuvraj said, "Taking the field with Sachin Tendulkar and my other teammates feels like reliving the glory days. The IML is a tribute to an era that defined Indian cricket, and I can't wait to create more unforgettable memories for fans." The tournament will also see South Africa's JP Duminy and Sri Lanka's Upul Tharanga in action. Duminy will play for South Africa Masters, while Tharanga will represent Sri Lanka Masters. With legends of the game participating, the IML promises high-quality cricket, bringing back nostalgia for fans worldwide.



Young Kartik Singh Creates History in Indian Golf

Gurugram's Kartik Singh, at just 15 years and 26 days old, has become the youngest Indian to make the cut in an international professional golf tournament, leaving a lasting impression at the \$2 million International Series India. Competing against some of the biggest names in golf, Kartik showcased remarkable skill at the challenging DLF Golf & Country Club, securing a spot in the third round at tied-30th place.



Kartik shot an impressive one-under-par 71 in the second round, finishing the first 36 holes at four-over-par 148. His stellar performance makes him the fourth-youngest golfer ever to make the cut on the Asian Tour. Competing in a field featuring reigning US Open champion Bryson DeChambeau and top-ranked golfers like Anirban Lahiri and Joaquin Neimann, his achievement is even more significant. Despite dropping three shots on the difficult final stretch, Kartik's position in the third round was never in doubt. His ability to thrive under pressure

was evident, as he had previously become the youngest player to make the cut at the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship at Royal Melbourne Golf Club at just 13 years old. Kartik, who trains at the DLF Golf Academy under Deepinder Khullar, expressed excitement about playing alongside his idol, DeChambeau, and hopes to improve his game further. "Making the cut was my goal, and now I want to finish as high as possible," said the rising star, who received a rousing ovation from golf fans at the 18th hole.



Vikram's 'Thangalaan' Selected for International Film Festival Rotterdam

Tamil superstar Vikram's blockbuster film 'Thangalaan', directed by Pa. Ranjith, has achieved a remarkable feat by securing a spot at the 54th International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) in the Netherlands. The film's director's cut version will be screened at the prestigious event, as announced by Pa. Ranjith on social media. Based on real-life events in the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), Thangalaan was released last year as an Independence Day special and became a super hit at the box office. The film not only marked Vikram's return to form but also grossed over ₹100 crore worldwide. Following its theatrical

success, Thangalaan is now streaming on Netflix. The film's selection at IFFR 2025 marks a major milestone, bringing international recognition to Indian cinema. The festival, known for showcasing innovative and thought-provoking films, provides a global platform for filmmakers to present their artistic vision. With its gripping narrative and Vikram's intense performance, Thangalaan continues to make waves, proving to be a landmark film in Tamil cinema. This achievement is a testament to the film's cinematic brilliance and its impact on global audiences.

BrahmaAnandam: King of Comedy's Birthday Special Look Goes Viral

Veteran comedian BrahmaAnandam is set to make a grand return with the upcoming film 'BrahmaAnandam', co-starring Raja Goutham. Directed by RVS Nikhil, the film is being produced by Rahul Yadav Nakka under the Swadharm Entertainment banner, known for delivering blockbuster hits like Masooda. On the occasion of BrahmaAnandam's birthday, the makers released a special look poster as a tribute to the legendary comedian. The trendy poster, featuring BrahmaAnandam in stylish goggles and a traditional panchekattu, has



gone viral on social media, increasing excitement for the film. Promotional teasers featuring Vennela Kishore and Raja Goutham have already generated significant buzz, raising expectations for the movie. The film stars Priya Vadlamani and Aishwarya Hollakal as the female leads, while Sandilya Pisapati is composing the music. With BrahmaAnandam's impeccable comic timing and a fresh concept, BrahmaAnandam is shaping up to be an exciting entertainer. Fans eagerly await more updates as the film nears its release.

The Secret of the Shiledars: A Promising Plot with Weak Execution

Disney+ Hotstar's latest web series, The Secret of the Shiledars, directed by Aditya Sarpotdar, is based on Dr. Raviprakash Koyade's Marathi novel "Pratipachandra". Starring Rajeev Khandelwal, Sai Tamhankar, and Ashish Vidyarthi, the series explores an ancient hidden treasure linked to Shivaji Maharaj. The story begins in 1996 and shifts to the present, following Ravi Bhatt (Rajeev Khandelwal), who loses his parents in a car accident. He grows up with immense respect for Shivaji Maharaj. His life takes a dramatic turn when he meets Justice Krishna Dixit, who hands him a mysterious book. The book reveals the story of a hidden treasure that Aurangzeb once sought, protected by a secret group called the Shiledars. Ravi learns he belongs to this lineage and is responsible for safeguarding the treasure. The plot unfolds as he embarks on a thrilling search, facing enemies determined to seize the treasure for themselves. While the series has an intriguing premise, it struggles with pacing and screenplay execution. The six-episode format follows a predictable structure, with slow early episodes that pick up momentum in the latter half. The cinematography and production values are impressive, captur-



ing historical grandeur, but the historical elements often feel artificial. The action sequences and twists lack depth, making the mystery feel less gripping than expected. Rajeev Khandelwal delivers a solid performance, but Ashish Vidyarthi's role feels underdeveloped. The lack of depth in character arcs and predictable storytelling weakens the overall impact. Though the treasure hunt element keeps the viewer engaged, the series doesn't offer anything groundbreaking. Despite its grand visuals and an engaging premise, The Secret of the Shiledars fails to maintain consistent excitement. While it provides a decent historical adventure, it doesn't leave a lasting impression. Rating: 2.75/5

