



Weather Forecast

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



Trump imposes 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico, 10% additional tariff on China.

Trump Hits Canada, Mexico & China with Tariffs

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
 US President Donald Trump has imposed fresh tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China, triggering immediate retaliation from all three nations. The new trade restrictions include a 25% tariff on all imports from Canada and Mexico, along with an additional 10% duty on Chinese goods. The move, which took effect on Tuesday, comes under an economic emergency declaration, allowing the US to impose duties to protect domestic industries. Trump also included provisions to further raise tariffs if these countries respond with countermeasures.

Mexico Hits Back with Trade Restrictions
 Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo strongly condemned the US tariffs, calling them unjustified and counterproductive. She announced the implementation of "Plan B," which includes tariff and non-tariff restrictions on US imports in response. Mexico's government has also rejected Washington's allegations of criminal ties, calling them an excuse to justify economic aggression.

Sheinbaum emphasized the need for dialogue and diplomacy instead of escalating trade conflicts. With Mexico being one of the US's largest trading partners, these new barriers are expected to impact cross-border commerce significantly.

Canada Imposes Heavy Retaliatory Tariffs
 Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced sweeping countermeasures, imposing 25% tariffs on \$155 billion worth of American goods. The first phase of these tariffs, targeting \$30 billion in US exports, is effective immediately, while the second phase covering \$125 billion will be implemented in 21 days. The Canadian tariffs include a wide range of American products, such as alcoholic beverages, fruits, household appliances, and industrial materials like lumber and plastics. Trudeau also hinted at possible non-tariff restrictions, including policies affecting critical minerals and energy trade. He urged Canadians to prioritize domestic products and tourism to counter the impact of US economic pressure.

China Challenges US Tariffs at WTO
 China responded by declaring that it would challenge the US tariffs at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Chinese Commerce Ministry described the US move as a violation of global trade norms and announced that China would take corresponding countermeasures. While Beijing has yet to specify the full extent of its response, it is expected that additional tariffs on American exports will follow. With the ongoing trade war between the two nations, this latest escalation threatens further economic disruptions and strained diplomatic ties.

As all three nations implement their countermeasures, the global trade landscape faces growing instability. The US tariffs, along with retaliatory actions from Canada, Mexico, and China, could lead to higher prices for consumers, disrupted supply chains, and uncertainty in global markets. With tensions rising, the possibility of negotiations remains uncertain, raising concerns over the long-term impact of this escalating trade conflict.

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| <p>Donald Trump mocks Canada again, saying, "If Canada were to join the United States as our 51st state, they would have lower taxes, no tariffs, and much better military protection. Think about it!"</p> | | <p>Mexico announces "Plan B" with trade restrictions in response.</p> |
| | <p>China to challenge US tariffs at WTO and warns of countermeasures.</p> | |

BR Patil Resigns as Karnataka CM

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India's Young Queens Dominate U19 T20 World Cup Again

India thrash South Africa by 9 wickets to retain U19 Women's T20 World Cup. Gongadi Trisha shines with 3/15 and unbeaten 44 off 33 balls. India win all matches, becoming first team to lift title undefeated.

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'Should Karnataka Just Eat Peanuts?' Ministers Slam Union Budget for Neglecting State

Krishna Byre Gowda calls budget a "dark day" for Karnataka.

He says Centre's bias towards Karnataka.

Claims state's tax revenue benefits Bihar.

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TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government has strongly criticized the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman,

Another MBBS Doctor Found Dead in RG Kar Quarters

No suicide note, police suspect depression.

Mother discovered body after unanswered calls.

Case registered, post-mortem underway.

Incident revives RG Kar scrutiny.

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At Rs 7,564 crore, railways a silver lining for Karnataka

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka has received its highest-ever railway budget allocation of ₹7,564 crore for the financial year 2025-26, Union Minister of State for Railways V Somanna announced. This marks a slight increase from the previous year's allocation of ₹7,559 crore.

A senior railway official confirmed that this is the highest railway budget allocation the state has ever received. Speaking in New Delhi, Somanna highlighted that the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP) has been allotted ₹350 crore this year, the same as last year. The 148-km project, which includes four corridors, has seen work begin on only two lines so far.

Meanwhile, the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BMRCL) had requested ₹1,717.62 crore from the Centre, with ₹1,200 crore earmarked for the upcoming Phase-3 project. A senior BMRCL official expressed confidence that the full amount requested would be approved, citing the Centre's past support for metro development in the city.

Phase-3 of the metro expansion will include two corridors: a 32.15-km stretch from JP Nagar Phase-4 to Kempapura and a 12.5-km stretch from Hosahalli to Kadabagere.

At the national level, the budget has allocated ₹31,239 crore for metro projects across the country. The exact share Bengaluru Metro will receive is yet to be confirmed, but last year, the Centre had allocated ₹4,814.58 crore for the city's metro network.

Industry Bodies Welcome Budget's Focus on MSE Growth



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Industry and commerce bodies have lauded the Union Budget, stating that it lays a strong foundation for the growth of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and promotes entrepreneurship.

Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) president MG Balakrishna said the budget fosters industrial growth and innovation while creating a business-friendly environment. "The Budget lays a strong foundation for industrial growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship. FKCCI appreciates the government's commitment to fostering an enabling business environment," he said.

The Bangalore Chamber of Industry and

Commerce also welcomed the budget, particularly its focus on tax relief and tourism. BCIC president Vineet Verma stated that the reduction in tax rates and an increased tax threshold for the middle class will boost consumption. "The Budget also laid strong emphasis on boosting tourism with Udaan regional connectivity, top 50 destination development, airport upgrades, skill development programs, MUDRA loans, incentives for states, and VISA waivers," he added. Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association president MG Rajagopal highlighted the budget's positive impact on MSMEs, saying it expands opportunities and credit access while supporting first-time entrepreneurs and

startups. "The establishment of five National Centres of Excellence for skilling will equip youth with industry-relevant skills, strengthening India's manufacturing ecosystem," he noted.

He further pointed out that the National Manufacturing Mission's focus on clean tech manufacturing will benefit MSEs engaged in high-growth sectors like solar energy, EV batteries, and grid-scale storage.

Industry leaders emphasized that the government's focus on spiritual and medical tourism, along with regional connectivity to 220 new destinations, will significantly enhance the tourism sector while contributing to overall economic growth.

Nine Injured as SUV Overtakes Near Tumakuru While Avoiding Dog

TPN Correspondent | Tumakuru

Nine people, including the driver, sustained injuries after their SUV overturned late Friday night near Bugudur village in Tumakuru district. According to police, the driver lost control while attempting to avoid a dog that suddenly appeared on the road. The victims, all construction workers, were returning home from Thirumani village when the accident occurred. They were traveling with their equipment when the vehicle swerved and overturned. Among the injured, two individuals are in critical condition, police sources confirmed.

The injured were rushed to Tumakuru District Hospital and Pavagadh Hospital for treatment. Local authorities have

registered a complaint and inspected the accident site.

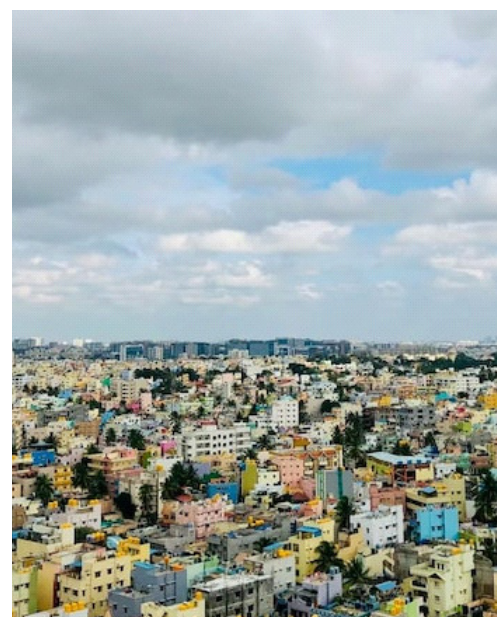
Fatal Crash in Uttara Kannada In a separate incident, ten people lost their lives and 15 others were injured when a truck crashed after colliding with an unidentified vehicle in Yellapur taluk, Uttara Kannada district. Superintendent of Police M Narayan stated that the truck, carrying vegetables, collided with a larger vehicle from behind before veering off the road and falling into a ditch. Many victims, who were traveling atop the truck, were crushed in the accident.

Yellapur Police Inspector Ramesh Honnapur confirmed that all the injured were admitted to the government hospital at Karnataka Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) in Hubballi.

Indian Startups Raise \$240 Million in a Week Bengaluru Tops Funding Deals

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Indian startups raised a total of \$240.85 million this week across 30 deals, with Bengaluru emerging as the top city for funding, securing 12 deals. It was followed by Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Chennai, and Patna, according to an Entracker report. Among sectors, e-commerce startups led with five investment deals, while SaaS and fintech firms followed closely with three each. Foodtech, healthtech, and manufacturing startups also saw investor interest. In the growth-stage category, edtech startup Leap secured \$65 million in a Series E round led by Apis Partners. B2B seafood startup Captain Fresh raised \$30 million in its pre-IPO round, while SaaS IT management firm SuperOps received \$25 million. A supply chain startup also secured \$12 million in Series C funding from Evolve India and Mirabilis Investment Trust.



Among early-stage startups, 20 companies collectively raised \$107.15 million. B2B SaaS firm Atomicwork led with a

\$25 million Series A round, while other investments went to co-working firm Innov8, senior healthcare provider Geri Care, telecom company Astrome Technologies, and mobility startup VoltUp. D2C handloom clothing brand Dressfolk and road safety products manufacturer Prisomoline also raised funds but did not disclose the amounts.

Weekly funding remained stable but dipped 3.22% from the previous week's \$248.87 million. Over the last eight weeks, the average weekly funding stood at \$349.53 million across 26 deals. Additionally, several key acquisitions took place. Raise Financials acquired financial media startup Filter Coffee, logistics firm Shadowfax took over CriticalLog, and Nazara-owned NODWIN Gaming expanded by acquiring esports startup StarLadder. Digital navigation company MapmyIndia also acquired a stake in AI startup SimDaaS.

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Another MBBS Doctor Found Dead in RG Kar Quarters

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

A 20-year-old medical student at RG Kar Medical College in Kolkata was found hanging in her hospital quarters on Friday, in what police suspect to be a case of suicide linked to depression. The tragic incident has sparked concerns over mental health issues among medical students, especially amid mounting academic and professional pressures. The deceased, identified as Ivy Prasad, was a second-year MBBS student residing in the Kamarhati ESI Hospital quarters. Her mother, who is also a doctor, had repeatedly attempted to contact her on Friday night but received no response. Growing increasingly anxious, she rushed to the hospital quarters, only to find the door locked from the inside. "Despite multiple calls, she did not respond, which raised suspicion. When her mother reached the quarters and found the door locked, she forcibly broke it open, only to find her daughter hanging from the ceiling," a senior official from the Barrackpore Commissionerate stated. Prasad was immediately rushed to

the hospital, but doctors declared her dead on arrival. Police officials investigating the case confirmed that no suicide note was found at the scene. However, preliminary findings suggest she may have been battling depression. The authorities have registered a case of 'unnatural death' and launched an investigation into the circumstances leading to her demise. Her body has been sent for post-mortem examination at the College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital, and further details will emerge based on forensic findings.

RG Kar Medical College Under Scrutiny Again

The tragic death of Ivy Prasad comes at a time when RG Kar Medical College is already under scrutiny due to a series of alarming incidents. The institution made headlines in 2024 following the brutal rape and murder of a trainee doctor, a case that shook the medical fraternity and raised serious concerns about campus safety. On January 20, 2025, a Sealdah Civil and Criminal Court convicted Sanjoy Roy for the crime and sentenced him to life imprisonment. However, the verdict has

been met with mixed reactions, with many doctors and medical professionals demanding a harsher punishment, including the death penalty. Several activists and colleagues of the victim continue to push for a re-investigation, alleging that multiple perpetrators may have been involved and that some suspects have escaped justice. The recent death of Ivy Prasad has further intensified concerns over student well-being and safety within the institution. The case highlights the immense pressure medical students endure, often leading to mental health struggles that remain unaddressed. Authorities are now being urged to take proactive measures to support students and provide adequate mental health resources to prevent such tragedies in the future. As the investigation into Ivy Prasad's death continues, police officials are expected to question her family, friends, and colleagues to determine any underlying factors that may have contributed to her suspected suicide. The findings of the post-mortem examination will play a crucial role in shaping the course of the probe.

