



Weather Forecast

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

CM Siddaramaiah to Hold Pre-Budget Meetings with Ministers

- CM to hold pre-budget meetings for five days starting Today.
- Discussions to focus on development and five guarantee schemes.
- Karnataka budget session likely to begin in the first week of March.



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is set to hold a series of pre-budget meetings with ministers and senior officials from various departments over five days, beginning Thursday. The discussions will take place at the Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) office on Race Course Road.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Siddaramaiah will meet representatives from 13 departments on the first day, followed by multiple sessions on Friday, Saturday, Monday, and next Thursday. Each meeting, lasting around 30 minutes, will focus on reviewing departmental budget proposals alongside officials from the Finance Department.

With Siddaramaiah preparing to present his record 16th budget, he faces the challenge of balancing development initiatives while sustaining the state's five guarantee schemes. The opposition BJP and JD(S) have accused the government of prioritizing welfare schemes over development, while some Congress legislators have raised concerns over insufficient funds for projects in their constituencies.

In response to these concerns, Home Minister G. Parameshwara recently stated that after the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting, the government released ₹10 crore for developmental works in each Assembly constituency.

The Karnataka budget session is expected to commence in the first week of March.

EXIT POLLS PREDICT EXIT OF KEJRIWAL

'AAP-da' For Arvind Kejriwal?

Delhi Exit Polls Predict Rout

For Congress - Another Wipeout? with zero to three seats expected.

AAP projected to win between 15 and 37 seats, while BJP could secure 38-60.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Exit polls for the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections indicate a major setback for Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), with most surveys predicting a shift in voter preference towards the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Out of seven exit polls, six suggest a BJP victory, while only one gives AAP a slim chance of crossing the halfway mark.

According to Matrize, AAP could secure up to 37 seats, just two above the majority mark of 35 in the 70-member assembly. However, other surveys predict a different outcome, with four agencies estimating AAP's seat tally between 15 and 35, while BJP is projected to win between 38 and 40-plus seats. People's Pulse exit poll has forecasted a BJP sweep with 51-60 seats. The aggregate of these polls suggests 26 seats for AAP and 43 for BJP.

Congress, which once held sway in Delhi politics, remains on the margins. The highest seat projection for

the party is three, while some exit polls predict zero seats. While exit polls are not always accurate, they had correctly predicted AAP's victories in the last two elections, albeit underestimating the party's final seat count. This time, however, the mood appears different.

The BJP's campaign focused heavily on corruption allegations against AAP, which had risen to power on an anti-corruption plank. Over the past two years, several AAP leaders, including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, have faced legal troubles and jail time over multiple corruption cases.

Congress Faces Another Wipeout

For Congress, the exit polls signal another dismal performance. Most surveys predict the party securing zero to two seats. Matrize and People's Insight suggest Congress may



SOURCE	AAP	BJP+	Congress
MATRIZE	25-37	33-45	0-1
PEOPLE'S PULSE	10-20	51-60	0
PEOPLE'S INSIGHT	15-30	40-50	0-1
P-MARQ	18-32	38-48	0-1
CHANAKYA STRATEGIES	20-35	37-45	2-3
JANMAT SURVEY	22-34	39-47	0-2
AGGREGATE (AVG.)	26	43	1
KK SURVEY	40	+26	0

Source: Regional and National Channels | Health Warning: Exit polls are not always accurate.

win just one seat, while People's Pulse indicates a complete washout. Chanakya Strategies offers the most optimistic prediction for the party, estimating 2-3 seats—the highest among all agencies.

As Delhi awaits the official election results, the exit polls suggest a significant political shift, potentially ending AAP's decade-long dominance in the capital.

Kharge's Outburst in Rajya Sabha Sparks Uproar

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A heated exchange in the Rajya Sabha on Monday saw Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge lose his temper when BJP MP Neeraj Shekhar interrupted his speech during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address.

The clash led to an uproar in the House, forcing Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to intervene and call for order.

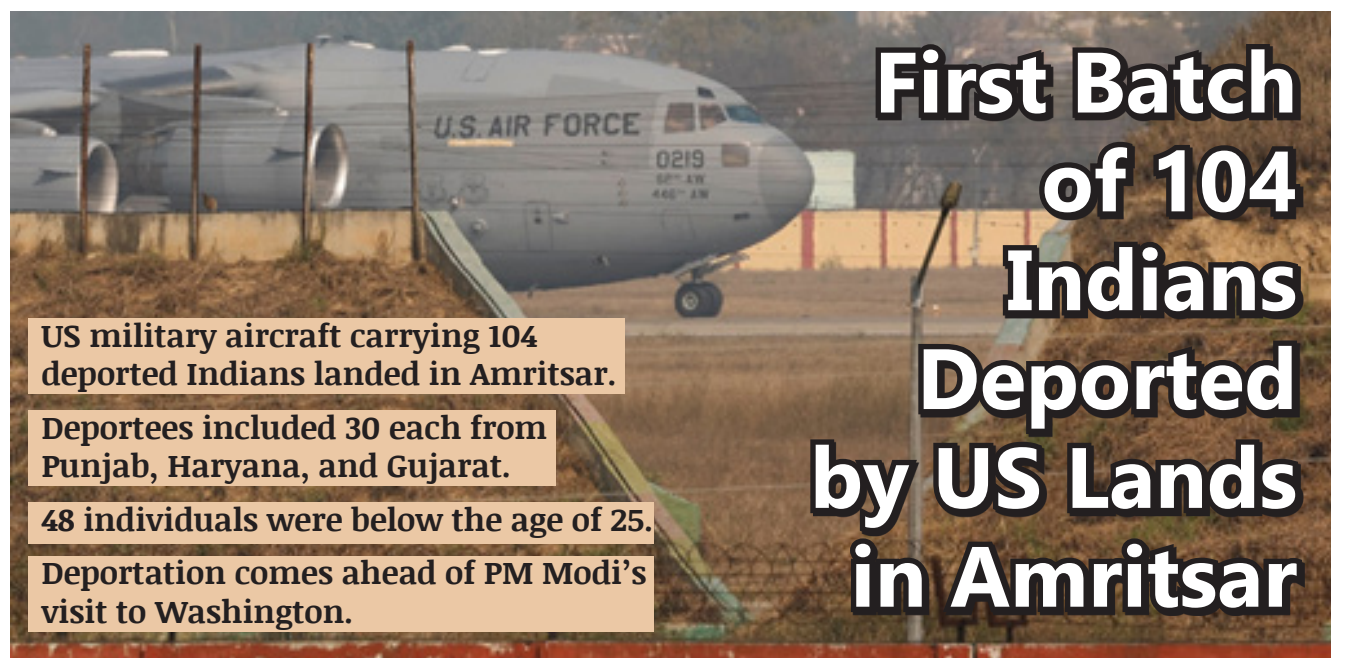
Kharge, while speaking on the depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar, was interrupted by Shekhar. This prompted an angry response from the veteran Congress leader, who reminded Shekhar of his association with his father, former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar.

"Tera baap ka bhi main aisa sathi tha. Tu kya baat karta hai? Tujhko lekar



ghuma. Chup, chup, chup baith" (I was your father's companion. What are you talking about? I took you around. Shut up and sit), Kharge said, directing his words at Shekhar. The remark led to strong objections from BJP members, with Chairman Dhankhar stepping in to restore decorum. He reminded the House of Chandra Shekhar's legacy, stating, "Chandra Shekharji happens to be one of the tallest leaders this country has ever seen. The respect for Chandra Shekharji in the country is immeasurable." Dhankhar then urged Kharge to withdraw his remark, emphasizing the need to maintain dignity in parliamentary debates.

Kharge, however, defended his comment, stating that he and



First Batch of 104 Indians Deported by US Lands in Amritsar

US military aircraft carrying 104 deported Indians landed in Amritsar.

Deportees included 30 each from Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat.

48 individuals were below the age of 25.

Deportation comes ahead of PM Modi's visit to Washington.

TPN Correspondent | Amritsar

A US military aircraft carrying 104 Indian nationals deported from the United States landed at Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport in Amritsar on Wednesday. The deportees, primarily from Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat, were sent back amid heightened security.

According to officials, the flight,

which took off from San Antonio, Texas, also carried 11 crew members and 45 US officials overseeing the deportation. Among the deported individuals, 30 were from Haryana and Gujarat, while 30 others were from Punjab. Additionally, there were two people each from Uttar Pradesh and Chandigarh, and three from Maharashtra. The deportees includ-

ed 25 women and 12 minors, with the youngest being just four years old. A total of 48 individuals were below the age of 25.

A senior Punjab official stated that most deportees from the state belonged to districts such as Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Jalandhar, Nawanshahr, Patiala, Mohali, and

Aero India 2025

Dates, Venue, and Ticket Booking Details

Key Highlights of Aero India 2025

- Aero India 2025 will be held in Yelahanka, Bengaluru, from February 10-14.
- The event will showcase aerospace innovations, business engagements, and air displays.
- Ticket booking is available online for ₹1000 via the official website.
- Under the theme “BRIDGE—Building Resilience through International Defence and Global Engagement,” this platform will bring together defence leaders to discuss global resilience and cooperation in evolving geopolitical scenarios.
- Senior officials, including Raksha Mantri, Raksha Rajya Mantri, Chief of Defence Staff, and other top defence personnel, will engage in discussions to bolster international defence ties.
- The India Pavilion will highlight indigenous defence manufacturing, cutting-edge technologies, and start-up innovations under the IDEX Pavilion.
- The air show will feature dynamic performances from fighter jets, helicopters, and UAVs, along with static displays of advanced military aircraft and defence systems.
- Over 800 global defence firms are expected to participate, showcasing the latest advancements in aerospace technology.
- Visitors can book tickets through the official Aero India website: aeroindia.gov.in



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
The 15th edition of Asia's premier aerospace and defence exhibition, Aero India 2025, is set to take place from February 10 to 14 at the Air Force Station in Yelahanka, Bengaluru. The biennial event will showcase India's growing aerospace capabilities, promote global collaborations, and strengthen the country's position in the global defence industry. The first three days, February 10-12, will be reserved for business engagements, providing Indian and international companies a plat-

form for strategic partnerships and defence agreements. The last two days, February 13-14, will be open to the general public, featuring aerial displays, static exhibitions, and interactive showcases of advanced military platforms. Aero India has a rich history of 14 successful editions since 1996, with the 2023 event drawing over 7 lakh visitors and delegates from 98 countries. The event led to defence deals and partnerships worth over ₹75,000 crore, cementing its reputation as a key global aerospace forum.