Vijay's 'Jana Nayagan' Set for a Grand Overseas Release

Tamil superstar Thalapathy Vijay is actively working on strengthening his political party ahead of the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections while also focusing on his next big film, 'Jana Nayagan' (People's Leader). Directed by H. Vinoth of Khakee fame, the film has already created massive buzz, especially after the first look and title announcement on Republic Day received an overwhelming response. According to reports, Jana Nayagan's overseas rights have been sold for a record-breaking ₹75 crore, highlighting Vijay's immense global fanbase. This makes it one of the most expensive overseas deals for a Tamil film. The movie is being produced by Kannada production giant KVN Productions, with Anirudh Ravichander composing the music. Actress Mamitha Baiju, known for her role in Premalu, will play the female lead.



Scheduled for a worldwide release in October 2025, Jana Nayagan is expected to be a politically significant film, aligning with Vijay's increasing involvement in state politics. The film's massive pre-release business proves that Vijay's popularity continues to soar, making it one of the most anticipated Tamil films of 2025.

Venkatesh Sets New Record

Remuneration Rises to ₹25 Crore After 'Sankranthiki Vasthunam' Blockbuster

Veteran Telugu actor Venkatesh Daggubati has created history by becoming the first senior hero to achieve ₹300 crore gross collections with his latest film, 'Sankranthiki Vasthunam'. The film, directed by Anil Ravipudi, turned out to be a massive success, winning over family audiences and emerging as a blockbuster hit. Before the film's release, Venkatesh was reportedly charging a remuneration of ₹10-12 crore per movie. However, with the spectacular success of 'Sankranthiki Vasthunam', his remuneration has now skyrocketed to ₹25 crore for his next project. The Daggubati star is widely known for his strong family audience base, which played a key role in the film's record-breaking collections. Made on a budget of ₹60 crore, the film reportedly grossed ₹300 crore, making it one of the highest-grossing films of



his career. Trade analysts have confirmed this as a milestone for a senior hero in the Telugu film industry. With this achievement, Venkatesh now stands as the highest-paid senior actor, setting a new benchmark among Chiran-

jeevi, Balakrishna, and Nagarjuna in terms of both market success and remuneration. His next film is already generating huge buzz, and expectations are high on what he will bring to the big screen next.

Tanikella Bharani in Lead Role for 'Asura Samharam'

Veteran actor Tanikella Bharani, known for his exceptional performances in over 750 films, is set to play the lead role in the upcoming crime suspense thriller Asura Samharam. The film is being produced under the Sri Sai Tejo Celluloids banner by Sai Srinanth and Shabarish Boyella, while Sri Sai Pravartika Boyella is presenting the project. The film's story, screenplay, dialogues, and direction will be handled by Kishore Srikrishna. Asura Samharam is a village crime drama that promises an intense and thrilling narrative. Alongside



Tanikella Bharani, Midhun Priya plays a significant role. The movie will feature Tanikella Bharani in a unique role as a village detective,

offering audiences a fresh and intriguing experience. Currently, the film is in its pre-production phase, with shooting scheduled to commence soon. The makers have assured that further details, including the complete cast and technical crew, will be announced in the coming days. Given Tanikella Bharani's versatile acting skills and the promising crime-thriller backdrop, Asura Samharam is expected to captivate audiences with its engaging storyline and gripping suspense.

Ajith's 'Pattudala' Completes Censor Formalities, Set for February 6 Release

Tamil superstar Ajith Kumar is set to captivate audiences with his upcoming action thriller Pattudala (Telugu version of Vidaa Muyarchi). Directed by Magizh Thirumeni, the film carries the tagline "Efforts Never Fail." The movie has recently completed its censor formalities and has been granted a U/A certificate by the Censor Board. With all post-production work wrapped up, Pattudala is scheduled for a grand worldwide release on February 6. Produced by Lyca Productions, the film stars Ajith and Trisha in the lead roles, marking their much-anticipated on-screen reunion. Arjun Sarja and Regina Cassandra also play crucial roles in the film. The music is composed by Anirudh Ravichander, adding to the film's excitement. With its high-octane action, gripping storyline, and star-studded cast, Pattudala is expected to make a



strong impact at the box office. Fans are eagerly awaiting to witness Ajith's power-packed performance in this thriller.