'Should Karnataka Just Eat Peanuts?' Ministers Slam Union Budget for Neglecting State

calling it biased towards BJP-ruled states and ignoring Karnataka's needs. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar termed the budget a "big blow" to the state's aspirations and the foundation of democracy. Shivakumar accused the BJP government of prioritizing elections over governance, stating, "The Union Budget proves once again that the BJP has no concern for Kannadigas. It is openly showing bias, denying Karnataka its rightful share of development and prosperity." Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda expressed anger over the budget's allocations, questioning, "Our tax is being taken by other states. Bihar has got five or six schemes. So should Karnataka just eat peanuts? Only UP and Bihar seem visible to the Centre, while Karnataka is treated like a labourer." Industries Minister MB Patil criticized the Union Budget for keeping capital expenditure unchanged, stating that it would slow down the pace of development. He emphasized that to compete with China, increased investment is essential, but the budget

failed to address this need. Home Minister G Parameshwara accused the Centre of neglecting SCs, STs, and backward classes in the budget. He further alleged that the tax wealth generated by the southern states was being diverted for the development of northern states, leaving Karnataka at a disadvantage. Law Minister HK Patil took a sharp dig at the Modi government, calling the budget a "Bihar election manifesto" rather than a well-balanced financial plan. He pointed out that Karnataka's pressing financial issues, including concerns over microfinance-related suicides, were ignored. Additionally, ministers expressed disappointment over the lack of specific initiatives for Karnataka's IT, BT, and startup sectors, despite the state's significant contribution to India's overall economy. They accused the Centre of systematically sidelining Karnataka's interests in budgetary allocations. With mounting dissatisfaction, Karnataka's leaders have accused the Centre of systematically sidelining the state in budgetary allocations.

Air India Express launches daily direct flights between Mangaluru and Delhi

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Air India Express has strengthened air connectivity in Karnataka by introducing a daily direct flight between Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) and Delhi International Airport. The new service aims to offer greater convenience and flexibility to travelers.

The inaugural flight, IX 1552, departed from Mangaluru at 6:40 AM and landed in Delhi at 9:35 AM on February 1, while flight IX 2768 took off from Delhi at the same time, reaching Mangaluru at 9:35 AM. The first flight was welcomed with a water cannon salute by the Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) team at Mangaluru Airport. The maiden journey saw 167 passengers flying to Delhi and 144 arriving in Mangaluru.

An MIA official emphasized that the new service will benefit both business and leisure travelers while also improving connectivity for those transiting to domestic and international destinations. "Enhancing air connectivity



remains a key priority to meet the region's growing travel demand," the official added. With this addition, passengers now have two daily flight options between Mangaluru and Delhi, complementing an existing evening service by IndiGo. The new route is expected to reduce travel time and provide more

choices for commuters.

Air India Express has been expanding its presence in Karnataka, recently launching weekend flights between Mangaluru and Pune. The new Delhi route is expected to boost trade, tourism, and education, contributing to the region's economic growth.

Man Caught on Dashcam Staging Accident in Bengaluru, Video Goes Viral



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A shocking incident from Bengaluru's Whitefield area has surfaced, where a man was caught on a vehicle's dashcam staging a fake accident. The viral footage shows him deliberately stepping in front of a moving car, pretending to be hit, and feigning injury—an apparent attempt to extort money from the driver.

Shortly after the staged accident, two motorcyclists arrived at the scene, seemingly trying to act as witnesses. However, the dashcam footage captured the entire incident, exposing the attempted scam. The video was shared on Instagram by the account "safecars_india," which called for strict police action and emphasized the need for every car owner to install a dashcam. The video has sparked widespread outrage, with many social media users demanding legal action against those involved. Concerns over a growing trend of staged acci-

idents in Bengaluru have been raised, with users sharing their experiences and urging drivers to equip their vehicles with dashcams for protection against fraudulent claims.

One user commented, "Call the police, they need to be punished severely!" Another stated, "Scams are getting worse. Without a dashcam, you're defenseless, especially at night." Others accused local police and auto-rickshaw drivers of being complicit in such fraudulent activities.

This incident is not an isolated case. Last year, a woman in Bengaluru was caught on a dashcam faking an accident in a similar manner. After seeing the approaching car, she intentionally fell onto the vehicle, then attempted to attack the driver before leaving the scene. The viral video has reignited discussions on road safety, with citizens calling for stricter laws against staged accidents and urging authorities to crack down on such fraudulent practices.

Bengaluru Man Falls Victim to ₹70,000 Fake Traffic Challan Scam



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Following the tragic death of a 20-year-old woman near Padmanabha Nagar, Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy has urged commuters to avoid boarding or deboarding moving buses. The minister emphasized the importance of passenger safety and advised people not to take unnecessary risks while using public transport.

The victim, identified as Monica, a resident of Katriguppe, was trying to catch a BMTC bus on Wednesday morning when she tripped and fell under the rear

wheel. She was rushed to the hospital but was declared dead on arrival.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy urged commuters to follow safety guidelines and avoid rushing to board moving buses. The minister reiterated that BMTC operates over 6,500 buses with high frequency, ensuring ample transport availability. Despite repeated awareness campaigns, incidents continue to occur due to negligence while boarding or deboarding buses.

"It is very clear that if a person tries to catch a running bus or shows negligence

while deboarding a bus or while boarding and even standing on footboard, he or she is likely to meet with an accident. We have already created awareness on these issues, but still, people end up repeating the same mistake," said Reddy. The minister stressed that as the BMTC has a fleet of over 6,500 buses and the frequency is higher and in cities like Bengaluru, the public should not panic. Authorities continue to emphasize public transport safety measures to prevent such accidents in the future.

BWSSB Plans Strict Water Curbs to Combat Summer Scarcity

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is considering stringent restrictions on the use of drinking and borewell water for non-essential activities as summer approaches, with penalties for wastage.

BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasat Manohar stated that groundwater levels are already depleting in certain areas, and the board may impose measures similar to last year to prevent a crisis. Officials confirmed that potable water usage for washing vehicles, cleaning front yards, and suppressing dust will attract penalties.

"The anticipated depletion of groundwater and the likelihood of 20% of borewells yielding less water will necessitate these restrictions. Bulk users, including swimming pools requiring 20 million litres of water, must cooperate," said an official. Last year, severe water shortages led to excessive tanker charges, particularly in southeastern Bengaluru, where borewells and lakes dried up. In response, BWSSB mandated all water tankers to register and adhere to government-fixed rates.

With the commissioning of Cauvery Stage-5, supplying 775 MLD of drinking



water to 110 newly merged BBMP villages, BWSSB is urging residents to secure connections to reduce borewell dependency. However, concerns remain over bulk water users, including apartment complexes, with potential actions against tanker operators if complaints arise. A meeting in February will finalize the curbs based on the emerging water situation.

NCC Cadets from Karnataka and Goa Get Heroic Welcome After Republic Day Victory

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A total of 124 National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets from the Karnataka and Goa Directorate, who won the prestigious Prime Minister's Banner at the Republic Day Camp 2025 (RDC-2025), received a grand welcome at KSR Railway Station in Bengaluru on Saturday morning. The cadets, who arrived from Delhi by train at around 6 a.m., were greeted with a celebratory band and welcomed by Deputy Director General of NCC Karnataka and Goa, Air Commodore SB Arun Kumar, along with other officials. Emotional parents embraced their children, many shedding tears of joy at their achievement. The cadets later participated in a victory parade from KSR Railway Station to Jalahalli in open vehicles. Officials noted that the Karnataka and Goa Directorate had won this prestigious award after a gap of five years. Lisha DS, a third-year engineering student from Man-



galuru and a cadet of the 6 KAR Naval Unit, expressed her joy at reaching RDC, highlighting the rigorous selection process that involved seven training camps. She competed in the Best Cadet Competition, which included writing, group discussion, firing, drill, and an interview. "The RDC offers great opportunities, especially for those aspiring to join the armed forces, and is highly beneficial for women," she said. Steeve Richard Sumitha D'Sou-

za, a second-year undergraduate student and a cadet of the 6 KAR Squadron (Air Force), emphasized the importance of teamwork, stating, "Together we try, together we win." He shared his excitement about briefing the three Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, along with the Chief of Defence Staff. The cadets will stay in Jalahalli for the next few days for the de-kitting camp before returning to their respective units.



BR Patil Resigns as Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah's Political Advisor

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

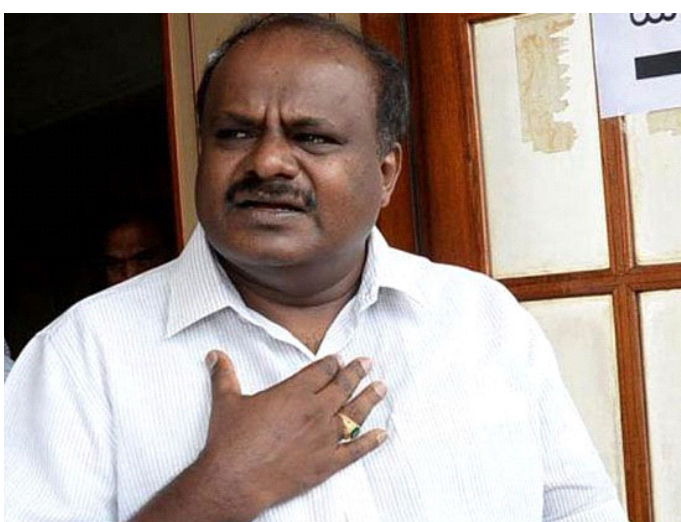
Senior Congress MLA BR Patil has resigned from his position as the political advisor to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, citing "several reasons" for his decision. Patil confirmed that he tendered his resignation on Friday but refrained from publicly disclosing the exact reasons.

"I resigned the day before yesterday. I have written a detailed letter to the Chief Minister. I will speak with him if he calls me. There are several reasons, but I cannot reveal them publicly. I have not spoken with the CM so far, and I won't withdraw my resignation," Patil told ANI on Sunday. Patil, a veteran politician, has been elected multiple times from the Aland constituency in Kalaburagi district under different party banners. He won as a Janata Party candidate in 1983, as a JD(S) candidate in 2004, under the Karnataka Janata Party in 2013, and most recently on a Congress ticket in 2023. He also served as an MLC from 1988 to 1994 and held the position of Deputy Chairman of the Legislative Council from 1991 to 1994.

His resignation has once again brought attention to the internal power struggles within Karnataka Congress. When the party came to power in 2023, there was speculation that Patil would be given a ministerial post. However, with Priyank Kharge and Sharan Prakash Patil securing Cabinet positions, he was instead appointed as the Chief Minister's political advisor in December 2023.

The resignation comes at a time when Congress leaders, including party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, CM Siddaramaiah, and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, recently gathered in Belagavi for an event marking 100 years of Kharge's presidency, unveiling a statue of Mahatma Gandhi.

Probe Ordered Against HDK in Land Encroachment Case



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Saturday confirmed that the Karnataka High Court's directives regarding allegations of land encroachment against Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy will be followed, with a Special Investigation Team (SIT) handling the probe.

Addressing reporters at Vidhana Soudha, the minister stated, "A SIT has been formed, and officials have been instructed to comply with the High Court's orders. The government must respect judicial directives, and the SIT will submit its report within the given timeframe."

The state government had previously constituted a five-member SIT, led by Bengaluru Regional Commissioner Amlan Aditya Biswas, to investigate allegations that 14.04 acres of government land in Kethaganahalli village, near Bidadi in Ramanagara district, had been encroached.

The case stems from a 2014 complaint by former Mandya MP late G Made Gowda against Kumaraswamy and former minister DC Thammanna, which led the Karnataka Lokayukta to order the recovery of the land. However, no action was taken, prompting the NGO Samaja Parivarthana Samudaya to file a contempt case in the High Court in 2020.

The SIT's findings will determine further legal action against those implicated in the case.

Karnataka Left Disappointed as Union Budget Ignores Key State Projects

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka has been left without any major grants or specific projects in the Union Budget, with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's pre-budget wishlist largely ignored. Despite receiving an allocation of Rs 7,564 crore for railway projects and centrally sponsored schemes, as well as interest-free loans for capital expenditure, the state's key demands, particularly clearance for irrigation projects, failed to find a place in the budget. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an allocation of Rs 1.5 lakh crore as interest-free loans for all states for 50 years. Last year, Karnataka availed around Rs 3,500 crore from this scheme, utilizing the funds for development projects under the Public Works Department (PWD), irrigation, and digitization of land records. This year, finance department sources indicate that the state is likely to secure around Rs 5,000 crore from the same initiative.