Karnataka government suspects foul play in Kaveri portal glitch



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government suspects “foul play” behind the massive disruption in property registrations through the Kaveri portal, which has been almost non-functional since February 1. With only 7% of the usual registrations taking place, the revenue department is struggling to resolve the technical glitch, which has also blocked access to encumbrance certificates (ECs). Officials revealed an unusual spike in portal traffic before the breakdown, with daily views soaring from the usual 15,000 to nearly 2 lakh, putting heavy strain on the system. A senior revenue official stated, “Unlike previous glitches, this one is serious,

and our technical team is unable to rectify it. We strongly suspect deliberate mischief.” The disruption has significantly impacted revenue, with daily collections dropping from an average of ₹75-80 crore to just ₹15 crore. Additionally, the inability to access ECs has stalled property transactions, raising further suspicions. Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda acknowledged the public's distress and assured that efforts were underway to resolve the issue. Meanwhile, citizens have expressed frustration online, with some alleging that the glitch was orchestrated to bring back middlemen and bribes into the system.

Hijab Ban Issue to Be Discussed, Says Karnataka Home Minister

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has stated that the government will discuss the hijab ban issue, which has caused confusion ahead of the upcoming SSLC and PU board exams. However, Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa maintained that the state government cannot take a decision since the matter is pending before the Supreme Court. Parameshwara, addressing the media, said, “There is time for the exams, we will discuss and take a final call. We have sufficient time.” The SSLC and second PU exams are scheduled for March this year. Background of the Hijab Ban The hijab controversy started in 2022, when a college principal in Udupi stopped Muslim students from wearing the hijab inside the classroom. The then BJP government



formed a committee, which issued guidelines mandating uniformity among students. The move sparked protests, leading to legal challenges in the Karnataka High Court, which ultimately upheld the ban. With the case now before the Supreme Court, the current rule states that students cannot wear the hijab in classrooms or during exams if their educational institution has a uniform policy. While school students must strictly follow uniforms, PU colleges have varying policies, with some allowing flexibility.

Govt awaits Governor's nod on microfinance ordinance

- The ordinance proposes 10 years' imprisonment
- ₹5 lakh penalty for violations.
- Law drafted to withstand potential legal challenges from microfinance firms.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government is awaiting approval from Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot for the Karnataka Micro Finance (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Ordinance 2025, which aims to regulate microfinance companies and prevent coercive recovery practices. The ordinance draft was sent to Raj Bhavan on Monday.

Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara confirmed on Tuesday that the governor, who was not in Bengaluru earlier, has now returned to Raj Bhavan. “We are hoping to



get the nod soon,” he said. The proposed ordinance introduces stringent penalties, including a 10-year impris-

onment term and a ₹5 lakh fine for violators. “They should feel the heat of the law. If we make a namesake law, it is of no use,” Parameshwara stated.

On concerns about microfinance companies challenging the ordinance in court, the minister said the government had taken time to ensure the legislation could withstand legal scrutiny. “Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had instructed the Law Department to take precautionary measures, and we have kept all these issues in mind while drafting the ordinance,” he added.

Microfinance firms have been accused of disregarding RBI guidelines, engaging in aggressive loan recovery tactics, and harassing borrowers. The government decided to act after reports of suicides and families fleeing their homes due to pressure from microfinance companies.

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Kharge's Outburst in Rajya Sabha Sparks Uproar

Chandra Shekhar had been arrested together in the past, reinforcing that his remark was not meant as an insult. “That's why I said your father was my companion. And you got up as if...,” he said.

Dhankar further questioned the tone of Kharge's remark, stating, “You are saying ‘apke baap’, can we certify this expression? You are telling another honourable Member ‘apke baap’, we have to have respect towards Chandra Shekharji. Please withdraw.”

Kharge refused to back down, instead shifting the focus to how BJP leaders had insulted former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in the past. “Someone said he wears a raincoat while bathing, some said he does not talk, some said he cannot run the government. They made such insulting remarks, but he

endured them and kept quiet in the country's interest. He was called Mauni Baba. This habit of insulting people is theirs, we are the ones who tolerate insult,” he said.

BJP MPs protested against Kharge's statements, demanding that he retract his remarks, but he remained defiant. Meanwhile, Neeraj Shekhar downplayed the incident and later stated that he shared a cordial relationship with Kharge outside the House. “I have always respected him, and we have interacted many times. But such language in Parliament should be avoided,” he said.

The political spat comes at a time when Parliament is already witnessing heated exchanges between the opposition and the ruling party on various issues.

First Batch of 104 Indians Deported by US Lands in Amritsar

Sangrur. Some of them had entered the US illegally, while others overstayed their visas. The deportation coincided with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Washington, marking his first visit since Donald Trump assumed office for a second term.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had earlier stated that India was open to the legitimate return of its nationals residing illegally abroad. He conveyed to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio that India was willing to accept these migrants post-verification. President Trump, defending his administration's strict immigration stance, had remarked last month, “For the first time in history, we are locating and loading illegal aliens into military aircraft and flying them back to the places from which they came.”

Meanwhile, Punjab's NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal expressed disappointment over the deportations, stating that these individuals had contributed to the US economy and should have been granted permanent residency instead.

According to data from the Pew Research Center, nearly 7.25 lakh Indian nationals live in the US illegally, making them the third-largest group of unauthorized immigrants after Mexico and El Salvador. Many of the deportees, particularly from Punjab, had used illegal routes such as the “donkey route” to enter the US by paying large sums of money. The Trump administration has intensified its crackdown on illegal immigration since returning to power.

Health Minister Pushes for Full Transition to Electric Vehicles

- Health Minister urges EV-only public transport in Bengaluru.
- Calls for electric autos, taxis, goods vehicles, and buses.
- Warns of pollution crisis like Delhi.
- Transport Minister to review proposal.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has urged the state government to permit only electric public vehicles in Bengaluru to combat rising air pollution and its adverse health effects. In a letter addressed to Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy on February 3, Rao emphasized the need for a complete shift to electric vehicles (EVs), covering autorickshaws, cabs, taxis, goods autos, and solid waste collection vehicles. He also insisted that all buses procured for public transport should be electric-only in the future.

Rising Pollution in Bengaluru a Major Concern

Highlighting the severe impact of vehicular emissions on public health, Rao pointed out that Bengaluru's high vehicle density significantly contributes to air pollution. He warned that if immediate steps are not taken, Bengaluru could face a pollution crisis similar to Delhi. "Air pollution due to vehicles running on conventional fuels is common, and its harmful effects on public health are well-established. Given the high number of vehicles in Bengaluru and its dense population, pollution levels are alarmingly high,"



Rao stated in his letter. He also mentioned that Bengaluru's geographical and climatic conditions worsen air pollution, making it even more urgent to adopt cleaner alternatives. "We must act now before Bengaluru becomes infamous for air pollution like Delhi," he cautioned.

Need for Urgent Action

Calling the transition to electric public transport an 'urgent necessity' rather than an option, Rao stressed that moving away from conventional fuels is critical for the long-term sustainability of urban transport. He urged the Transport Minister to take immediate policy measures to ensure only electric autos, cabs, taxis, goods autos, and solid waste collection vehicles operate in the

city. Additionally, he insisted that all new government-procured buses for public transport should be electric vehicles (EVs) only.

Response from Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy

Responding to Rao's appeal, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy confirmed receiving the letter and acknowledged the importance of reducing vehicular emissions. He stated that some measures would require approval from the union government, while others could be implemented at the state level with proper permissions. "We will take necessary steps to reduce vehicle emissions and promote sustainable transport solutions," Reddy assured.



Young Cancer Fighters Turn Traffic Cops for a Day in Bengaluru

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a heartwarming gesture, four children battling cancer got the unique opportunity to serve as police officers for a day at the Bengaluru Traffic Management Centre on Tuesday, marking World Cancer Day. Aged between 12 and 14, the children – Vishwas, Jeevan Kumar, Danamma, and Divyashree – took part in police activities and addressed a press conference alongside City Police Commissioner B Dayananda.

The initiative, organized by the city police in collaboration with Parihar and Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, aimed to fulfill the children's dream of becoming police officers. They observed the functioning of the Traffic Management Centre, witnessed how the traffic police regulate the city's flow, and toured the newly built Traffic Police Museum.

Sitting with the commissioner, the young cancer fighters shared road safety messages with the media, holding placards that read, "Follow road safety rules. Wear a helmet. Be safe." As a token of appreciation, Commissioner Dayananda presented them with police constable model gifts.

Speaking at the event, he drew a parallel between their fight and the role of the police. "Cancer is a disease of the body, and crime is a disease of society. Police personnel battle crime to remove it from society," he said.

Man Surrenders After Allegedly Killing Wife Over Infidelity

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a tragic turn of events, a 35-year-old man named Nizamuddin surrendered to the Sulibele police station late Monday night, confessing to the murder of his wife, Rabiya, aged 32. The incident reportedly stemmed from disputes over Rabiya's alleged relationships with multiple men.

Rabiya was the mother of three children. To avoid traumatizing them, Nizamuddin did not commit the act in their presence. Instead, he took his wife for an evening walk to a lake bund near their home in Thammarsanahalli, Hoskote. During what escalated into a heated argument, he allegedly strangled her with her own veil and then disposed of her body in the lake.

After the act, Nizamuddin walked into the Sulibele police station at around 11 pm to turn himself in. The police swiftly responded by accompanying him to the crime scene where they recovered Rabiya's body. The body was then moved to the mortuary at Hoskote Government Hospital for a post-mortem examination.