In terms of tax devolution, Karnataka has been allocated Rs 51,850 crore for the upcoming financial year, a notable increase from last year's Rs 46,000 crore. Additionally, the state can leverage funds from centrally sponsored schemes, including the Jal Jeevan Mission, which collectively could bring over Rs 2 lakh crore to Karnataka in 2025-26. However, the absence of direct grants or special projects has been a major setback. Among the key demands overlooked by the Union Budget was Siddaramaiah's request for the Centre's clearance of crucial irrigation projects. This included the long-pending Kalasa Banduri and Mekedatu balancing reservoir projects, as well as the declaration of the Upper Bhadra and Krishna Upper Bank



(Stage III) projects as national initiatives.

The Chief Minister had also urged the Centre to increase its contribution under the National Social Assistance Programme, which currently covers only 17% of Karnataka's pensioners. He had advocated raising this to at least 50%. Presently, the Union government provides financial assistance to only 14.41 lakh beneficiaries in Karnataka, while the state government supports an additional 68.66 lakh under its own welfare schemes.

Another key request that was overlooked was the release of Rs 5,495 crore and Rs 6,000 crore as state-specific grants recommended

by the 15th Finance Commission. Siddaramaiah had also pressed for the share of cess and surcharges collected by the Centre to be distributed among states, but no such provision was announced.

With the budget failing to address Karnataka's critical demands, concerns have been raised over the state's ability to execute large-scale infrastructure and irrigation projects without adequate central backing. The lack of specific allocations has left Karnataka's leadership disappointed, even as the state plans to make the most of the available resources for its development initiatives.

Foundation for Future-Ready India

Karnataka BJP Hails Union Budget

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka BJP leaders have welcomed the Union Budget, calling it growth-oriented and balanced across economic and social sectors. BJP state president BY Vijayendra said the budget lays a strong foundation for a future-ready Bharat, ensuring inclusive growth, economic prosperity, and new opportunities for all.

Former Chief Minister and BJP MP Basavaraj Bommai emphasized that the budget is development-driven and will accelerate GDP growth to 7-8% by 2025-26. He highlighted key aspects such as taxation simplification, customs reforms, and major investments in cancer treatment, medical sciences, electronics, and emerging technologies. "This is a highly progressive budget with a long-term vision for India's growth," Bommai stated. He also noted the surprise tax exemption increase to Rs 12 lakh, which exceeded expectations of a Rs 10 lakh limit.

Rajya Sabha MP Lahar Singh Siroya pointed out the benefits of the zero-tax policy up to Rs 12 lakh, stating that it will provide much-needed relief to the middle class, enhance disposable income, and boost consumption. He praised the Rs 5 lakh crore al-



location for women, Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST), calling it a crucial step towards economic inclusion and social empowerment. "This budget nurtures entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation through strong support for MSMEs, start-ups, and the rural economy," he added.

Siroya also lauded investments in artificial intelligence, infrastructure, agriculture, and Digital India, which he believes will drive technological and economic advancement in the coming years.

Leader of Opposition (LoP) R Ashoka underscored the increased financial support for farmers through Kisan Credit Cards, where loan limits have been raised from Rs 3 lakh

to Rs 5 lakh. He also highlighted new incentives for start-ups, with loan availability increasing from Rs 10 crore to Rs 20 crore at lower interest rates. Additionally, term loans will now be extended to women from SC/ST communities to help them establish industries.

Ashoka defended the Centre against Congress' accusations of discrimination, stating that Karnataka stands to receive between Rs 7,000 to Rs 8,000 crore from the Rs 1.5 lakh crore interest-free loan announced for states. He further pointed out the extension of the Jal Jeevan Mission, a key initiative for water accessibility. "Congress leaders are misleading the public by claiming Karnataka has been ignored. Deputy CM DK Shivakumar demanded Rs 65,000 crore for Bengaluru and Rs 85 crore for irrigation, but he should also clarify how much allocation Karnataka received during the UPA government," Ashoka said.

Karnataka BJP leaders remain firm in their stance that the Union Budget has delivered on key economic priorities and will significantly contribute to the state's development, particularly in sectors like MSMEs, digital transformation, and agriculture.

No AIIMS for Raichur: Minister Gundu Rao Slams Modi Govt

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has criticized the Union government for ignoring the state's long-pending demand for an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Raichur in this year's Union Budget. "Our demand for an AIIMS in Raichur has been completely ignored. While 22 states have received approval for AIIMS, Karnataka's request remains unanswered," Rao said, accusing the BJP-led government of sidelining the state. The minister also pointed out that while the Centre has announced plans to set up 200 daycare cancer centres in district hospitals over the next three years, Karnataka has already taken the lead in this regard. "By next month, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will inaugurate such centres in all districts. We had announced this initiative last year and have been actively working on it," he said.

Rao stated that Karnataka has already reserved beds in district hospitals and collabo-



rated with various institutions to ensure the smooth operation of these centres. He welcomed the exemption of 36 life-saving drugs from basic customs duty for cancer, rare diseases, and severe chronic ailments but criticized the Centre for failing to increase the honorarium for ASHA workers. "Despite the programme being centrally managed, Karnataka bears the financial burden, while

the Union government does not provide adequate support," he said.

Regarding AIIMS, Rao dismissed the Union health minister's suggestion to use National Health Mission and PM-ABHIM funds as unrealistic. "These funds are already allocated for existing needs. AIIMS requires a dedicated budget, and Karnataka is fully prepared to support it. However, the Modi government's actions show that Karnataka is being denied the facility," he said.

The minister also criticized the Centre's inaction on the HPV vaccination programme for cervical cancer, stating that despite repeated requests, the government has failed to even consider it. "This is a critical initiative that could save countless lives, but the government has chosen to neglect it," he added.

Rao reiterated that Karnataka continues to face discrimination under the Modi government, calling the exclusion of AIIMS Raichur another instance of injustice to the state.

Homestays in Karnataka to Face Stricter Scrutiny for Better Tourism



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs, Legislation, and Tourism HK Patil has announced that the state government is conducting a survey to scrutinize and streamline homestays to ensure better tourism standards. The initiative, carried out by the tourism and revenue departments, aims to certify homestays and enforce stricter regulations for their operation.

As the state works on improving the homestay sector, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in the Union Budget, announced initiatives to boost tourism, including providing Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) loans for homestays. Patil emphasized that with the Centre's focus on the tourism sector, Karnataka will take necessary measures to ensure responsible tourism through proper certification and scrutiny of homestays.

"A detailed survey is underway, and discussions between the tourism and revenue departments are being held to address key concerns. Certification norms will be tightened, and each homestay property will undergo rigorous scrutiny," Patil said.

A senior official from the Karnataka tourism department highlighted that homestays are a crucial part of the state's tourism industry, particularly in Kodagu, Chikkamagaluru, and other parts of the Western Ghats. "A survey is currently being conducted in Kodagu. While many homestays operate legally, some do not meet the required standards. With the Centre including homestays in the budget, the sector is set to grow, but it also calls for responsible tourism practices," the official said.

The government's efforts aim to ensure that homestays adhere to safety, quality, and legal standards, ultimately enhancing Karnataka's tourism experience while maintaining regulatory oversight.

Basant Panchami Officials on High Alert for Zero-Error Event at Maha Kumbh

TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj
Following the tragic stampede during the Mauni Amavasya Snan on January 29, which resulted in at least 30 deaths and left 60 injured, the Uttar Pradesh government has intensified preparations for the upcoming Basant Panchami Snan on February 3 at Maha Kumbh 2025. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to ensure a "zero-error" event, with strict crowd control measures in place. The number of devotees continues to rise, with nearly 90 lakh people having taken a dip in the Ganga and Sangam by Sunday noon. Since January 13, Maha Kumbh has witnessed participation from over 33.61 crore pilgrims.

Security and Administrative Measures
To manage the massive influx of devotees, the state government has deployed two senior IAS officers, Ashish Goyal and Bhanu Chandra Goswami, who were instrumental in the 2019 Ardh Kumbh. They are working alongside Mela Adhikari Vijay Kiran Anand to oversee crowd control and coordination efforts. Additional Director General of Police (ADG) Bhanu Bhaskar is monitoring security arrangements, including real-time surveillance at the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC). On Sunday, he reviewed major intersections and ghats through large screens and issued instructions via loudspeakers to ensure smooth movement. He urged devotees to vacate the ghats promptly after bathing and avoid eating or drinking near the riverbanks. The police force has



been instructed to prevent overcrowding and facilitate a steady flow of pilgrims. Meanwhile, Mahant Ravindra Puri, president of the All India Akhada Parishad, appealed to devotees to spread out across the five-kilometer stretch of Prayagraj, assuring them that any dip between Phaphamau and Arail holds the same spiritual significance as bathing at the Sangam. The Amrit Snan is considered the most sacred ritual of the Maha Kumbh, attracting millions of devotees who believe

that bathing in the Triveni Sangam during this celestial period cleanses sins and leads to salvation. The event is marked by grand processions of saints, including the revered Naga sadhus. The Amrit Snan dates are determined by the astrological alignments of the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter, believed to enhance the spiritual energy of the holy rivers. The first two Amrit Snans took place on January 14 (Makar Sankranti) and January 29 (Mauni Amavasya), with the next set for February 3.

Rishi Sunak Visits Mumbai, Plays Cricket at Parsee Gymkhana

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai
Former British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited Mumbai on Sunday and took part in a game of tennis ball cricket at the Parsee Gymkhana. He expressed his delight at the experience, stating that no trip to Mumbai is complete without a game of cricket. "Great to be with all of you at the Parsee Gymkhana Club at its anniversary celebrations. What an extraordinary achievement. So much history and so much exciting stuff to come. I managed not to get out too many times this morning," Sunak told reporters. Sharing his experience on X, Sunak wrote, "No trip to Mumbai is complete without a game of tennis ball cricket." He also mentioned that he looked forward to more such visits in the future. The historic Parsee Gymkhana was founded on February



25, 1885, with Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy as its first president and Jamsetjee Tata as chairman. The club moved to its current location along Marine Drive in 1887.

Swara Bhaskar's X Account Reactivated After Suspension

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai
Actor and political commentator Swara Bhaskar's X profile was reactivated on Sunday after being suspended over alleged copyright violations related to two images. Bhaskar had criticized the suspension, calling it an attempt to silence her, and urged the platform to reconsider its decision. Following her return to X, Bhaskar posted, "AND WE ARE BACK LIKE A BAD PENNY Thank you everyone who helped!" Her comeback sparked mixed reactions, with some netizens mocking her return while others expressed support. One user quipped, "I wish my Twitter account meant this much to me. If someone hacked it and I got it back, I'd be celebrating at 1 AM just like this." Another wrote, "Hey Swara, your X account suspension made breaking news in mainstream media. I even



got a notification on Bing! Glad you're back!" **Why Was Swara Bhaskar's X Account Suspended?**

Bhaskar's account was suspended due to alleged copyright violations involving two specific images. Sharing her frustration on Instagram, she called the action "ridiculous and untenable." One of the flagged images featured a popular protest slogan in Hindi: "Gandhi, we are ashamed; your killers are still alive." The other was a photo of her child waving the Indian flag on Republic Day, with the child's face concealed. Bhaskar questioned how these posts could violate copyright laws and suggested that mass reporting led to her suspension. She accused X of enabling targeted harassment, stating, "If these tweets have been mass reported, it is an effort to harass me and suppress my freedom of speech." Her account was later reinstated, though X has not issued an official statement on the matter.

IITian Develops AI-Powered Roti Checker, Sparks Debate Online

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Artificial intelligence continues to find its way into everyday life, and now an IIT Kharagpur graduate has created an AI tool to judge the roundness of rotis. The project, called RotiChecker.ai, analyzes the shape of flatbreads and assigns them a score based on their circularity. The techie introduced the AI tool on X after a user shared a photo of her nearly perfect roti, calling round rotis an "art." He ran the image through RotiChecker.ai, which scored it 91 out of 100. Encouraging engagement, he announced, "420 likes and RotiChecker.ai goes public!" The post quickly went viral, garnering significant attention.