The couple had previously lived in Vijayapura, Devanahalli taluk, but moved to Thammarsanahalli following Nizamuddin's discovery of Rabiya's extramarital affairs. Nizamuddin works as a driver of goods vehicles, which often kept him away from home for extended periods. It was during these times that Rabiya reportedly met with her lovers, leading to frequent quarrels where she insisted on returning to Vijayapura, a proposal Nizamuddin consistently rejected.

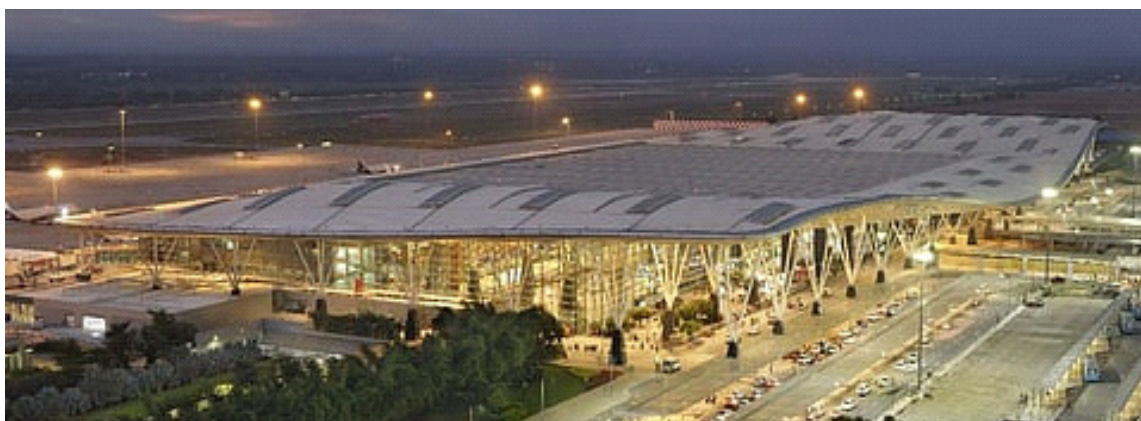
The police are continuing their investigation into the matter, piecing together the events leading up to the murder, and are providing support to the three children left behind by this tragedy.

Kempegowda Airport Plans \$2 Billion Expansion for 100 Million Passengers

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) is set to undergo a massive expansion, with a \$2 billion investment aimed at increasing passenger capacity to over 100 million annually. The expansion, planned over the next five years, includes upgrades to the existing two terminals and reserving space for a future Terminal 3. An automated people mover is also in the works to connect the terminals. Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the airport's operator, confirmed that its Board has approved the Master Plan for the expansion. Chief Operating Officer Satyaki Raghunath stated that the goal is to ensure sufficient infrastructure for passenger and cargo growth while addressing airspace management challenges.

Key components of the expansion include the refurbishment of Terminal 1 and enhancements to accommodate an additional 20 million passengers. Terminal 3 will be developed once the airport reaches 85-90 million annual passengers. A comprehensive



traffic forecast has been conducted to assess the two-runway system's capacity. "If we resolve airspace issues and maximize system efficiency, we can accommodate over 100 million passengers. This requires collaboration with IAF Yelahanka Airforce Base, HAL, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation," Raghunath said.

Work has already begun on the Western Cross taxiway, which will connect the airfield and improve circulation. This, along

with the existing Eastern taxiway, will complete the airport's airfield connectivity. The airport also plans to increase the number of aircraft stands from 140 to 230 by the next decade.

Additionally, space is being reserved for a future tunnel on the eastern side, ensuring connectivity for both the Metro, expected in 2026, and the upcoming Suburban Rail corridor. The entire expansion project is targeted for completion within five years.

Water Can Supplier Arrested for Rape and Murder of Bangladeshi Woman

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a chilling case of crime, a 28-year-old water can supplier, Mudukappa, has been apprehended by the Ramamurthy Nagar police for the rape and murder of a Bangladeshi woman, Najma, also aged 28. The incident occurred near Kalkere Lake, where Najma's body was discovered on January 24 morning.

Mudukappa, who lives in Kothanur and originally from Bagalkote, was taken into custody on Sunday after the police pieced together the events leading to the crime. Najma, who resided in Kothanur, was employed as a domestic worker in a high-end apartment complex in Kalkere.

According to the police investigation, the brutal attack took place between 1 pm and 3 pm on Janu-

ary 23. Najma was allegedly raped, then strangled, and further bludgeoned to death. Her body was found by a passerby the next day, who promptly notified the authorities.

The connection between Mudukappa and Najma was established through his routine water delivery services to her residence and workplace. On the day of the crime, Mudukappa reportedly followed Najma as she was heading home from work, ambushed her near Kalkere Lake, and committed the heinous acts in a secluded spot.

The arrest was facilitated by CCTV evidence and the details from the postmortem report, which corroborated the timeline of the crime. Mudukappa is currently in police custody as the investigation continues to delve deeper into the circumstances and motives behind this gruesome act.

AIDSO Protests Against Closure of 4,200 Government Schools

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) has strongly opposed the Karnataka government's decision to close 4,200 government schools with low enrollment. AIDSO members staged a protest on Tuesday, criticizing the move for ignoring the underlying causes of declining student numbers. Chandrakala, Vice President of AIDSO Karnataka, called on the state government to take responsibility for revitalizing government schools by ensuring basic infrastructure and resources. She argued that instead of shutting down schools, the government should focus on addressing the challeng-

es that lead to lower enrollment. "The government is shutting schools without tackling the real issues behind



falling enrollment. We need to strengthen government schools, not close them," Chandrakala said.

BJP will resolve leadership row within 15 days, says Ashoka

**Warns leaders against remarks on B.Y. Vijayendra.
Blames state govt for suicides due to microfinance harassment.
Predicts Congress CM post will be vacant before November 15.**

TPN Correspondent | Hassan

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, R Ashoka, has expressed confidence that the BJP high command will resolve the ongoing leadership crisis within the party in Karnataka within the next 15 days. Addressing the media on Tuesday, he stated that senior leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, are closely monitoring the developments and have sought feedback from state leaders. Ashoka emphasized that the BJP is a disciplined party where every leader and worker must adhere to its principles. "As a sincere and disciplined party worker, I cannot discuss internal matters publicly," he remarked. He also condemned remarks made by certain party leaders against BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra, warning that those who fail to abide by the high command's decisions will face action. Ashoka confirmed that he has already conveyed his opinions on the matter to BJP national president J.P. Nadda and Karnataka in-charge Radha Mohan Agarwal. On the issue of microfinance-related suicides in Karnataka, Ashoka held the state government responsible, arguing that people would not have resorted to extreme steps if sufficient grants had been released for various boards and corporations that provide loans. He accused the government of financial mismanagement, claiming that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has pushed the state into a debt crisis, forcing heavy borrowing to sustain administration. Commenting on the alleged internal conflict within the ruling Congress, Ashoka claimed that the Chief Minister's post would become vacant before November 15. He also criticized AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge for his remarks in Parliament regarding deaths at Prayagraj during



the Mahakumbh Mela, stating that Kharge should have exercised more caution before making such statements. "While he speaks about incidents elsewhere, he seems blind to the series of suicides in Karnataka due to microfinance exploitation," Ashoka said, further alleging that no action has been taken against the owners of microfinance companies despite multiple suicides.

Parameshwara Dismisses Speculation of CM Change

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Wednesday dismissed claims of a leadership change in the state, asserting that there are no indications within the Congress party regarding Chief Minister Siddaramaiah being replaced. His response came after BJP leader and Leader of Opposition R Ashoka claimed that Siddaramaiah would be replaced by November 15 or 16 this year. "I want to ask him (Ashoka), when did he learn astrology? I don't know which training school taught him astrology. There are no indications of such changes in our party," Parameshwara remarked. Speculation regarding a leadership shift had gained traction in recent months, with some Congress leaders making public statements. However, after strict instructions from AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, such discussions have subsided. On the proposed second airport for Bengaluru, Parameshwara said



that Minister M B Patil had begun preparations, and a proposal would be sent to the Centre. While he expressed a preference for Tumakuru, others have suggested Bidadi, but the final decision will be based on civil aviation guidelines. Speaking on the ordinance to curb harassment by microfinance institutions, Parameshwara said it was awaiting the Governor's assent, following which it would be implemented immediately.

BJP leader Sriramulu eyes Kudligi for next assembly election



TPN Correspondent | Kudligi, Hosapete

BJP leader and former minister B Sriramulu has set his sights on Kudligi for the next assembly election, making frequent visits to the constituency and holding meetings with locals. His decision follows a fallout with Gangavati MLA Gali Janardhana Reddy and his rift with BJP state president BY Vijayendra. Kudligi, an ST-reserved constituency, is currently represented by Congress MLA Dr. NT Srinivas, a former AIIMS doctor known for his public outreach. While some BJP workers back Sriramulu's move, others prefer a local candidate, with the party's final decision resting with the high command.

Former minister B Sriramulu has intensified his campaign in Kudligi following his fallout with BJP leaders. His presence has led to divisions among local BJP leaders, with differing opinions on his potential candidature. Meanwhile, the Congress has asserted that Kudligi remains its stronghold under the leadership of MLA N.T. Srinivas. A senior BJP leader noted that Sriramulu's frequent visits are being watched but emphasized that the party's ticket allocation will be decided closer to the election. Meanwhile, a Congress leader dismissed Sriramulu's efforts, asserting that Kudligi remains a Congress stronghold and that he will face defeat again.

Rahul Gandhi Slams PM Modi, Calls 'Make in India' a Failure

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi launched a fresh attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, accusing him of failing to deliver on the 'Make in India' initiative. Reacting to Modi's speech during the Motion of Thanks to the President, Gandhi pointed out that the PM did not mention the flagship manufacturing initiative, which he claims has not yielded results. "Prime Minister, in your speech, you didn't even mention 'Make in India'! The prime minister should acknowledge that 'Make in India', although a good initiative, is a failure. Manufacturing has fallen from 15.3% of GDP in 2014 to 12.6% — the lowest in 60 years,"



at scale. He called for a new vision to make Indian manufacturing globally competitive, with a focus on emerging technologies like electric motors, batteries, optics, and artificial intelligence.

Gandhi posted on X.

The Congress leader said India's youth desperately need jobs, and neither the NDA nor the previous UPA government has been able to address the challenge

"China is 10 years ahead of us and has a stronger industrial system. This is what gives them the confidence to challenge us," he added.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Modi, in his speech, hit back at Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of speaking the "language of urban Naxals." Taking a swipe at the Congress leader, he remarked, "Those who entertain themselves by getting photo sessions done in huts of the poor will find the talk about the poor in Parliament boring."

Congress MPs meet FM, seek special grants for Karnataka

- Congress MPs urge FM for special grants to Karnataka.
- Concerns raised over NABARD funding cuts and LIC issues.
- Demand for AIIMS in Raichur to improve healthcare.



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Several Congress MPs from Karnataka met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Tuesday, urging the Centre to allocate special grants to the state. They also raised concerns over the reduction in NABARD refinancing and issues faced by LIC representatives. The MPs highlighted that the Union

Budget did not include any special financial provisions for Karnataka. Additionally, they appealed for the establishment of an AIIMS in Raichur to enhance healthcare infrastructure in the region. The delegation included Priyanka Jarkiholi, G Kumar Naik, Rajashekar Hitnal, Sagar Khandre, Shreyas Patel, Sunil Bose, and Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun.

Congress Leader Injured in Accidental Firing

TPN Correspondent | Dakshina Kannada

Congress and INTUC leader Chittaranjan Shetty sustained injuries in an accidental firing incident at Anantadi village in Dakshina Kannada district on Tuesday. The incident occurred within the jurisdiction of the Vittla police station. According to police, the firearm discharged accidentally from Shetty's own pistol, which he reportedly kept for personal security. Sources suggest the mishap was due to improper locking of the weapon. Shetty was immediately rushed to a private hospital in Mangaluru, where he remains under observation. A senior police official confirmed that a case has been registered, and an investigation is underway to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Our fight against BYV to purify BJP like the Ganga: Yatnal



TPN Correspondent | KALABURAGI

Former minister Basanagouda Patil Yatnal has stated that his opposition to state BJP president B.Y. Vijayendra is aimed at making the party as pure as the Ganga. Speaking at the Bharatiya Samskruti Utsava on Tuesday, Yatnal criticized the party's leadership for appointing individuals responsible for BJP's defeat in the Lok Sabha elections as district

presidents. He asserted that the BJP must be free of dynastic politics, corruption, and those with an anti-Hindutva stance. "Our struggle is for the betterment of the party and the country," he said. Highlighting his contributions to the region, Yatnal mentioned his efforts in establishing a sugar factory to aid local development. However, he alleged that certain individuals, unable to tolerate his initiatives, created obstacles through the Karnataka Pollution Control Board. He added that the court has now ordered its restitution, and operations will resume soon. Yatnal further stated that 370 villages in Kalaburagi district would fall under the jurisdiction of the Chincholi sugar factory, which he operates. He also promised to provide insurance for school students, similar to the initiative he implemented in Vijayapura.

PM Modi Takes Holy Dip at Maha Kumbh



TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj
Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a holy dip at the Sangam in Prayagraj on Wednesday morning, joining millions of devotees at the Maha Kumbh. Wearing a saffron jacket and blue trackpants, and holding rudraksha beads, Modi performed rituals and chanted prayers before submerging himself multiple times in the sacred waters where the Ganga, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers converge. Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister toured the Sangam by boat, accompanied by Uttar Pradesh

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Calling the experience a "moment of divine connection," he expressed gratitude for being part of the spiritual gathering.

"The holy dip at the Sangam is a moment of divine connection. May Maa Ganga bless all with peace, wisdom, good health, and harmony," he posted on X.

The Maha Kumbh has drawn massive crowds, with thousands gathering along the riverbanks to witness Modi's visit. The event, however, has also seen tragedy, with a stampede a week ago claiming 30 lives.

Delhi Votes as Modi Takes Holy Dip

Modi's visit coincided with the Delhi Assembly election, where the BJP is challenging the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and looking to counter any resurgence from Congress. Before heading for his dip, the PM urged voters in Delhi to "participate enthusiastically in this festival of democracy and cast their valuable votes."

BJP Leaders, Foreign Dignitaries at Maha Kumbh

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and his family had also taken a holy dip at the Kumbh last week, just days before the stampede. Meanwhile, Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk visited Prayagraj for the Kumbh, taking part in spiritual activities and exploring the Digital Mahakumbh Experience Centre. Weeks before the event, Modi had inaugurated ₹5,500 crore worth of development projects in Prayagraj, including investments in roads, sanitation, and security measures for the Maha Kumbh.

Karnataka's KWIN-City project to sign MoUs with universities at GIM

- Karnataka to sign MoUs with top universities for KWIN-City at GIM 2025.
- Project planned over 5,000 acres between Doddaballapur and Dabaspet.
- Farmers to protest against land acquisitions, alleging corporate land grab.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

An exclusive round table session on the Karnataka government's ambitious KWIN-City project will be held during the Global Investors' Meet (GIM) Invest Karnataka 2025, focusing on collaboration with top universities for education, research, and innovation.

Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil announced that the session, scheduled for February 13, will bring together leading Indian and international universities. The state government expects to sign MoUs with five to six foreign universities and six to eight Indian institutions.

Patil highlighted that under UGC norms, the world's top 500 universities are now allowed to establish campuses in India, and Karnataka will leverage this opportunity. "The GIM will not only focus on industrial investments but also emphasize research, skill development, and ancillary sectors to create a highly skilled workforce," he said.

Higher Education Minister Dr. MC Sudhakar, Medical Education Minister Dr. Sharan Prakash Patil, and senior officials will participate in the one-and-a-half-hour round table session.

KWIN-City, a futuristic urban development model, is planned on 5,000 acres between Doddaballapur and Dabaspet. The project aims to establish a hub for education, healthcare, research, and innovation by integrating world-class institutions and industries.

Farmers' protest against GIM land acquisitions



Meanwhile, farmer leaders have announced a massive 'Vidhana Soudha Chalo' protest, starting February 10 at Freedom Park in Bengaluru. Karnataka Pranta Raitha Sangha (KPRS) state secretary HR Naveen Kumar said thousands of farmers and agricultural laborers will participate, opposing forced land acquisitions and corporate land grabs facilitated by GIM. KPRS district president Chikkannegowda demanded the repeal of laws related to agriculture, revenue, and land acquisition, ensuring protection for bagair hukum farmers, forest dwellers, and agricultural laborers.

Chennai Horror: 18-Year-Old Migrant Assaulted in Moving Auto

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

In a disturbing incident late on Monday night, an 18-year-old migrant worker was sexually assaulted in a moving auto-rickshaw just outside the Kilbakkam bus terminus in Chennai. The police are currently reviewing CCTV footage to pinpoint and apprehend three suspects involved in this heinous crime.

According to reports, the young woman, who hails from another state and is employed in Salem, was waiting to board a bus when she was approached by an auto-rickshaw driver offering her a ride. Upon her refusal, the driver forcibly pulled her into the vehicle. Shortly thereafter, two additional men joined them, and the assault took place at knifepoint as the three-wheeler moved through the city streets.

The victim's screams alerted nearby pedestrians who promptly informed the police. A chase ensued, but the perpetrators managed to escape after abandoning the woman on the roadside. Fortune smiled upon her when she encountered a bystander who was also a police officer, enabling her quick rescue and subsequent medical attention.

This incident comes on the heels of another sexual assault case at Anna University, igniting further political debate in Tamil Nadu.

K. Annamalai, the BJP state president, has vehemently criticized the ruling DMK government, led by MK Stalin, for what he describes as a "horrible reality" of increasing sexual assaults. In a statement on X, Annamalai highlighted the case, saying, "An 18-year-old girl was abducted in an auto rickshaw outside the Kalaignar Centenary Bus Terminus in Kilbakkam and was sexually assaulted. She was saved by a good samaritan who dialled the police control room after hearing the girl's cry for help."

He further slammed the government for the apparent rise in drug availability and the sharp decline in arrests related to narcotics. "Sexual assault across TN has become a horrifying reality, with drugs becoming an easily accessible commodity. However, the number of arrests made in NDPS cases in TN in the last three years, between 2022 and 2024, was only 1122 compared to 9632 in 2021. The sale of Ganja & Methamphetamine is on the rise in TN but the arrests are on the decline. How? Has the TN Govt deliberately become complacent to give drug peddlers a free run?" he questioned.

The police have confirmed their commitment to ensuring justice for the survivor and have promised swift action against the culprits. This case has once again brought to light the urgent need for enhanced safety measures and stricter law enforcement in Tamil Nadu.



Legal Concerns Raised Over Sharavathy Pumped Storage Project



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Conservationists and wildlife experts have strongly opposed the State Wildlife Board (SWLB) decision to grant clearance for the Sharavathy pumped storage project within the Lion Tailed Macaque Sanctuary in the Western Ghats, Shivamogga district. Experts argue that the project violates multiple provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and could have severe ecological consequences.

According to a media release by Wildlife First, Section 8 of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA), 1972, mandates the State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) to ensure the protection and conservation of wildlife and its habitat. However, the project, which involves blasting, drilling, road construction, and tree felling, could lead to landslides, habitat fragmentation, and irreversible environmental damage.

Legal Violations Highlighted

Wildlife First pointed out that Section 29 of WLPA prohibits the destruction of wildlife, damage to habitat, or alteration of water flow inside sanctuaries unless it improves wildlife management. The project's impact contradicts

this provision. Section 33 assigns the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) the duty of ensuring the protection of wild animals and sanctuary preservation, which the project fails to address. The proposal to construct a 12.3 km road within the sanctuary, requiring the felling of over 12,000 trees, violates Supreme Court orders that prohibit such large-scale deforestation in protected areas.

Additionally, some experts have written to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), urging a reconsideration of the SWLB's approval and recent orders issued by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah regarding the project.