AI Roti Checker Gains Traction
Following the buzz, the developer shared a Google Trends screenshot showing a spike in searches for "Roti Maker." The excitement even led to discussions about similar AI concepts



like a Dosa Checker and a Chai Colour Checker. The website for RotiChecker.ai now features a playful tagline: "Dough or Die: The Great Gol Roti Challenge. Coming soon." The creator even joked about applying to Y Combinator, adding, "Thanks to multiple investors who reached out. Quickest money ever made." While many found the AI amusing, some accused the creator of reinforcing gender stereotypes by implying that

making round rotis is a measure of skill, particularly for women. The developer dismissed the criticism by sharing posts from men who also submitted their rotis for analysis. "Who said this platform is only for women? If you assumed that, then that's your own misogyny showing, not mine," he wrote.

Social Media Reactions
The post, which has crossed 450,000 views, sparked both fascination and skepticism. Some users applauded the creativity, while others questioned the usefulness of such an AI. "US has ChatGPT, China has DeepSeek. We have RotiChecker.ai," one user joked. Another pointed out, "Who's going to check the thickness? That matters more to taste than shape." Despite the debates, the AI-powered RotiChecker.ai has successfully captured the internet's attention, proving that even simple ideas can go viral in the age of artificial intelligence.

Bengaluru Food Delivery Agent Falls to Death From Under-Construction Building

Building

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
A 19-year-old food delivery agent in Bengaluru died by suicide on Tuesday evening after jumping from an under-construction building near Doddanekundi. The deceased, identified as Prakash, was a resident of Mahadevapura and worked for Swiggy. According to reports, Prakash informed his father around 7:30 PM that he was going out but did not reveal his destination. Later investigations revealed that he had gone to the under-construction site, where he ended his life. The Mahadevapura police have registered an Unnatural Death Report (UDR) and are continuing their investigation. "No signs of foul play have been found so far, but the inquiry is still ongoing," a police officer stated. Aerospace Engineering Student Ends Life in Bengaluru

In a similar incident, a 21-year-old aerospace engineering student from BMS College of Engineering in Bengaluru's Hanumanth Nagar died by suicide after jumping from the fifth floor of the college building.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the student, identified as Akshay (name changed), ended his life due to family-related issues. Hours before the incident, he reportedly sent distress messages to his parents. Authorities have withheld further details at the request of the family. Akshay was a seventh-semester student, residing in Anekal and commuting daily to college. He had attended his internal exams earlier that day, scoring 38 out of 50, according to a professor who reviewed his paper after the incident.

Donald Trump Hits China With Fresh Tariffs, Beijing Vows Retaliation

TPN Correspondent

Former U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Saturday that Chinese exports to the United States will be subjected to an additional 10 percent tariff, escalating trade tensions between the world's two largest economies. The decision, aimed at countering China's trade practices and its role in America's fentanyl crisis, has drawn a sharp response from Beijing. China swiftly condemned the move on Sunday, declaring its "firm opposition" and warning of "corresponding counter-measures" to protect its interests.

The Scale of Trade at Stake

Trade between the U.S. and China remains substantial, surpassing \$530 billion in the first 11 months of 2024, according to Washington. Chinese exports to the U.S. alone accounted for over \$400 billion, second only to Mexico.

China plays a crucial role in supplying goods ranging from electronics to textiles, but the trade imbalance—standing at \$270.4 billion last year—continues to be a major concern in Washington. The U.S. has long accused China of unfair industrial subsidies, market restrictions, and mistreatment of American companies operating in its territory.

Trump's Trade War Legacy

During his first term, Trump aggressively imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of Chinese goods, sparking a trade war. China retaliated, particularly targeting U.S. agricultural exports. The conflict led to a "phase one" trade deal, where China pledged to purchase \$200 billion in U.S. goods, including \$32 billion in agricultural products. However, analysts note that China only



fulfilled 58 percent of its commitments under the agreement, failing to meet pre-trade war import levels.

Biden's Approach and Continued Restrictions

Trump's successor, Joe Biden, did not roll back his predecessor's tariffs but took a more strategic approach. His administration focused on curbing China's access to advanced U.S. technology, particularly in semiconductors, and imposed tariffs on \$18 billion worth of Chinese imports last year. This included quadrupling duties on electric vehicles to 100 percent and doubling semiconductor tariffs to 50 percent, targeting China's dominance in green energy and battery production.

Beijing's Response and Next Steps

Trump's latest tariff escalation signals

a serious move rather than a mere negotiation tactic. Additionally, he has linked tariff policies to the fate of TikTok, warning of possible action if the Chinese-owned app is not sold.

China has pledged strong countermeasures, with the commerce ministry confirming plans to take the issue to the World Trade Organization. While a WTO ruling could take time, China's foreign ministry has hinted at more immediate retaliation, warning that the new tariffs could impact future U.S.-China cooperation on drug control.

This raises concerns over counternarcotics efforts, especially regarding fentanyl precursor regulation, which had seen renewed engagement after Biden's 2023 meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco. With both sides refusing to back down, the U.S.-China trade conflict appears set for another heated chapter.



Government Opens Nuclear Power Sector for Private Participation

TPN Correspondent, New Delhi

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a significant policy shift in the Union Budget 2025-26 by proposing to open the nuclear power sector to private players. She also unveiled a Rs 20,000 crore Nuclear Energy Mission aimed at advancing research and development in the field, with a target to establish five small modular reactors (SMRs) by 2033.

Sitharaman emphasized that producing at least 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047 was crucial for India's energy transition. To facilitate private sector involvement, amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act will be introduced. The initiative marks a historic step in reforming India's nuclear industry, which has traditionally been restricted to state-controlled operations.

India currently generates 8.1 GW of nuclear power through 24 operational atomic power plants and aims to increase this capacity to 20 GW by 2032. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), which currently holds a monopoly over nuclear power generation, has formed joint ventures with National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to expand nuclear energy projects. However, private sector investment has remained absent due to legislative restrictions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the decision as a "historic reform" that would enable nuclear energy to play a more significant role in India's development. Former Atomic Energy Commission chairman Anil Kakodkar welcomed the move, stating that a targeted approach was essential to achieving the vision of "Viksit Bharat." Kakodkar, who was instrumental in negotiating India's civil nuclear agreement with the United States, stressed that generating 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047 was critical to meeting India's net-zero emission commitments.

Union Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh had earlier highlighted nuclear energy's potential in securing long-term sustainable energy solutions. He stated that the government's nuclear expansion plan aims to increase installed capacity from 8,180 MW to 22,480 MW by 2031-32. Singh also pointed out that nuclear power serves as a reliable 24x7 source of clean electricity, crucial for India's energy security.

The NPCIL had previously invited private sector proposals to establish 220 MW Bharat Small Reactors as a replacement for coal-fired captive power plants in energy-intensive industries such as steel, aluminum, copper, and cement. Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), which are being developed globally, offer a scalable and cost-effective nuclear power solution. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), more than 80 SMR designs are in various stages of development worldwide, with four advanced-stage SMRs under construction in Argentina, China, and Russia.

With these policy changes, India is set to embark on a new era in nuclear energy, leveraging private sector expertise to accelerate progress toward a cleaner and more sustainable power infrastructure.

Extreme Weather Events Fueling Food Inflation in India

The latest Economic Survey tabled in Parliament on Friday highlighted that frequent extreme weather events in India have significantly contributed to rising food inflation, particularly in horticultural commodities. The report pointed out that while global food inflation has remained stable or declined over the past two years, India's food inflation rate has remained firm due to climate-related disruptions and supply chain challenges.

According to the survey, major horticulture-producing states faced severe crop damage in 2023-24 due to extreme weather conditions, leading to inflationary pressure on essential food items. The decline in onion and tomato production in the past two years was partly attributed to such climate anomalies in key producing regions.

Extreme Weather Impact on Food Prices Citing data from the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the survey revealed that the total crop area damaged in 2024 was higher than in the previous two years due to erratic weather patterns. The government also referred to India Meteorological Department (IMD)

data, which indicated a sharp rise in the frequency of extreme weather events, especially heatwaves.

Between 2022 and 2024, heatwaves occurred on 18% of days, compared to just 5% in 2020-21. This rise in extreme weather conditions has had a direct impact on agricultural output, disrupting the supply chain and pushing up food prices.

"Over the past two years, India's food inflation rate has diverged from global trends. This can be attributed to supply chain disruptions exacerbated by extreme weather events and a reduced harvest of key food items," the Economic Survey stated.

Government's Response and Future Measures The Economic Survey acknowledged that external shocks such as geopolitical conflicts and erratic weather patterns have caused price fluctuations in food commodities. However, the impact of these disruptions has now started to subside, leading to increased variation in prices rather than continuous inflationary pressure.

To ensure long-term price stability, the

report emphasized the need for proactive measures, including:

- **Developing climate-resilient crops to withstand extreme weather conditions.**
- **Strengthening data systems to closely monitor price trends and anticipate market fluctuations.**
- **Reducing crop damage through improved farming techniques and infrastructure.**
- **Minimizing post-harvest losses by enhancing storage and distribution systems.**

In a significant move, the government on Saturday announced a six-year mission to boost pulse production, aiming for self-sufficiency in three widely consumed varieties—tur, urad, and masoor. The initiative seeks to reduce India's dependence on imports while ensuring stable prices for pulses, a key component of the Indian diet.

With food inflation remaining a major concern, the government's focus is now on implementing climate-smart agricultural strategies to safeguard food security and stabilize market prices in the long run.

Over 90% of US Air Traffic Control Facilities Understaffed

TPN Correspondent, New Delhi

A new report has revealed that over 90% of air traffic control facilities in the United States are facing severe staff shortages, raising concerns about aviation safety. The issue came into focus days after a passenger jet and a military helicopter collided in Washington DC, killing all 67 people aboard.

According to The New York Times, 285 of the 313 air traffic control facilities in the US are operating below the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) recommended staffing levels. Among them, 73 facilities are critically understaffed, with at least a quarter of their workforce absent.

The issue gained attention after an American Airlines flight and a Black Hawk Army chopper collided near Reagan National Airport. At the time, only one air traffic controller was

managing helicopters and planes, a task usually requiring two individuals.

The US air travel system remains one of the safest globally, but persistent staff shortages and underinvestment in safety measures have increased close-call incidents. The shortage is particularly severe in New York, where two major facilities on Long Island operate with only 40% of required personnel. These facilities manage air traffic for some of the busiest US airports, including JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark, which handled 1.2 million flights last year.

FAA projections indicate that ongoing hiring and training efforts will still leave three-quarters of facilities below recommended staffing levels. Training a new air traffic controller takes over four years in some locations and nearly 16 months at Reagan National



Airport.

A CBS News report found that only 2% of air traffic control towers met the

2024 staffing targets for fully trained personnel. An analysis of 2023 data for nearly 200 airport towers revealed

that only 8% met the required staffing levels, even after considering trainees in the system.

SC National Conference Stresses Judicial Reforms, Faster Case Disposal

- SC conference stresses judicial reforms and faster case disposal.
- Over 5.1 crore cases pending, 90% in district courts.
- Policy and Action Plan-2024 aims to bridge the case backlog gap.
- Sessions focused on staffing, technology, and accountability in judiciary.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court, under Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, hosted a national conference on Saturday, focusing on judicial reforms and strategies to expedite case disposal. The conference brought together Supreme Court judges, chief justices of high courts, district judges, and senior officials from the ministries of home affairs and law. Discussions centered on implementing the Policy and Action Plan-2024 formulated by the National Court Management Systems (NCMS) Committee, aimed at reducing judicial backlogs. With over 5.1 crore pending cases nationwide—90% of them in district courts—the conference emphasized the urgent need for systemic improvements. The conference featured four key sessions addressing critical judicial issues. The first session, chaired by CJJ Sanjiv Khanna, along with justices Abhay S Oka, BV Nagarathna, and Dipankar Datta, focused on strategies to reduce case backlogs and bridge the gap between case institution and disposal. The second session, led by justice Bhushan R Gavai with justices



PS Narasimha and KV Viswanathan, explored the feasibility of a uniform case categorization system and the integration of technology to streamline judicial processes. The third session, chaired by justice Surya Kant, with justices JK Maheshwari and Sudhanshu Dhulia, discussed judicial staffing challenges, the expansion of legal aid, and the need for a permanent IT cadre in courts to enhance efficiency. The final session, chaired again by CJJ Khanna, with justices Vikram

Nath, MM Sundresh, and Bela Trivedi, focused on the career progression, performance evaluation, and accountability of judicial officers, emphasizing the need for structured mentoring and standardized training programs. The conference underscored collaboration among all judicial levels to enhance efficiency. The adoption of Policy and Action Plan-2024 is expected to significantly streamline case resolution and strengthen the justice delivery system.



'Jhunjhuna, Not Special Package': Congress, RJD Slam Budget for Bihar

TPN Correspondent | Patna

Congress Rajya Sabha MP Pramod Tiwari has criticized the Union Budget, stating that Bihar was promised a special package but received only a "jhunjhuna" instead. He accused the Centre of reducing funds for key sectors like education, rural development, and MGNREGA while claiming to push for "Viksit Bharat."

Speaking to ANI, Tiwari argued that the budget failed to deliver meaningful relief. "They made income up to ₹12 lakh tax-free, but the same people will pay more through GST. The education budget has been slashed, yet they talk about development," he said. He also questioned the reduction in rural development and employment schemes, calling the budget a disappointment for Bihar.

In her budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced several initiatives for Bihar, including the development of Greenfield airports, expansion of Patna Airport, and construction of a brownfield airport in Bihta. She also highlighted the Western Kosi Canal ERM project in the Mithilanchal region.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav also criticized the budget, stating that it lacked clarity on Bihar's demands. "They did not mention a special package or special state status. The Greenfield airport proposal lacks specifics, and no budget allocation was provided. This is just another 'jumla'," he said.

Addressing a press conference in Vaishali, Yadav accused Bihar CM Nitish Kumar of failing to secure a better deal for the state despite his alliance with the BJP. "Today's budget was unfair to Bihar. Whatever was given in the last budget has just been repeated this time. Train fares are increasing, but no relief has been provided," he added.

While the Centre has announced infrastructure projects, opposition leaders remain skeptical about their execution and the overall benefits Bihar will receive from this budget.



200 New Vande Bharat Trains in Next 2-3 Years

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced that India will see the addition of 200 new Vande Bharat trains, 100 Amrit Bharat trains, 50 Namoo Bharat rapid rail, and 17,500 general non-AC coaches over the next two to three years. The minister's remarks came after the Union Budget 2025-26 allocated ₹2.52 lakh crore as gross budgetary support for the Indian Railways. Calling the budget "amazing," Vaishnaw said the new allocation will ensure faster, safer, and more comfortable rail travel. He emphasized that the new trains and modern coaches would benefit the low and middle-class population significantly. The total railway infrastructure projects outlined in the budget amount to ₹4.6 lakh crore, with a major focus on safety improvements. The reimbursement of losses on the operation of strategic lines has been set at ₹2,739 crore, while ₹706 crore is allocated for debt servicing of market borrowings for national projects. Vaishnaw highlighted that the railway budget's gross budgetary support is now nearly nine times what it was in 2013-14 when it stood at just ₹28,174 crore. The government also aims to develop 7,000 km of high-speed rail lines supporting speeds of up to 250 km per hour by 2047. On the sustainability front, the minister reiterated that Indian Railways will achieve 100% electrification by FY 2025-26, aligning with the budget's focus on small modular reactors as a clean energy source.

5 Killed, 17 Injured as Pilgrims' Bus Falls Into Gorge in Gujarat

TPN Correspondent | Gujarat

Five pilgrims lost their lives, and 17 others sustained serious injuries after a private bus plunged into a deep gorge in Gujarat's Dang district early Sunday morning. The incident occurred around 4:15 am near the Sapatara hill station when the driver lost control of the vehicle, officials confirmed. The bus, carrying 48 pilgrims, broke through a crash barrier and fell nearly 35 feet into the gorge. Among the deceased were two women and three men, who died on the spot, according to in-charge Superintendent of Police SG Patil. "Five pilgrims died, and 17 others suffered serious injuries. They have been rushed to a civil hospital in Ahwa. Some passengers sustained minor injuries. The rescue operation is nearly complete," the official said. The bus was traveling from Trim-bakeshwar in Maharashtra to Dwarka in Gujarat when the tragedy struck. The passengers were from Guna, Shivpuri, and Ashok Nagar districts of Madhya Pradesh.



Modi Backed Tax Cuts, Took Time to Convince Bureaucrats: FM Sitharaman

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman revealed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was fully supportive of the idea of tax cuts, but it required time to convince bureaucrats. Speaking in an interview, she emphasized that Modi was clear about his intent, and the primary challenge lay in convincing the concerned officials. "The PM was very clear that he wanted to do something. The effort was more within the ministry to ensure that the tax board was convinced about efficiency in collection and the voice of honest taxpayers," Sitharaman stated. She highlighted that Modi has always been attentive to feedback from various sectors, engaging with industrialists, tribal communities, and vulnerable groups to understand their concerns. In the Union Budget 2025-26, presented on Saturday, Sitharaman announced a significant tax relief for the middle class. Under the new provisions, no income tax will be payable on annual earnings up to ₹12 lakh. "A tax rebate is being provided in addition to the benefit of slab rate reductions, ensuring that individuals with income up to ₹12 lakh pay no tax," she said in Parliament.

The announcement was met with strong approval from the treasury benches, with Prime Minister Modi leading the applause. Later, Modi described the budget as a "force multiplier," emphasizing its role in increasing citizens' savings and making them active participants in development. "This budget focuses on filling the pockets of the people rather than just the government treasury," he said in a video address.

Rahul Gandhi slams UP govt over woman's brutal murder



TPN Correspondent | Muzaffarnagar

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi strongly criticized the Uttar Pradesh government over the brutal murder of a 22-year-old Dalit woman in Ayodhya, calling it "heartbreaking and deeply shameful." He accused the BJP-led administration of neglecting the family's pleas and failing to act in time. The woman's unclothed body was found in a canal on Saturday morning. Her family claimed her eyes were violently removed, her body had broken bones, and authorities suspect she was gangraped. They alleged that despite filing a missing complaint on Friday, the police did not actively search for her.

Rahul Gandhi, in a post on X, said, "Had the administration paid attention to the family's pleas, which had been echoing for three days, her life might have been saved." He demanded the harshest punishment for the culprits and strict action against negligent police officials. "Please, for once, do not harass the victim's family, as is often the case. The daughters of this country and the entire Dalit community are looking to you for justice," he added.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also condemned the crime and blamed the administration. He demanded strict action against the culprits and negligent police officers, along with ₹1 crore compensation for the victim's family.

Faizabad SP MP Awadhesh Prasad visited the family and expressed deep sorrow over the incident. Speaking to reporters, he said, "I will raise this issue in Parliament, and if justice is not served, I will resign."

As outrage grows, opposition leaders continue to question the Yogi Adityanath-led government's handling of the case.

"Sorry to Spoil Udda Assam Party" Says CM Himanta Sarma as Poppy Farms Worth ₹27 Crore Destroyed

TPN Correspondent | Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday announced that over 56 acres of illegal poppy cultivation, valued at more than ₹27 crore, were destroyed in Goalpara district as part of the state's intensified crackdown on drug-related activities. Taking to X, Sarma mocked those involved in the illicit trade, stating, "Dear Local Pablo Escobars, sorry to spoil your planned Udda Assam party! Because @Goalpara_Police destroyed 170 Bighas of poppy cultivation in the Char areas worth ₹27.20 crore in January." The Chief Minister also shared a video of a tractor uprooting the vast poppy fields under heavy police supervision. "So next time you

think of drugs, think of @assampolice first. #AssamAgainstDrugs," he added, reinforcing his government's commitment to eradicating drug networks in the state. Assam has been conducting extensive anti-drug operations in recent years, targeting illegal cultivation and trafficking networks. The latest action in Goalpara is part of a broader effort to curb the production and distribution of narcotics. Officials have warned of strict action against those involved in drug-related



offenses, with continued surveillance and enforcement measures in place.

Musk's DOGE Team Gains Access to US Govt's Payment System

TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.

Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), an advisory group under the Trump administration, has reportedly gained access to the federal payment system, allowing it to monitor and potentially limit government spending. The New York Times, citing sources familiar with the matter, reported that the move aligns with President Donald Trump's directive for Musk and his team to implement spending cuts.

The development follows the resignation of David Lebryk, a top-ranking Treasury Department official, after a reported clash with Musk's allies over payment system access. According to the report, Musk's team members were made Treasury employees, cleared background checks, and obtained security clearances, though they currently lack operational control and have not blocked any government payments.

Musk claimed on X that his team discovered Treasury payment officers were instructed to approve payments "even to known fraudulent or terrorist groups," alleging that such approvals were never denied in the past.

Trump and Musk have previously suggested that cutting federal spending could save up to \$2 trillion. Initially, Trump had also appointed entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy to co-lead DOGE with Musk, but Ramaswamy later opted to run for gover-



nor of Ohio instead. Since assuming office on January 20, Trump has dismissed or sidelined hundreds of civil servants in an effort to downsize the federal workforce.

Musk Aides Restrict Access to Federal Data Systems

Meanwhile, Musk's aides overseeing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) have reportedly locked career civil servants out of critical data systems containing the

personal information of millions of federal employees, according to a Reuters report. The restricted access includes a vast database known as Enterprise Human Resources Integration, which holds sensitive details such as Social Security numbers, home addresses, pay grades, and employment history. "There is no visibility into what they are doing with the systems," an official was quoted as saying, raising cybersecurity and oversight concerns.

Eyal Zamir Appointed as Israel's New Army Chief



TPN Correspondent | Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has appointed retired Major General Eyal Zamir as the new Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Zamir replaces Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi, who resigned last month, taking responsibility for the military's failure to prevent the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. A statement from Netanyahu's office confirmed the appointment, which was finalized in consultation with Defence Minister Israel Katz. Zamir, 59, previously served as the deputy chief of staff until 2021 and was the head of the army's Southern Command, overseeing security operations related to the Gaza Strip. He had been serving as the defence ministry's director general since 2023.

Halevi stepped down on January 21, just two days after a ceasefire took effect in Gaza, which led to the release of 18 hostages by Hamas and Islamic Jihad. In his resignation letter, he cited accountability for the military's failure but also highlighted the IDF's recent operational successes. Shortly after Halevi's resignation, Major General Yaron Finkelman, the wartime head of Southern Command, also stepped down, further shaking the Israeli military leadership. Zamir's past experience includes leading efforts to dismantle Hamas's tunnel networks that extended into Israeli territory. His appointment comes at a critical time as Israel continues its military operations in Gaza and faces security challenges on multiple fronts.

Ukraine Unveils Long-Range Drone With 2,000 Km Range, 250 Kg Payload



TPN Correspondent | Kyiv

Ukraine has introduced a new long-range unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) capable of flying up to 2,000 km, carrying a 250-kg bomb, and returning to base. The latest addition to Ukraine's drone arsenal could be the most potent reusable UAV deployed in the ongoing war with Russia, significantly enhancing Kyiv's ability to strike deep inside enemy territory.

The Ukrainian military's unmanned systems branch confirmed the development on Friday, calling it a "game-changing" innovation for the battlefield. Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion three years ago, Ukraine has been developing drones capable of striking targets over vast distances. Recent attacks on Russian sites more than 1,600 km away hinted at the emergence of a reusable bomber drone, which was officially acknowledged with this announcement.

Unlike traditional one-way strike drones, this new UAV can drop its payload and return to base, enabling multiple missions until it is destroyed or rendered inoperable. This capability could allow Ukraine to sustain a higher frequency of deep strikes against Russian military infrastructure, including bomber bases and oil facilities.

Recent Ukrainian drone attacks have disrupted Russia's oil production and increased the cost of its bombing campaigns against Ukrainian cities. The Volgograd refinery, one of Russia's largest, was recently targeted by Ukrainian drones. Kyiv also claimed responsibility for strikes on a Lukoil refinery in the Nizhny Novgorod region and another refinery in Ryazan, southeast of Moscow, which was forced to halt operations.

While the exact airframe of Ukraine's new drone remains unclear, photographic evidence suggests it may be based on a modified civilian sport plane. Ukrainian forces have previously converted Aeroprakt A-22 aircraft into remotely piloted one-way attack drones, but this new UAV represents a shift toward a more advanced, reusable design.

One major challenge for reusable long-range drones is landing. While small UAVs can deploy parachutes, larger ones require a proper landing system. Advanced militaries integrate sophisticated landing technologies, but it is uncertain whether Ukraine has equipped its strike drones with similar capabilities, given their relatively low cost, estimated at a few hundred thousand dollars per unit.

As Ukraine continues its campaign targeting Russian industrial and energy assets, Moscow has intensified retaliatory strikes. On Thursday, a Russian drone attack on an apartment block in Sumy, eastern Ukraine, killed nine people, including three elderly couples.