Environmentalists argue that the project proposal lacks clarity on power transmission lines and the upgradation of existing infrastructure, raising concerns about the hidden environmental costs of the project. They stress that any disturbance in the Lion Tailed Macaque Sanctuary, a critical habitat in the biodiversity-rich Western Ghats, could have long-term consequences for wildlife and forest conservation efforts.

Appointment of information commissioners subject to plea outcome



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday ruled that the appointment of the state chief information commissioner and information commissioners will be subject to the final outcome of a petition challenging their selection.

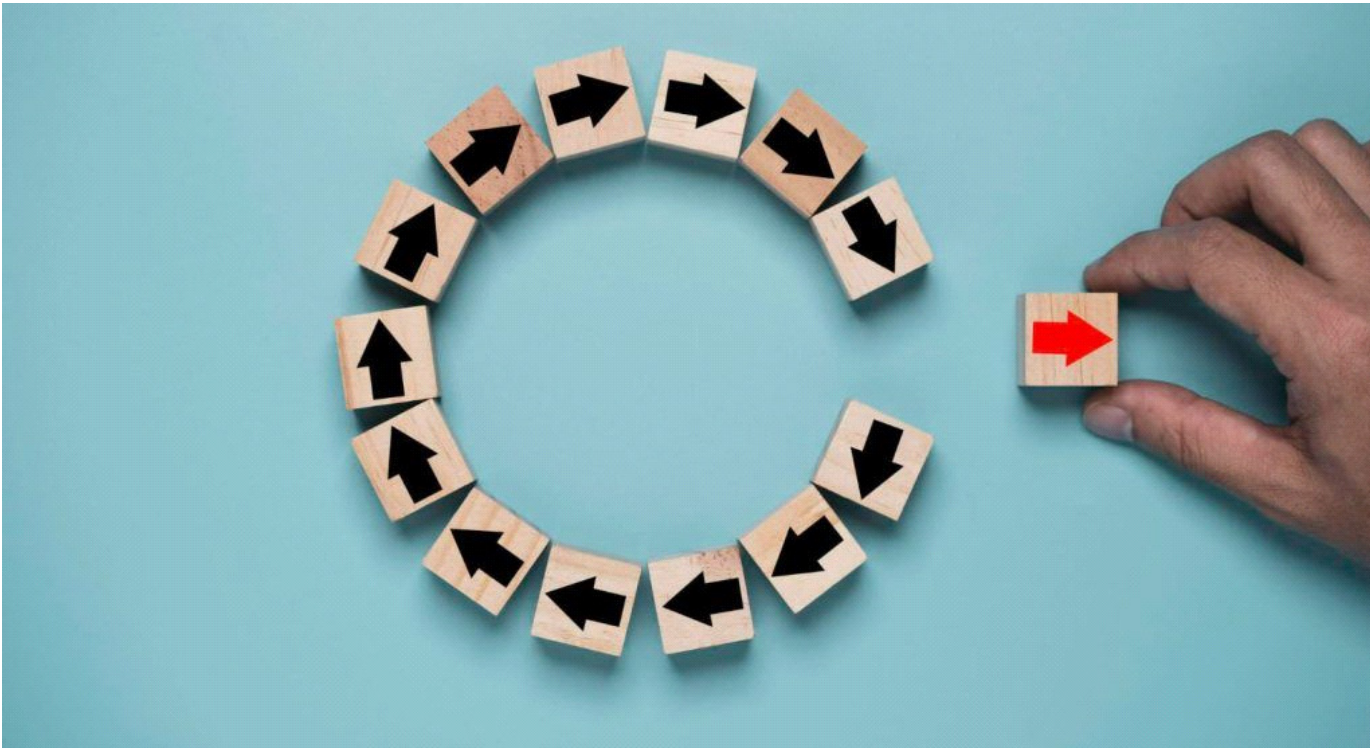
Justice R Devdas passed the order while hearing a plea filed by K Mallikarjuna Raju from Bengaluru, questioning the state government's January 30, 2025, notification appointing former IPS officer Ashit Mohan Prasad as the state chief information commissioner, along with Raman K, Dr. Harish

Kumar, Rudrana Harthikote, Narayan G Channal, Rajashekara S, Badruddin K, and former IAS officer Dr. Mamatha BR as information commissioners. The court issued notices to all appointees and adjourned the hearing to February 10.

Referring to the oath-taking ceremony held on Tuesday evening, the court noted that being sworn in would not preclude it from issuing appropriate orders based on the interim plea. The petitioner argued that the state government had not followed due process as mandated by Section 15(3) of the Right to Information Act, 2005, which requires a

selection committee comprising the chief minister, the leader of the opposition, and a nominated cabinet minister. He further cited a Supreme Court judgment in the Anjali Bhardwaj case, which mandates a search committee to scrutinize applications before placing recommendations before the selection panel. The plea also claimed that Ashit Mohan Prasad had not applied for the post. Advocate General K Shashikiran Shetty countered the claims, stating that a search committee had scrutinized applications, and the selection committee had followed due process before finalizing appointments.

CHANGE3|CHANGE



In the intricate tapestry of life, change takes on the role of a gentle breeze, softly nudging us forward on our journey. Imagine change as a trusted friend, always there to guide us through the twists and turns of our existence. Can you feel its presence? It's like a comforting hand on our shoulder, encouraging us to step beyond our comfort zones and explore the vast landscape of possibilities that lie ahead. No one is stopping us from changing; it's our comfort zone that often holds us back, along with the weight of old experiences that tether us to the past. Old experiences can act as anchors, keeping us rooted in familiar patterns and preventing us from venturing into the unknown. They whisper tales of caution, reminding us of past failures or discomforts, and urging us to stay within the confines of what we already know. But change is like a river, flowing ever forward, and to resist its current is to stagnate. It's in those moments of uncertainty that we truly discover our strength and re-

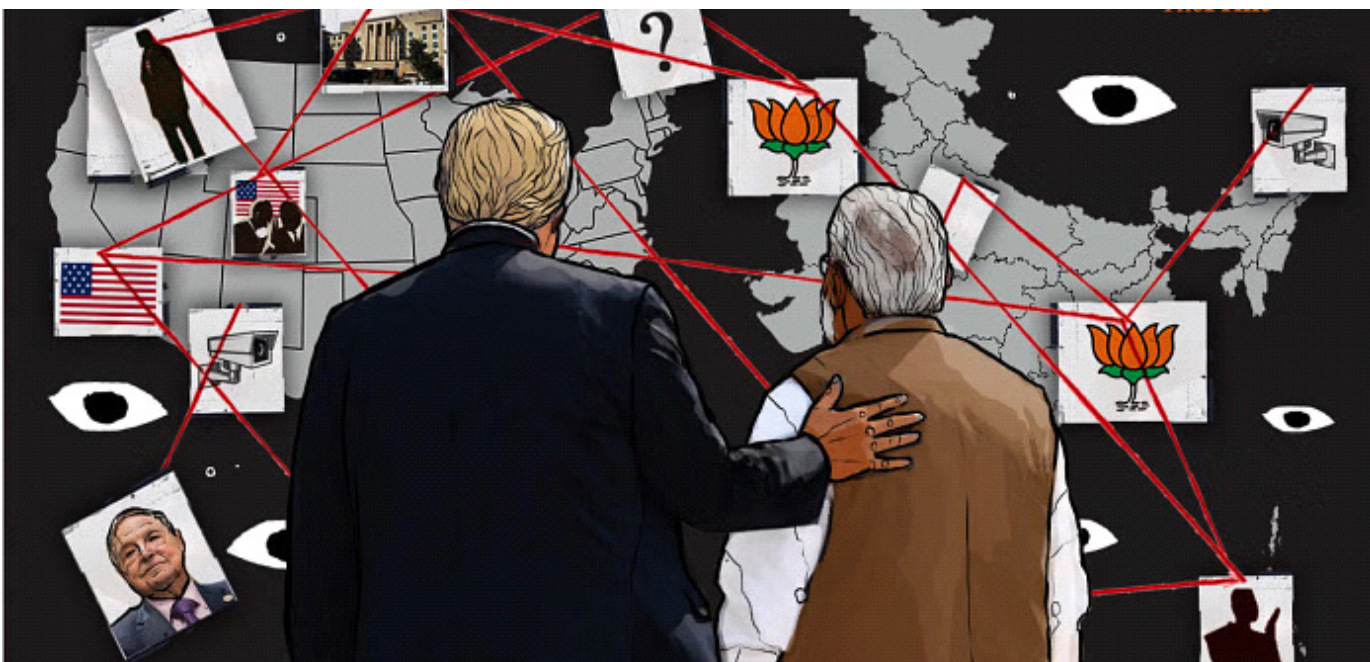


Sandeep Sagar Kola

silience. Yet, amidst the excitement of change, there's often a hint of apprehension – a whisper of doubt that lingers in the corners of our minds. Yet, like a reassuring voice, change reminds us that growth lies on the other side of fear. It beckons us to release the shackles of the past and embrace the possibilities of the present and fu-

ture. Think of change as a caterpillar undergoing its miraculous transformation into a butterfly. It's a journey of growth and renewal, a reminder that even in our darkest moments, there's always the promise of something beautiful waiting to emerge. Yet, despite its transformative power, some shy away from change, clinging to the safety of what's familiar. But oh, the wonders that await those who dare to embrace it! Like a seed bursting through the soil to reach for the sun, change opens up a world of opportunity and possibility. Those who welcome change with open arms are like captains navigating the seas of life. They may face storms along the way, but they also discover hidden treasures and uncharted territories beyond the horizon. So let's embrace change as a cherished companion on our journey – a friend or a colleague who challenges us, inspires us, and ultimately leads us to our fullest potential. Together, let's dance to the rhythm of change, knowing that with each step forward, we're one step closer to realizing our dreams.

The Deep State and the Great Game: Echoes of Power and Espionage



In 1900, Rudyard Kipling wrote **Kim**, placing the titular character at the heart of the Great Game, the covert struggle for control and influence between the British Empire and Tsarist Russia in Central Asia. Set in the late 19th century, the novel explores the complexities of espionage and political intrigue, following Kimball O'Hara, an Irish orphan in Lahore, who becomes embroiled in the shadowy world of spies. Kim befriends a Tibetan lama and is eventually recruited by Mahbub Ali, a Pashtun horse trader working for the British Secret Service, to gather intelligence in Afghanistan and Tibet.