Trudeau Slams Trump's Tariffs, Warns of Fallout in US-Canada Trade

TPN Correspondent, Ottawa

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has hit back at US President Donald Trump's sweeping 25% tariffs on Canadian imports, calling them an unjustified attack on one of America's closest allies. Speaking at a press conference in Ottawa, Trudeau reminded Americans of Canada's longstanding support in critical moments—from military conflicts to disaster relief efforts.

"From the beaches of Normandy to the mountains of the Korean peninsula, from the fields of Flanders to the streets of Kandahar, we have fought and died alongside you during your darkest hours," Trudeau said. "We've built the most successful economic, military, and security partnership the world has ever seen."

Trudeau acknowledged past tensions between the two nations but emphasized that Canada had always worked through its differences with the US. He urged Trump to rethink his approach, stating, "If President Trump wants to usher in a new golden age for the United States, the better path is to partner with Canada, not to punish us."

The tariffs, which take effect on Tuesday, will apply to nearly all Canadian exports to the US, with energy resources facing a slightly reduced 10% levy. In response, Canada is imposing 25% tariffs on CAD



155 billion (\$106 billion) worth of American goods, starting with CAD 30 billion worth of products in the first phase. The remaining tariffs will be implemented in three weeks.

"We're certainly not looking to escalate. But we will stand up for Canada, for Canadians, for Canadian jobs," Trudeau asserted. He warned that the trade conflict would impact not only Canadians but also American businesses and consumers, with potential shutdowns of auto manufacturing plants and increased costs for essential goods like food and gas.

Trump, citing concerns over illegal im-

migration and drug trafficking, defended the tariffs as necessary for protecting American interests. However, with the US-Canada border facilitating over \$2.5 billion in trade daily, the economic repercussions of the escalating tensions could be severe. In 2023 alone, Canada exported nearly CAD 550 billion worth of goods and services to the US, with energy and manufacturing making up a significant portion.

Trudeau stressed that these measures threaten to disrupt a critical economic relationship and urged the US to reconsider its stance before further damage is done.

Los Angeles Wildfires Fully Contained After Weeks of Destruction

TPN Correspondent, Los Angeles

Firefighters have fully contained the two massive wildfires that ravaged Los Angeles County for more than three weeks, killing about 30 people and displacing thousands. The Palisades and Eaton fires, which started on January 7, destroyed over 10,000 homes and burned more than 37,000 acres, making them the most destructive in the city's history.

Cal Fire, California's firefighting agency, confirmed on Friday that both fires were 100% contained, meaning their perimeters were fully controlled. While evacuation orders had already been lifted, officials warned of extensive rebuilding efforts ahead.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass assured affected residents that recovery efforts were underway. "Our priority is to help people return home safely and start rebuilding," she stated. Meanwhile, police chief Jim McDonnell announced increased security in affected areas to prevent potential looting.

The fires, fueled by prolonged drought and strong Santa Ana winds, were worsened by climate change, according to a recent study. Researchers found that global warming made such extreme conditions 35% more likely, as reduced rainfall and dry vegetation set the stage for rapid fire spread.

The economic impact of the disaster is expected to be severe, with AccuWeather estimating losses between \$250 billion and \$275 billion. Authorities continue to investigate the exact cause of the blazes while focusing on recovery efforts for the thousands affected.

Ken Martin Elected DNC Chair, Vows to Rebuild Democratic Party

TPN Correspondent
Washington, D.C.

In a bid to recover from a significant electoral defeat, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) on Saturday elected Ken Martin, the longtime leader of the Minnesota Democratic Party, as its new chair. Martin will now be responsible for steering the party out of its crisis following its loss to Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election, which also saw Democrats fail to secure control of either the House or Senate.

The Democratic Party has been struggling to counter Trump's sweeping executive actions, many of which overturned key policies implemented by former President Joe Biden. Martin, a veteran political strategist, wasted no time in launching an attack on Trump's proposed tariffs on Mexico, Canada, and China, arguing that they would ultimately hurt working-class Americans.

"Trump isn't going to make corporate billionaires pay for these tariffs—working families and small businesses will," Martin said in a statement. "He's using American workers as pawns in his petty political games."

Martin has vowed to restore and expand the Democratic Party's national infrastructure, ensuring it is equipped to contest elections across the country. He won the DNC chairmanship after defeating Wisconsin Democratic Chair Ben Wikler on the first ballot.



Uncertainty Ends, Markets Set for Gains

The domestic stock markets are expected to move upward this week, breaking out of their recent range. With key economic events—such as the US Federal Reserve, European Central Bank, and Bank of Japan interest rate decisions—now concluded, and the Modi government having presented the Union Budget, uncertainty in the markets is easing. Moving forward, market trends may depend on geopolitical developments and the impact of Trump's proposed tariffs. Sectors like finance, defense, public sector enterprises, infrastructure, and agriculture are likely to rebound following the budget announcements. Last week, stocks in the realty, consumption, auto, tourism, and FMCG sectors performed well, while IT, pharma, media, and metal indices saw declines. Meanwhile, the India VIX Fear Index dropped by 15%, signaling reduced volatility.



Phoenix Mills

Currently available at attractive prices, Phoenix Mills shares offer a favorable risk-reward ratio despite weak recent results. The stock has shown relative strength, gaining 21% in the last six sessions. Closing at ₹1,764 last Saturday, investors should consider entering around ₹1,700 with a target of ₹1,950-₹2,000. A stop-loss at ₹1,650 is advised.

Kaveri Seeds

After hitting a lifetime high, Kaveri Seeds shares have corrected by 32% and are now gaining momentum after months of consolidation. Showing relative strength compared to Nifty, the stock is in an attractive zone. It closed at ₹965 last Saturday, and investors should consider entering at ₹940 with a target of ₹1,050. A stop-loss at ₹910 is recommended.



CarTrade



This stock has demonstrated strength

even in a weak market, rebounding with higher volumes after positive quarterly results. With stable performance post-IPO and strong EPS, net profit, and revenue growth, it remains promising. Closing at ₹1,766 last Saturday, investors should enter around ₹1,700 with a target of ₹1,950. A stop-loss at ₹1,660 is advised.

Emami Limited

The company's shares have rebounded following strong Q3 results. After falling 40% from its lifetime high, the stock has gained 17% in the last seven sessions. Closing at ₹625 last Saturday, investors should consider an entry at ₹610 with a target of ₹740. A stop-loss at ₹575 is essential.



Hero MotoCorp

Down 35% from its lifetime high, Hero MotoCorp shares have found support at the crucial ₹4,000 level and are showing a turnaround. The stock has been in profit for the last five sessions as quarterly results approach. Closing at ₹4,402 last Saturday, investors should enter at ₹4,375 with a target of ₹4,800. A stop-loss at ₹4,325 is recommended. With the

easing of economic uncertainties and favorable budgetary policies, analysts anticipate a positive trajectory for the markets in the coming weeks.



Income Tax Rebate Up to ₹12 Lakh: New Slabs Explained



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
The Union Budget 2025 has brought a major relief for the middle class, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announcing that no income tax will be payable for incomes up to ₹12 lakh under the new tax regime. However, the revised tax slabs still show applicable taxes for this range, leading to confusion among taxpayers.

| New Income Tax Slabs (FY 2025-26) | Income Slab | Tax Rate |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------|
| | ₹0 - ₹4 lakh | No Tax |
| | ₹4 lakh - ₹8 lakh | 5% |
| | ₹8 lakh - ₹12 lakh | 10% |
| | ₹12 lakh - ₹16 lakh | 15% |
| | ₹16 lakh - ₹20 lakh | 20% |
| | ₹20 lakh - ₹24 lakh | 25% |
| | Above ₹24 lakh | 30% |

Under this structure, the tax slabs indicate that individuals earning up to ₹12 lakh should pay tax. However, the government has introduced a rebate that cancels out the tax liability for these individuals.

How the Rebate Works

A person earning ₹12 lakh per year would have faced:

| Income Slab | Tax Rate | Tax Amount |
|--------------------------|----------|----------------|
| ₹4 lakh - ₹8 lakh | 5% | ₹20,000 |
| ₹8 lakh - ₹12 lakh | 10% | ₹40,000 |
| Total Tax Payable | | ₹60,000 |

But due to the rebate, this ₹60,000 gets eliminated, making the final tax liability zero for incomes up to ₹12 lakh.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman clarified, "For taxpayers with income up to ₹12 lakh (excluding capital gains and special income), tax rebate is being provided, ensuring no tax is payable."

Tax on Higher Incomes

For individuals earning above ₹12 lakh, the rebate does not apply. Tax is calculated only on the income exceeding ₹12 lakh.

Example: If an individual earns ₹16 lakh, their tax liability will be

This structured reform is expected to ease the tax burden on middle-class taxpayers, leaving them with more disposable income. The Modi-led government aims to boost household consumption, savings, and investment while simplifying the tax process.

| Income Slab | Tax Rate | Tax Amount |
|--------------------------|----------|----------------|
| ₹4 lakh - ₹8 lakh | 5% | ₹20,000 |
| ₹8 lakh - ₹12 lakh | 10% | ₹40,000 |
| Total Tax Payable | | ₹60,000 |

Tata Power, Swiggy, Bharti Airtel Among Key Companies to Announce Q3 Earnings

Several major companies, including Tata Power, Swiggy, Bharti Airtel, Hero MotoCorp, Cochin Shipyard, Sula Vineyards, Torrent Power, and Info Edge India Ltd (Naukri), are set to announce their October-December quarter (Q3) results next week. The Indian stock market ended flat after investors reacted negatively to the Union Budget 2025 capex numbers, which fell short of expectations. The Nifty 50 index closed 0.11% lower at 23,482.15 points, down from 23,508.40 in the previous session. The BSE Sensex, however, saw a marginal increase of 0.01%, closing at 77,505.96 points compared to 77,500.57 earlier. Economists had anticipated a higher capex allocation, given concerns over India's slowing economic growth. Market participants are now keenly watching the opening session on Monday, February 3, for any further reactions.

Monday, February 3: Notable companies announcing results include Aditya Birla Capital Ltd, Castrol India, Bombay Dyeing & Manufacturing Co. Ltd, Barbeque-Nation Hospitality Ltd, Bajaj Steel Industries, Divi's Laboratories Ltd, Dredging Corp of India Ltd, Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE), KEC International Ltd, Poly Medicare Ltd, Power Grid Corp of India Ltd, Premier Energies Ltd, Religare Enterprises Ltd, Tata Chemicals Ltd, and Thomas Cook India Ltd.

Tuesday, February 4: Companies reporting earnings include Asian Paints Ltd, Bajaj Electricals Ltd, Birla Corp Ltd, Ceigall India Ltd, Essar Shipping Ltd, Godrej Properties Ltd, JK Tyre and Industries Ltd, JSW Holdings Ltd, Lemon Tree Hotels Ltd, One Mobikwik Systems Ltd, Niva Bupa Health Insurance Company Ltd, Paisalo Digital Ltd, PC Jeweller Ltd, Quick Heal Technologies Ltd, Tata Power Co. Ltd, Titan Co. Ltd, and Torrent Power Ltd.

Wednesday, February 5: Key firms scheduled to release Q3 earnings include Abbott India Ltd, Avalon Technologies Ltd, Cummins India Ltd, Eveready In-



dustries India Ltd, Info Edge India Ltd (Naukri), Piccadilly Agro Industries Ltd, Skipper Ltd, Sula Vineyards Ltd, Swiggy Ltd, and Welspun Corp Ltd.

Thursday, February 6: Major announcements include those from Akums Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Apollo Tyres Ltd, Aurobindo Pharma Ltd, Bharat Dynamics Ltd, BEML Ltd, Bharti Airtel Ltd, Bharti Hexacom Ltd, Bikaji Foods International Ltd, Britannia Industries Ltd, Cochin Shipyard Ltd, Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Hero MotoCorp Ltd, ITC Ltd, JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd, MRF Ltd, Orient Technologies Ltd, PVR Inox Ltd, Ramco Cements Ltd, Sai Life Sciences Ltd, Sapphire Foods India Ltd, and State Bank of India.

Friday, February 7: Companies concluding the week's earnings announcements include 3M India Ltd, Century Plyboards Ltd, Delhivery Ltd, Dreamfolks Services Ltd, Edelweiss Financial Services Ltd, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd, and Shipping Corp of India Ltd.

With multiple heavyweight companies set to declare their financial results, market sentiment in the coming week is expected to be influenced by these earnings reports along with broader economic and global market trends.

Historic Ripley Castle Up for Sale After 700 Years

Ripley Castle, a historic estate in England that has remained with the Ingilby family for over 700 years, is now on the market. The Grade I-listed property, located near Yorkshire Dales National Park, is being sold along with its 445-acre estate for £17 million (Rs 182.5 crore). The Ingilby family has owned the castle since the early 1300s, witnessing centuries of history, from royal visits to wartime events. Sir Thomas and Lady Emma Ingilby, the current custodians, decided it was time to move on. "We've been working seven days a week for so long, and we're nearly 70. Now it's time for us to travel and be impulsive," Sir Thomas told The New York Post.

Originally acquired through the marriage of Sir Thomas Ingilby to Edeline Thweng in the 14th century, the castle has survived wars, economic shifts, and changing times. Among its many legends is the story of "Trooper Jane" Ingilby, who allegedly held Oliver Cromwell at gunpoint while secretly protecting her brother.

The estate blends medieval architecture with Georgian-era additions. Its Knight's Chamber is known for oak paneling and a Tudor-style ceiling, while a hidden priest hole was discovered in 1963. The property also features a deer park, ornamental gardens, an 18th-century orangery, and a thriving commercial venture.

Mark Granger of Carter Jonas Christie's International Real Estate emphasized the castle's vast potential for commercial, agricultural, and

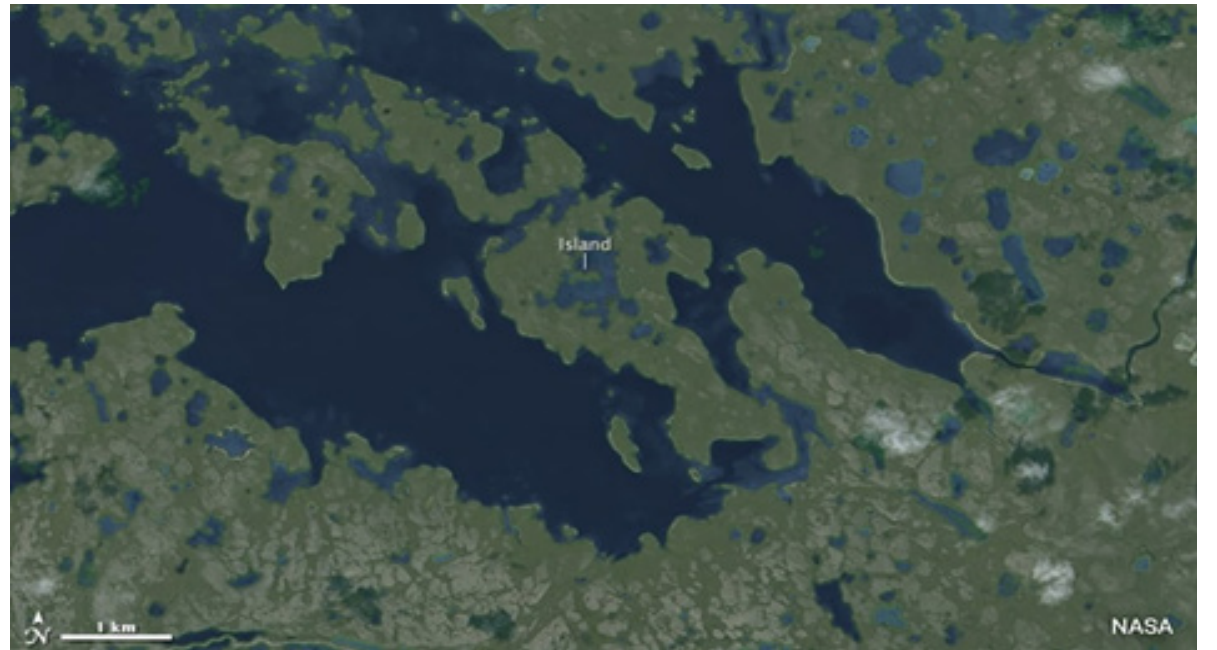


conservation projects. The Ingilbys have meticulously maintained the estate, including major restoration efforts.

Lady Emma Ingilby described their time at Ripley Castle as a privilege. "Some of the events we've hosted here have been incredibly moving. Walking around the gardens in the evening, with deer drinking from the lake, feels like something out of a fairy tale."

The decision to sell was made with the agreement of their children, who opted not to take on the estate's responsibilities.

World's Largest 'Island-In-A-Lake-On-An-Island' Confirmed in Canada's Arctic



TPN Correspondent | Nunavut, Canada

A nameless island within Victoria Island in Canada's Nunavut Territory has been officially recognized as the world's largest island-in-a-lake-on-an-island-in-a-lake-on-an-island, a rare geographical phenomenon confirmed through satellite imagery.

Satellite images captured by the Operational Land Imager (OLI) on Landsat 8 verified the existence of this unique landform. At its core, a seahorse-shaped island, approximately 1,000 feet wide, sits within a small unnamed lake. This lake itself is situated on a larger island, which is enclosed by a long, finger-shaped lake about 90 kilometers inland from Victoria Island's southern coast.

Guinness World Records has formally acknowledged this location as the largest landform of its kind. Victoria Island, known as "Kitlineq" by the Inuit, is the world's eighth-largest island and part of the expansive Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Given the region's vast and largely

unexplored landscape, experts believe similar undiscovered formations may still exist.

The Canadian Arctic is home to thousands of islands and millions of lakes formed after the Ice Age. Many recursive landforms—patterns of islands within islands or lakes within lakes—have been identified through satellite imagery. However, due to the extreme remoteness of this Arctic region, it is highly unlikely that any human has ever set foot on this particular island.

As mapping technologies and satellite capabilities continue to advance, geographers expect more unusual landforms to be discovered. In a separate instance, NASA satellites recently observed a temporary island emerging off Azerbaijan's coast in the Caspian Sea due to an eruption from the Kumani Bank mud volcano. The landmass, first spotted in early 2023, had completely eroded by the end of 2024, mirroring similar short-lived formations recorded in the area since 1861.

Google Pixel 9a Spotted on Certification Site, Hints at Android 15 Launch

Google Pixel 9a has appeared on the GEMVCo certification website, suggesting its launch could be imminent. The listing reveals the smartphone's model number as GTF7P, though its name is not explicitly mentioned. The upcoming device is expected to run on Android 15 out-of-the-box and could debut before Android 16's release in mid-2025.

Reports indicate that Google may launch the Pixel 9a in March, mark-

ing the first time a Pixel A-series device arrives before the annual Google I/O event in May. The smartphone is rumored to feature a 6.3-inch Actua display with a peak brightness of 2,700 nits and Gorilla Glass 3 protection. It is expected to be powered by Google's Tensor G4 chip, paired with 8GB of RAM and 256GB of internal storage.

The Pixel 9a is likely to come with a 48-megapixel primary camera and a 13-megapixel ultrawide sensor. It may

also retain an IP68 rating for dust and water resistance. The phone is expected to pack a 5,100mAh battery with 23W wired and 7.5W wireless charging support, alongside an in-display fingerprint scanner.

With its anticipated launch, the Pixel 9a could set a new precedent for Google's midrange smartphone lineup, offering flagship-like features at a competitive price.



Turkish Man Sets Guinness World Record for Longest Axe Throw

TPN Correspondent | Istanbul

Turkish national Osman Gurcu has set a new Guinness World Record for the longest axe throw, achieving a remarkable distance of 183 feet, 8.72 inches. The 43-year-old surpassed the previous record of 143 feet, held by American Jesse Rood, and even exceeded the length of an Olympic swimming pool (164 feet). This latest feat marks Gurcu's eighth Guinness World Record title.

Osman, a father of two, has long been passionate about record-breaking. He actively follows Guinness World Records updates and seeks new challenges to conquer. Reflecting on his achievement, he said, "It was an incredible feeling to break the record because the distance is very far, and you have to be able to get far. At the same time, the axe has to get stuck in the target board. I hit it many times, but it didn't get stuck, and I never gave up."

Overcoming Challenges

Despite his determination, Osman faced multiple challenges in his journey to the record. As a private security guard, he found it difficult to allocate time for rigorous training, especially given the cold and wet weather conditions. Additionally, while he was



attempting to break the record, another competitor raised the previous mark, increasing the distance he needed to surpass. However, Osman credits his natural throwing ability, which he developed in childhood, for helping him succeed.

Future Ambitions

Osman is not stopping at axe throwing. He now aims to set a record for hitting the bullseye on a dartboard from the farthest distance. Additionally, he plans to continue breaking basketball shooting records and explore other challenging feats. "Being a record holder makes me very happy," he said, expressing his desire to inspire others through his achievements.

Ahmedabad Auto Driver's Coldplay Rendition Wins Hearts Online

A video of an auto-rickshaw driver in Ahmedabad singing Coldplay's "Sky Full of Stars" while driving through the city's streets has gone viral, drawing admiration from social media users. The clip, shared by Instagram user Navendu, captures the driver passionately singing along to the popular song, creating a heartwarming moment for netizens.

The video showcases the driver immersed in the music, effortlessly belting out the lyrics while maneuvering through traffic. Navendu, who uploaded the video, captioned it, "Found this auto driver enjoying Coldplay tunes in Ahmedabad. Coldplay should invite him to their next performance. Getting on to the stage in his auto." The lighthearted remark sparked a wave of reactions, with many supporting the idea. Social media users were quick to respond, with



many praising the driver's passion for music and his ability to spread joy. Some even suggested that Coldplay should invite him to their next concert. "This man should be performing in front of thousands," one user commented. Another added, "Coldplay needs to make him part of the show."

Many users appreciated the positivity of the moment, with comments like, "Such pure joy! I wish I could be as carefree as this driver," and "This is the kind of content we need in our feeds, heartwarming and full of energy." Others humorously suggested that the driver deserved a stage of his own. "He needs his own concert," a comment read, while another user added, "Let's get this guy a mic and a stage!" The uplifting video continues to gain traction online, proving that simple moments of joy can bring people together across the internet.

India's Young Queens Dominate U19 T20 World Cup Again

- India thrash South Africa by 9 wickets to retain U19 Women's T20 World Cup.
- Gongadi Trisha shines with 3/15 and unbeaten 44 off 33 balls.
- India win all matches, becoming first team to lift title undefeated.



TPN Correspondent | Kuala Lumpur

India's dominance in women's cricket continued as they secured their second consecutive U-19 Women's T20 World Cup title with a commanding nine-wicket victory over South Africa. The Indian team showcased their strength by completing the chase with 52 balls to spare, becoming the first side to win the tournament without losing a single game.

All-rounder Gongadi Trisha was the standout performer, delivering an impressive 3/15 with the ball before guiding the chase with an unbeaten 44 off 33 balls. Vice-captain Sanika Chalke (26* off 22) sealed the victory with a boundary, setting off celebrations among the Indian players draped in the Tricolour.

South Africa, opting to bat first, struggled against India's disciplined spin attack and were bowled out for just 82. Left-arm spinner Aayushi Shukla starred with figures of 2/9 in four overs, while Trisha further underlined her all-round ability with three wickets. Parunika (2/6) and right-arm seamer Shabnam Shakil (1/7) also contributed to South Africa's batting collapse.

South Africa's innings never gained momentum, with early wickets putting them on the back foot. Parunika struck early, dismissing opener Simone Lourens for a duck, while Shabnam Shakil removed the dangerous Jemma Botha. At 20/2 in four overs, the South African lineup struggled to find stability. Captain Kayla Reyneke (7) was dismissed while attempting to accelerate, and despite brief resistance from Mieke van Voorst (23)

and Fay Cowling (15), South Africa failed to post a competitive total.

In response, India started aggressively, with Trisha leading the charge. Kamalini G contributed before falling for 8, but Sanika Chalke provided the finishing touch as India cruised to victory. The win capped off a flawless campaign for the defending champions, who remained unbeaten throughout the tournament.

India's dominance was evident from the group stage, where they defeated West Indies, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka before securing wins against Bangladesh and Scotland in the Super Six stage. Their semi-final triumph over England ensured a perfect path to the final, where they reaffirmed their status as the best in the world.

India Secures Davis Cup World Group I Spot with Dominant Win Over Togo

India secured its place in the Davis Cup World Group I after N Sriram Balaji and Rithvik Choudhary Bollipalli delivered a commanding straight-set victory over Togo in the play-off tie at DLTA Complex on Sunday. The win handed India an unassailable 3-0 lead in the best-of-five contest.