Though the so-called Great Game is often viewed as a period of strategic competition, with British imperialists fearing Russian expansion in Central Asia, the reality of this geopolitical struggle is debated by historians. The British Empire, particularly through figures like

Viceroy George Curzon, depicted Tsarist Russia as a looming threat to British interests in India. National papers, including *The Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore and *The Statesman* in Calcutta, reflected this sentiment, supporting the narrative of Russian encroachment. However, a century later, many historians question the extent and authenticity of the Great Game, suggesting that the geopolitical tensions may have been exaggerated to justify British military and diplomatic endeavors.

The concept of the "deep state" bears striking similarities to the Great Game, both involving shadowy power structures and covert agendas. While the Great Game revolved around imperial interests in Central Asia, the modern discourse surrounding the deep state focuses on the hidden forces that supposedly control or influence national policy and international relations.

Whether or not the deep state truly exists, operates in every country, or connects through global networks like the dark web remains unclear. The idea often becomes a matter of ideological debate rather than empirical analysis.

Some individuals, like former intelligence officers AS Dulat and Asad Durrani, have presented themselves as central figures within the deep state. In their 2018 book **The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace**, they discuss their roles in the tense relationship between India and Pakistan. However, their self-appointed stature as arbiters of this complex geopolitical relationship has drawn heavy criticism. Much like the figures in Kipling's **Kim**, those who claim insider knowledge of shadowy power structures may shape the narrative, but the true extent and influence of these forces remain open to interpretation.

US Navy Successfully Tests High-Energy Laser Weapon, HELIOS



The US Navy has achieved a major milestone in its efforts to incorporate cost-effective laser weaponry into its arsenal. In 2024, the Navy successfully tested its High-Energy Laser with Integrated Optical Dazzler and Surveillance (HELIO) system aboard the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Preble, marking a significant step towards enhancing the US military's defense capabilities against emerging threats.

HELIO, developed by Lockheed Martin, is a high-powered laser weapon designed to counter a range of threats, including drones, fast attack boats, and missiles. The system is versatile, offering two modes of attack: Hard Kill, which directly destroys a target, and Soft Kill, which disrupts electronic components to disable enemy systems. According to Lockheed Martin, HELIO is characterized by its "deep magazine, low cost per kill, speed-of-light delivery, and precision response," with the ability to generate over 60 kilowatts of directed energy, potentially reaching 120 kilowatts with future upgrades.

The successful test saw HELIO engage an aerial drone, validating its operational capabilities in a real-world setting. While the exact location and date of the test remain classified, a photo included in the Pentagon's annual Director, Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) report captured the moment the laser engaged its target. This test was designed to assess the system's functionality, perfor-

mance, and overall capability.

HELIO is particularly important because it provides a more affordable alternative to traditional missile defense systems, which rely on costly ammunition. In regions like the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, where Iranian-backed Houthi rebels have launched drone and missile attacks against US and allied warships, the need for advanced defensive technology is increasingly urgent. Vice Adm. Brendan McLane pointed out that directed-energy weapons, such as HELIO, could effectively counter asymmetric threats posed by groups like the Houthis.

Despite the success of this test, there are still challenges to overcome. One major hurdle is the power supply required to support high-energy lasers aboard ships. Additionally, environmental conditions such as fog, wind, and other weather factors could impact the performance of the laser. Another challenge is integrating HELIO with existing defense systems on naval vessels.

The Department of Defense has invested \$1 billion annually into high-energy lasers, and while progress has been slow, the success of HELIO represents a significant step toward expanding directed-energy weapons in the Navy's arsenal. The ability to disable drones and missiles affordably could fundamentally change naval warfare, reducing reliance on expensive interceptors while providing more efficient defense systems.

Delhi Assembly Polls 2024: A Three-Way Battle Between AAP, Congress, and BJP

The upcoming Delhi Assembly elections are set to be a fierce three-way contest between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Indian National Congress (INC). As the first of two crucial state assembly elections this year, the political atmosphere in the national capital is charged with high stakes and intense rivalry.

AAP, led by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, has decided to contest the elections independently, fueling speculation about a possible rift within the opposition alliance, I.N.D.I.A. The party's focus remains on local governance issues, with Kejriwal pushing for demands like reservations for Delhi's Jat community, aiming to garner support from this crucial vote bank. Kejriwal's strategy of playing on regional identity and local concerns is expected to be central to his campaign in the face of strong opposition.

On the other hand, the BJP is banking on issues like the alleged liquor excise policy scam and ongoing pollution problems in Delhi to gain political mileage. The party hopes to capitalize on these issues to secure an edge over AAP, who has been under scrutiny for its handling of both matters. The BJP's national leadership, including figures like Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari, are expected to focus heavily on these local grievances, portraying the AAP as failing in its governance duties.

Meanwhile, Congress, which has struggled to make significant inroads in Delhi in recent years, is attempting to assert it-

Delhi votes...



self in this election. While the party has distanced itself from any formal alliance with AAP or BJP, it has not hesitated to attack its erstwhile partners. Congress aims to make a comeback by targeting both the AAP and the BJP for their handling of governance issues in the capital, including the state of the economy and social welfare.

With multiple contenders in the fray, the Delhi Assembly election promises to be a high-octane contest, as AAP defends its reign, BJP seeks to capitalize on local issues, and Congress looks to revive its fortunes in the national capital. As the campaign intensifies, all eyes will be on the outcome, which could significantly impact the political dynamics in Delhi and the wider region. Stay tuned to the latest developments, analysis, and updates on Deccan Herald for comprehensive coverage of the election race.

Hat-trick of zeros for Congress in Delhi? Exit polls suggest no revival for party

- People's Pulse predicts a strong BJP lead, while Matrize sees a close contest.
- Mind Brink and Wee Preside project AAP ahead with 44-52 seats.
- Final results will be revealed when votes are counted on February 8.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

As the exit polls pour in for the Delhi Assembly elections, the Congress party is staring at yet another electoral disaster, with most projections suggesting a third consecutive wipeout. According to six exit polls, two have predicted that Congress could fail to secure any seats in the Delhi Assembly, continuing its struggle to regain political relevance in the national capital.

The Congress's decline in Delhi began in 2015 when it lost all 70 seats, a result that was replicated in 2020. Once a formidable force under the leadership of Sheila Dikshit, the party has seen its influence erode significantly, with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) dominating the political scene. This trend is expected to persist, according to the latest exit polls, all of which predict a poor showing for Congress.

Exit poll projections for Congress vary slightly, but the consensus remains bleak. Matrize, JVC, and Pmarq predict 0-1 seat for the party, while People's Pulse and WeePreside forecast zero seats. Mind Brink, the only poll showing a glimmer of hope for Congress,



predicts one seat. If these predictions hold true, Congress will once again fail to make its presence felt in the Delhi Assembly. In contrast, the exit polls have painted a more optimistic picture for the BJP and AAP. Three exit polls suggest that the BJP, after a 27-year

hiatus, may stage a major comeback in the city, with seat projections ranging from 39 to 60. However, two exit polls, Mind Brink and WeePreside, predict a third consecutive term for AAP, with the party securing between 44 and 52 seats.

TTD Takes Action Against Employees for Non-Hindu Practices

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), the administrative body overseeing the famous Tirupati temple, has taken significant action against 18 employees for allegedly engaging in non-Hindu religious practices, despite having taken an oath to uphold the Hindu faith upon joining the institution. These employees have been barred from participating in any religious activities or events related to the temple, which is one of the holiest sites for Hindus.



The TTD board, committed to maintaining the spiritual sanctity of the temple and its activities, has issued orders to transfer these employees to roles outside the religious operations of the temple. This could involve redeploying them to various government departments or offering them an option for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS).

TTD Chairman BR Naidu emphasized that the Tirumala temple must remain a symbol of Hindu faith and that the integrity of religious practices must be preserved. According to a statement from the board, the employees in question have been accused of participating in non-Hindu religious practices, which, according to the board, adversely affects the sentiments of millions of Hindu devotees. Their involvement in Hindu religious events like fairs, festivals, and functions, while adhering to non-Hindu practices, has been deemed inappropriate and detrimental to the sanctity of the temple's rituals.

Sikkim CM Dismisses Merger Rumors with Darjeeling, Stresses Article 371F Protection

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Amid growing rumors about a potential merger between Sikkim and Darjeeling, Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang has firmly denied these claims, labeling them as false. Following a session in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister stated that Sikkim's special status under Article 371F of the Indian Constitution would continue to safeguard the state's autonomy.

"This is well-known to every Sikkimese. Even those spreading these rumors have been asked about the merger and they have confirmed it will never happen. It is not possible. The opposition lacks real issues to address, and so they resort to such baseless claims," he asserted.

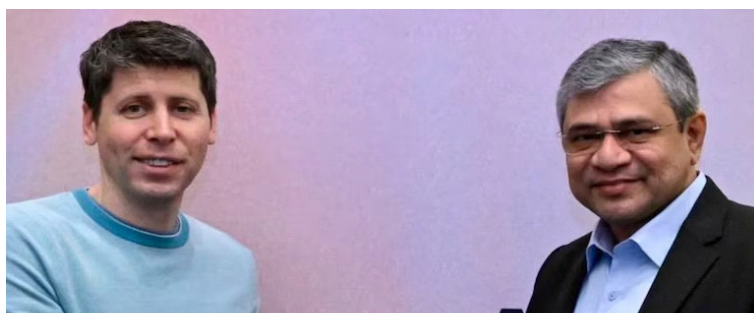
On Tuesday, during the foundation day celebration of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM), Mr. Tamang reiterated his stance, saying, "There is no merger between Sikkim



and Darjeeling. We are protected by Article

371F. No state can take over Sikkim, and no region can merge with us. Sikkim has its own identity, just as Darjeeling has its own."

The Chief Minister also clarified that the upcoming delegation traveling to New Delhi on February 10 to demand tribal status for 12 marginalized communities would not include representatives from Darjeeling hills. This, he explained, is in contrast to previous delegations, such as the Limboo Tamang tribal status demand in the early 2000s, which did include Darjeeling representation. "The meeting was initially scheduled in Kolkata, as the committee's chairman is from there. However, we decided to change the venue to New Delhi due to our infrastructure at Sikkim House. The Legislative meeting that finalized this decision did not include representatives from Darjeeling," Tamang said. He clarified that only Sikkimese communities would be represented in the upcoming meeting with the concerned ministry.



India's AI Ambitions: Minister Vaishnaw Meets OpenAI's Sam Altman for Key Talks

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

As the global artificial intelligence (AI) race intensifies, India has outlined a comprehensive strategy to build an entire AI ecosystem, from hardware to software applications. Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, recently met OpenAI's Co-founder and CEO Sam Altman in New Delhi, where the two discussed India's AI roadmap and the potential for collaboration between OpenAI and India in this sector. Vaishnaw took to social media, highlighting that Altman was impressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to democratize technology and make AI more accessible.

During the meeting, Vaishnaw shared India's plan to develop a full AI stack, including GPUs, models, and applications, and OpenAI expressed willingness to collaborate in these areas. The Minister emphasized that PM Modi's vision for AI aligns with OpenAI's goals, with both parties recognizing the importance of harnessing AI for the benefit of the public. Altman, who oversees the development of the popular AI models like ChatGPT, acknowledged India's significant role in the AI space, calling it the second largest market for OpenAI. He further emphasized that while AI models remain expensive, they are within reach, and India has the potential to become a leader in AI technology.



Himanta Sarma Inaugurates Redeveloped Kerbside At Guwahati Airport

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the newly redeveloped kerbside at Terminal 1 (T1) of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) Airport, marking a significant upgrade to the airport's infrastructure. The inauguration was attended by key stakeholders from the LGBI Airport ecosystem, highlighting the airport's commitment to enhancing passenger experience.

This redevelopment aims to provide a safer, more secure, and enjoyable travel experience for passengers. The upgrades include an expanded passenger movement area, now increased by 700 sqm to better accommodate the rising number of travelers. In addition, the number of departure gates has risen from five to seven, which will reduce wait times for passengers. These gates now feature a total of 14 entry lanes, streamlining the entry and exit processes.

To further improve accessibility, two new entry points have been added, and the airport has optimized the traffic flow with segregation lanes, including FastTag-enabled entry and exit points. A safe and convenient walking path with a zebra crossing has also been created from the parking area to the terminal for pedestrian safety.

The revamped kerbside area offers a traffic-free lane, providing a more streamlined and pleasant experience for passengers. Retail and food outlets along the kerbside have been thoughtfully curated, allowing travelers to shop and dine in a vibrant atmosphere that operates 24/7, 365 days a year.

The upgraded terminal is part of Guwahati International Airport Limited's (GIAL) broader vision to modernize and improve passenger facilities. "As the Gateway to the Northeast, the refurbished T1 will help foster economic growth, educational development, and job creation in the region," said a GIAL spokesperson.

BJP Confident of Victory in Delhi Assembly Elections, Predicts Over 50 Seats

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

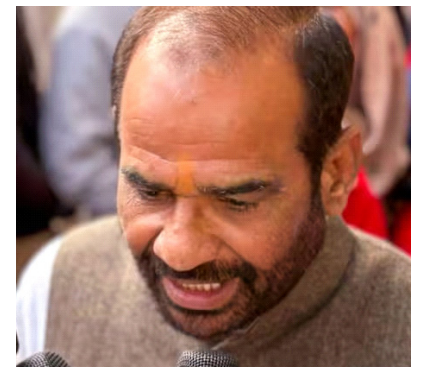
Following the release of exit poll predictions showing a clear majority for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Delhi Assembly elections, Ramesh Bidhuri, BJP's candidate from Kalkaji, expressed strong confidence in his party's victory. He attributed the projected success to what he described as a "Modi wave" and emphasized that the BJP would surpass the 50-seat mark in the Assembly.

The exit polls came soon after the voting concluded across all 70 constituencies in Delhi on February 5, with the majority indicating a BJP-led government in the national capital. "This is Modi wave. The people of Delhi want development just like there has been development across the rest of the country under PM Narendra Modi. The hard work put in by our party workers and the guidance and strategy of our leaders have reaped fruit," Bidhuri said to ANI, reiterating his belief that the BJP's seat count will exceed projections.

Bidhuri's remarks followed the exit poll projections that placed the BJP in a commanding position, with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) trailing behind. In a video shared by ANI, he confidently stated, "I don't believe in these exit polls, the number of our seats will rise further. BJP will cross the 50-seat mark."

Similarly, Parvesh Verma, BJP's candidate from New Delhi, echoed this optimism, stating, "It is certain that Lotus will bloom on 8th February. We will give good governance, clean Yamuna, and employment in Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal is confident that he is losing."

The exit polls from multiple pollsters suggested a clear victory for the BJP. The Matrize Exit Poll forecasted that the BJP would secure between 35 and 40 seats, while the AAP was expected to win between 32 and 37 seats. Congress was predicted to win 0-1 seat.



Elon Musk Given 'Read-Only' Access to Treasury Payments Data

US Treasury confirms access amid concerns over government efficiency reforms.

- Team can view but not alter Treasury payment data as part of a cost-cutting review.
- Democratic lawmakers demand an investigation, citing legal and ethical concerns.
- Lawsuits filed to block Musk's team from accessing taxpayer information.

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Elon Musk, the world's wealthiest individual, has been granted "read-only" access to the US Treasury Department's highly sensitive payment system, which manages trillions of dollars in transactions, including Social Security, Medicare payouts, and federal salaries. The move has raised concerns among Democratic lawmakers, prompting calls for an investigation into the decision.

Musk, who is leading the federal cost-cutting initiative under the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), reportedly pushed for his team to gain access to the Treasury's payment system as part of his efforts to streamline government operations. His request was approved by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, allowing Musk's IT executive Tom Krause to lead the team with access to the payment system.

In response to growing concerns, Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ron Wyden sent a letter to the congressional watchdog agency, urging an investigation into how Musk and his team were granted access. The Democratic lawmakers have expressed apprehension over the ethical and legal implications of allowing private individuals, such as Musk, to view government financial data.

The Treasury Department clarified in a letter to Congress that the access granted to Musk's team is "read-only," which



means they can view the data but cannot alter it. The department emphasized that this type of access is similar to the permissions granted to auditors reviewing Treasury systems.

Despite this assurance, Democratic lawmakers and labor unions have voiced their opposition to Musk's involvement in the Treasury's operations. Some groups have filed lawsuits against DOGE, arguing that it is illegal for Musk or his team to access personal taxpayer information, demanding that a federal judge block this access.

In a post on X, Musk defended the move, stating that "the only way to stop fraud

and waste of taxpayer money is to follow the payment flows and pause suspicious transactions for review." Musk's cost-cutting initiative has faced increasing resistance, with critics raising concerns over the potential misuse of sensitive government data.

The decision to grant Musk's team access to the Treasury's payment system came after a career official was placed on administrative leave for refusing to approve the request, leading to their eventual retirement. This development has intensified the debate over the government's transparency and the role of private entities in reviewing public financial data.

India A Very Important Market For AI, Can Be A Leading Force: Sam Altman



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India is on the brink of making significant strides in artificial intelligence (AI), with Sam Altman, Co-founder and CEO of OpenAI, recognizing the country as one of the most important markets for AI. Speaking at an event attended by Union Minister for Railways and Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Altman shared that India is the second biggest market globally for OpenAI.

The event comes as OpenAI has announced a monumental \$500 billion project called 'Stargate' aimed at building new AI infrastructure in the US over the next four years, alongside major partners like SoftBank, Oracle, and MGX. Altman emphasized that India, with its immense potential, should be a leader in the AI space, particularly in large language models (LLMs).

Altman also addressed his previous comments on India's ability to develop large language models, clarifying that his statement had been "taken out of context." He affirmed that India's growth in AI is possible, acknowledging that while AI models are still expensive, they are becoming more accessible.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw spoke about India's ambition to make significant innovations in AI, similar to the success of missions like Chandrayaan. He highlighted the country's drive to bring AI solutions that reduce costs, making them more accessible to entrepreneurs, researchers, and students. In line with this vision, the Indian government is working towards launching an indigenous AI model within the next six months. This model aims to be not only safe and secure but also affordable, positioning India as a leading global player in ethical AI solutions.

The IndiaAI initiative is rapidly progressing, with efforts underway to customize AI solutions that address the unique needs of the Indian context, including Indian languages. Scientists, researchers, and developers are currently working on foundational models, and the AI computation facility has already been equipped with 10,000 GPUs. Additional GPUs are set to be added to further enhance the model's capacity.

As China Slaps US With Retaliatory Tariffs, The Trade War Begins

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

Trade tensions between the United States and China have reached new heights, as China retaliates with counter-tariffs on US imports in response to President Donald Trump's 10% tariff on Chinese goods. The intensification of this trade war has reignited concerns about the impact on the global economy. China's Finance Ministry has condemned the US tariffs, claiming that they violate World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

In a strongly worded statement, China warned that it may be forced to take additional countermeasures, asserting that there are "no winners in a trade war." China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Fu Cong, criticized the US decision, calling it an "unwarranted increase" and affirming that it breaches international trade norms.

To counter the US tariffs, China has imposed its own set of retaliatory measures. These include a 15% tariff on US coal and liquefied natural gas exports, as well as a 10% tariff on crude oil, agricultural machinery, and large-displacement cars. These new tariffs are set to take effect on February 10. Additionally, China has implemented export controls on rare metals, such as tungsten, tellurium, ruthenium, and molybdenum, citing national security concerns.

In a surprising move, China has also launched an anti-trust investigation into Google, accusing the tech giant of monopolistic practices. This probe is seen as a strategic response to the escalating trade conflict, with China's State Administration for Market Regulation alleging that Google violated the country's Anti-Monopoly Law.