With a 2-0 lead already in hand, India needed just one more win to seal the tie, and Balaji-Bollipalli got the job done in the opening match of the day, defeating M'lpa Tingou Akomolo and Hod'abalo Isak Padio 6-2, 6-1 in just 57 minutes. Togo's top player, Thomas Setodji, was replaced by Akomolo due to an arm injury, which severely weakened the visiting side. Akomolo struggled, failing to hold serve even once in the contest.

Balaji was outstanding with his serves, barely losing a point throughout the match. Bollipalli, making his Davis Cup debut, initially showed some

nerve but soon settled into his rhythm. India broke Akomolo's serve early in the first set and built a solid lead.

The second set followed a similar pattern, with the Indian pair breaking their opponents early and dominating the match. Togo's resistance crumbled as their serves came under relentless attack, with Akomolo committing crucial double faults.

India is now likely to give young player Karan Singh his Davis Cup debut in the dead rubber. Balaji and Bollipalli's dominant performance further strengthens India's standing as they move ahead to the next stage.

Virat Kohli Praises Railways Pacer Himanshu Sangwan After Being Dismissed in Ranji Trophy Match



Virat Kohli's much-anticipated return to Ranji Trophy cricket ended abruptly when he was dismissed for just six runs by Railways pacer Himanshu Sangwan in Delhi's match against Railways at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. Despite Delhi's dominant win by an innings, Sangwan's dismissal of Kohli made headlines.

After the match, the young Railways pacer approached Kohli to sign the ball that was used to dismiss him. Sangwan later revealed in a conversation with Dainik Jagaran that Kohli was impressed by the delivery, saying, "What a ball it was; it was a beautiful delivery. I really enjoyed that!" before signing the ball.

Kohli also acknowledged Sangwan's talent, as the bowler had previously played for Delhi at the under-19 level. "I've heard about you. You're a good bowler. Best wishes for the future," Kohli told him.

Meanwhile, Delhi's off-spinner Shivam Sharma took five wickets as the team secured a bonus point win over Railways. Delhi ended their campaign with 21 points but failed to qualify for the knockout stage. Despite Kohli's low score, his return to domestic cricket after 13 years was a major highlight of the match.

Two-Tier Test Format Likely Before India's Tour of England

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is reportedly considering revamping the World Test Championship (WTC) by introducing a two-tier format, potentially before India's tour of England in June this year.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chairman Richard Thompson, who also heads the ICC's strategic growth committee, has been in discussions with ICC chairman Jay Shah regarding the restructuring of the Test format. With just five months left before England hosts India at Headingley from June 20, Thompson acknowledged the need for immediate changes.

"The current structure does not work as it should. We need a fairer, better competition, but at this stage, no recommendations have been finalized," Thompson told Telegraph Sport. He emphasized that the revamped format should encourage the best teams to reach the final while



also ensuring that nations outside the top tier continue playing Test cricket.

The two-tier system has gained traction following record-breaking attendance for Australia's recent series against India. However, cricketing legends, including West Indies great Clive Lloyd and Sri Lanka's Arjuna Ranatunga, have voiced strong opposition, arguing that it could sideline smaller teams.

Discussions are also underway about introducing four-day Test matches, which could make scheduling three-Test series around franchise leagues more feasible. However, marquee series like The Ashes and contests between top-tier nations will remain five-day affairs.

Critics argue that the two-tier system primarily benefits the "big three" (India, Australia, and England), leaving smaller cricketing nations like West Indies, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh at a disadvantage.

Abhishek Sharma Sets Massive T20I Record in India's Dominant Win Over England



India's young batting sensation Abhishek Sharma scripted history on Sunday by smashing his second T20I century during the fifth and final game against England in Mumbai. Abhishek reached his century in just 37 balls, narrowly missing out on equaling the record held by Rohit Sharma and David Miller, who have the fastest T20I centuries (35 balls) among batters from Test-playing nations.

Despite missing the all-time record, Abhishek still made history by becoming the fastest player to reach a T20I century in terms of overs faced. He reached the milestone on the first ball of the 11th over, breaking Quinton de Kock's previous record of reaching a century in 10.2 overs.

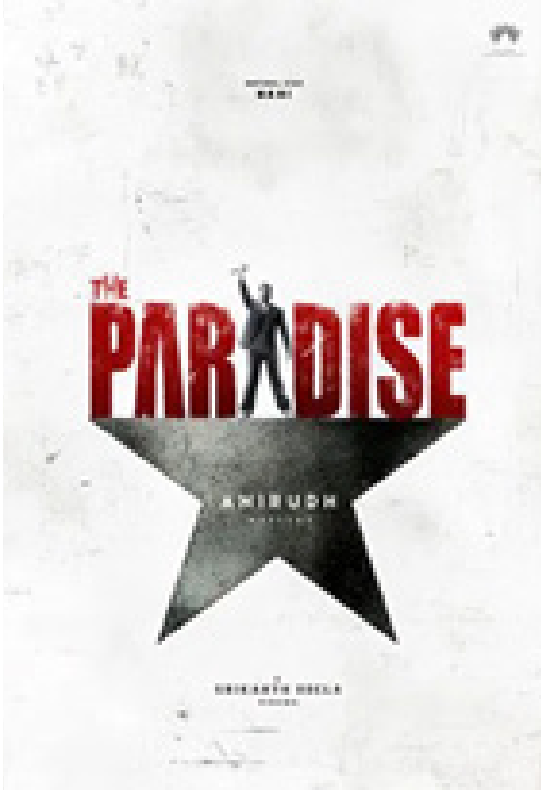
After India was put in to bat, Abhishek launched a brutal counter-attack, dismantling England's bowling attack. His aggressive approach began in the third over when he smashed Jofra Archer for a four and two massive sixes. He continued his carnage, reaching his half-century in just 17 balls with back-to-back sixes off Jamie Overton.

With Tilak Varma also joining the onslaught, India recorded their highest-ever Powerplay score in T20 internationals, posting an astonishing 95/1 in six overs.

Abhishek's innings further cemented his reputation as a dangerous T20 batter. In late 2024, he had already equaled the record for the fastest T20 century by an Indian, smashing a 28-ball hundred for Punjab in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.



Anirudh Ravichander Joins Nani's 'Paradise' as Music Director



Hyderabad: The highly anticipated film Paradise, marking the second collaboration between Nani and director Srikanth Odela, has officially onboarded Anirudh Ravichander as its music composer. The announcement was made by the makers on Sunday, creating a buzz among fans. This marks the third collaboration between Nani and Anirudh after Jersey and Nani's Gang Leader, both of which delivered chart-buster soundtracks. With Anirudh's proven track record of composing hit music, expectations for Paradise have skyrocketed. Fans eagerly await whether the composer can recreate his magic and add another blockbuster album to Nani's filmography. After the grand success of Dasara, which won multiple Filmfare awards and received critical acclaim, Nani and Srikanth Odela have teamed up once again. With Dasara becoming a milestone film in Telugu cinema, the duo aims to deliver another powerful cinematic experience. Nani, who was last seen in Saripodhaa Sanivaaram, has been on a winning streak with consecutive hits like Dasara, Hi Nanna, and Saripodhaa Sanivaaram. His upcoming projects include Paradise, HIT: The Third Case, and an untitled film with director Sujeeth. With his growing dominance in the Telugu film industry, expectations continue to soar for Nani's next venture.

February 2025 Movie Releases : A Diverse Mix of Action, Romance, and Thrillers

As the cinematic world steps into February 2025, audiences can expect an exciting line-up of films across multiple languages, spanning action-packed thrillers, heartwarming

romances, family dramas, and experimental cinema. After a mixed January, which saw some major releases like Game Changer and Daaku Maharaj underperform while Sankran-

thiki Vastunnam emerged as a surprise hit, February is expected to bring a fresh wave of excitement to theaters.

Major Telugu Releases in February 2025

February 7 Releases

1. Thandel - A much-anticipated action drama starring Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi, directed by Chandoo Mondeti. The film is based on the real-life story of a fisherman from Srikakulam who gets captured by Pakistani forces. With intense action and an emotional storyline, this film has already created significant buzz.



2. Brahma Anandam - A special project starring comedy legend Brahmanandam in a lead role, sharing the screen with his son, Raja Goutham. The film is expected to be a laughter riot with a touch of family drama.



3. Sundarakanda - A family entertainer starring Nara Rohith. The film follows the life of a man born under Mula Nakshatra, facing constant misfortune in relationships.



4. Bhavani Ward 1997 - A musical horror drama where a romantic love story takes a terrifying turn after an evil spirit takes over, blending supernatural elements with intense emotions.



February 14 Releases

1. Laila - Vishwak Sen is set to surprise fans with a unique role, playing a character who disguises himself as a woman in this action-packed drama.



2. Captain America: Brave New World - The latest Marvel superhero film, releasing in multiple Indian languages including Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, and Kannada.

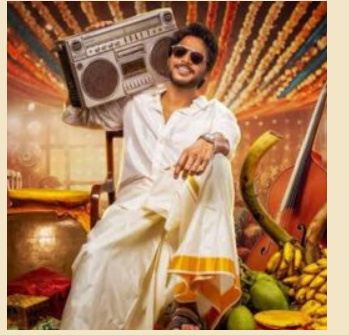


3. Dilruba



A romantic entertainer starring Kiran Abbavaram. However, there is still uncertainty surrounding its release date. February 21 Releases

4. Mazaka - A mass entertainer starring Sundeeep Kishan and Ritu Varma, directed by Thrinadha Rao Nakkina.



February 28 Releases

1. Thalli Manasu - A heartwarming family drama starring Adarsh Balakrishna and Kamal Kamaraju, focusing on a middle-class mother's struggles.



With a mix of mainstream entertainers and unique content-driven films,

2. Aghathiyaa - A fantasy thriller featuring Jiiva, Raashi Khanna, and Arjun Sarja, releasing in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi.



February is shaping up to be an exciting month for movie lovers across India.

Ibrahim Ali Khan to Make His Digital Debut with Romantic Drama 'Nadaanian'

Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan's son, Ibrahim Ali Khan, is set to make his acting debut digitally with the young adult romantic drama 'Nadaanian', alongside Khushi Kapoor. The film, directed by Shauna Gautam, will premiere on Netflix, though the release date remains undisclosed. 'Nadaanian' revolves around Piya, a bold and spirited girl from South Delhi, and Arjun, a determined middle-class boy from Noida. As their worlds collide, they embark on a journey filled with mischief, heart, and the sweet messiness of first love.

The film boasts a stellar supporting cast, including Mahima Chaudhary, Suniel Shetty, Dia Mirza, and Jugal Hansraj. It is produced under Dharmatic Entertainment, backed by Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, and Somen Mishra.

Speaking about the film, the producers said, "Love has always been at the heart of our storytelling, and with 'Nadaanian', we're celebrating it in its purest, most youthful form." Director Shauna Gautam, making her debut, previously worked as an assistant director on 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'.

Netflix India's Ruchika Kapoor Sheikh



shared, "Nadaanian captures the innocence and irreverence of young love. It takes audiences on an emotional rollercoaster while introducing a fresh, dynamic pairing." The first poster was shared by Netflix on Instagram, captioned: "Every love story has thodi si nadaani." Fans are eagerly awaiting the debut of Ibrahim Ali Khan and the chemistry between the two young stars.

Rapper Raftaar Marries Fashion Stylist Manraj Jawanda in Traditional Kerala Wedding



Indian rapper Raftaar has tied the knot with fashion stylist and fitness professional Manraj Jawanda in a traditional Kerala-style wedding in Thiruvananthapuram. The wedding was an intimate and elegant affair, embracing the rich cultural heritage of Kerala. This marks Raftaar's second marriage, following his divorce from Komal Vohra in 2022. Komal, the sister of actor Karan Vohra, and Raftaar had parted ways after a few years of marriage. For the wedding, Raftaar, whose real name is Kalathilkuzhiyil Devadasan Dilin Nair, donned a traditional Kerala mundu, while Manraj Jawanda looked stunning in a white and gold saree.

The couple's wedding pictures, shared on social media, captured the serene and elegant ambiance of the ceremony. Fans and friends from the entertainment industry showered them with love and best wishes. The ceremony was kept private with close friends and family in attendance, making it a personal and cherished celebration. Raftaar, known for his energetic rap and music, continues to make waves in the Indian music industry. With this new chapter in his life, fans are excited for what's next, both personally and professionally.