The tariffs, which came into effect on Tuesday, are part of President Trump's broader strategy to pressure China into curbing the flow of illicit drugs, particularly fentanyl. The White House stated that the tariffs are intended to hold countries like China accountable for failing to halt illegal immigration and drug trafficking. However, China has countered by urging the US to address the issue from its own perspective and focus on the demand side of fentanyl rather than blaming other countries.



Could Change History: Israel's Netanyahu On Trump's Gaza Take Over Plan

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made headlines on Tuesday when he praised US President Donald Trump's proposal for the United States to take control over the Palestinian territory of Gaza. Speaking at a joint press conference held at the White House, Netanyahu described the plan as an idea that could "change history."

Netanyahu's remarks came as he responded to Trump's suggestions, which have raised eyebrows internationally. He emphasized the significance of the proposal, hinting at the potential transformative effect it could have on the region. While Netanyahu did not go into extensive detail, he stressed that it was a development that deserved serious consideration, acknowledging the gravity of the moment.

The idea, if implemented, would mark a dramatic shift in the longstanding geopolitical situation in Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since the early 2000s, Gaza has been a flashpoint for tensions, with the Palestinian group Hamas controlling the area, leading to frequent conflicts and humanitarian concerns. The US plan, by potentially placing the region under American oversight, would be a historic departure from previous strategies and proposals surrounding the governance and future of the territory.

Netanyahu's statement hints at the evolving dynamics of Israeli politics and its relationship with the United States. Trump's administration has been a vocal supporter of Israel, and this latest proposal is seen by some as a further deepening of the bond between the two countries. However, the plan's implications could extend far beyond bilateral relations, affecting the broader Middle East peace process and the ongoing struggles of the Palestinian people.

The White House press conference, held at a critical time in the Middle East, signaled the possibility of a new direction in US foreign policy under Trump's leadership, particularly in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the exact details of the plan remain unclear, Netanyahu's endorsement of it suggests that Israel may be open to significant changes in how the region is governed in the future.



Tulsi Gabbard Clears Senate Intelligence Committee Vote for DNI Nomination

TPN Correspondent | Washington

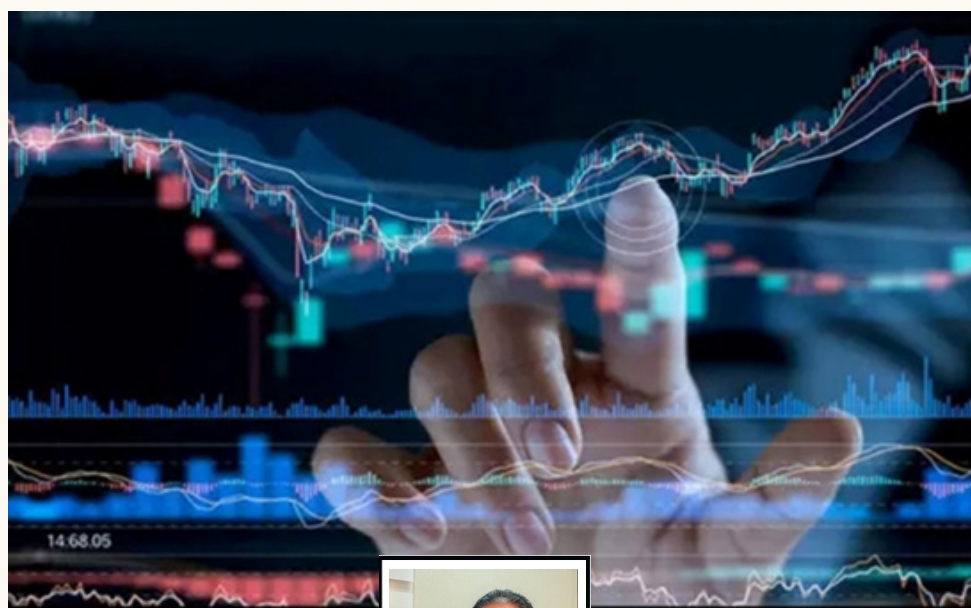
Former U.S. Representative Tulsi Gabbard has passed a significant hurdle in her bid to become the next Director of National Intelligence (DNI), clearing the Senate Intelligence Committee vote. The vote, which was closely contested, passed 9-8 along party lines, bringing Gabbard one step closer to full Senate confirmation.

After the vote, Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) expressed his confidence in Gabbard's nomination, saying, "The Intelligence Committee just voted for Tulsi Gabbard's nomination to be the Director of National Intelligence favourably to the full United States Senate. We look forward to her confirmation and working with her to keep America safe." This marks a crucial moment in Gabbard's journey to leading the U.S. intelligence community, a position responsible for overseeing the nation's 17 intelligence agencies.

The vote came on the heels of an important announcement from Senator Todd Young (R-Ind.), a pivotal swing vote in the process. Young publicly declared his support for Gabbard, endorsing her nomination via social media. He praised her ability to engage with him on key issues, ensuring that U.S. intelligence professionals would be supported under her leadership and that policymakers would receive unbiased information. His endorsement played a significant role in tipping the balance in favor of Gabbard's nomination.

Gabbard, who served as a U.S. Representative from Hawaii from 2013 to 2021, has been a prominent figure in American politics. Known for her independent views, she has often taken a more non-interventionist stance on foreign policy and criticized U.S. military involvement abroad. Her nomination to lead the U.S. intelligence community has garnered attention for her unconventional political career and her potential to reshape how intelligence is gathered and analyzed at the highest levels of government.

Markets End With Moderate Losses Amid Global Uncertainty



Domestic stock markets ended with moderate losses on Wednesday, taking a breather after heavy declines in the previous session. While the benchmark indices opened with gains, they lost momentum due to weak global cues, a record-low rupee, and selling pressure on FMCG stocks. Despite the short-term dip, market experts remain optimistic about a bullish trend in the medium term. At close, the Nifty settled at 23,696, down 42 points, while the Sensex lost 312 points to finish at 78,271. The BSE Sensex, which opened at 78,704, touched an intraday high of 78,735 before slipping to a low of 78,216. Sim-



ilarly, the Nifty oscillated between 23,680 and 23,801 before closing lower. Meanwhile, the Nifty Bank index defied the trend, gaining 185 points to settle at 50,343. Out of the 50 Nifty stocks, 25 advanced while 25 declined. Top gainers included Hindalco, ITC Hotels, ONGC, Apollo Hospitals, and BPCL, while Asian Paints, Titan, Nestle India, Britannia, and Tata Consumer saw the biggest losses. FMCG, realty, and consumer durables stocks remained under pressure, while media, metal, PSU banks, and oil & gas sectors saw positive movement. On the NSE, market breadth was positive, with 1,969 stocks advancing, 857

declining, and 33 touching 52-week highs, compared to 34 stocks at 52-week lows. Swiggy's Q3 losses widened to ₹800 crore from ₹574 crore, while the rupee hit a fresh low of 87.46 against the US dollar. The Finance Ministry imposed a ban on DeepSeek and ChatGPT AI tools. In corporate earnings, Solar Industries reported a 55% surge in net profit to ₹315 crore, while Thangamayil's net profit jumped 72% to ₹28 crore. Several stocks, including Laurus Labs, JK Cement, Muthoot Finance, UPL, Bajaj Finance, and Essar F, hit 52-week highs. JM Financial anticipates Zomato and Jio Finance joining the Nifty50 index. Meanwhile, Page Industries saw a 35% rise in net profit to ₹205 crore, Arvind Passions' profit soared 60% to ₹30 crore, and Tega Industries' profit climbed from ₹35 crore to ₹54 crore. JB Chemfarm also posted a 21% increase in net profit, with revenue rising by 14%.

REC Ltd:
The stock remained stable amid a volatile session, backed by strong financials and consistent government support for the power sector. Investors



are optimistic about REC's long-term growth, given its role in financing key infrastructure and energy projects. The company's strong loan book and improved asset quality have also strengthened investor sentiment.

ONGC:
The oil and gas giant saw buying interest as global crude prices remained firm, boosting revenue expectations. Investors are optimistic about ONGC's deepwater exploration projects and rising domestic energy demand. The company's strong dividend yield and ongoing efforts to expand production capacity have further enhanced its appeal in the market.



Naukri (Info Edge):
The job portal's stock gained traction as hiring activity improved across sectors. Increased recruitment in IT, BFSI, and startup ecosystems has bolstered revenue expectations for Info Edge. The company's diverse digital portfolio, including platforms like 99acres and Jeevansathi, also contributes to long-

term growth potential.

Hindalco:
The aluminum major remained among the top gainers, supported by strong metal prices and improved demand from the construction and auto industries. The company's expansion plans, coupled with higher global aluminum consumption, are driving positive sentiment. Additionally, Hindalco's strategic partnerships in the renewable energy sector further boost its long-term prospects.



IndusInd Bank:
The private lender's stock saw steady movement as investors remained confident in its asset quality and robust credit growth, particularly in retail and MSME segments. The bank's digital transformation efforts and focus on expanding its loan portfolio have further strengthened investor sentiment. Analysts anticipate stable growth ahead, supported by improving economic conditions and increasing corporate lending.



India's Adani Wilmar bets on urban revival, quick grocery delivery to boost growth

Adani Wilmar, a leading player in India's food and edible oil industry, is forecasting a 10% growth in its sales volume for the next fiscal year. CEO Anshu Mallick shared this optimistic outlook with Reuters on Wednesday, citing the rise of 10-minute grocery delivery apps and the expected recovery in urban consumer spending, driven by recent tax cuts. The company anticipates that the personal income tax cuts announced by the Indian government will put more disposable income in the hands of consumers, ultimately driving demand. According to Mallick, a surge in disposable income typically leads to an increase in demand for high-quality food products, and Adani Wilmar expects its food business to grow by more than 20% by March 2026.

However, in the third quarter of the current fiscal year, the company saw only a modest 5% growth in its sales volume. This was despite the edible oil business, which produces the well-known 'Fortune' cooking oil brand, showing a 4% growth. Mallick emphasized that the company is focused on turning this around, with projections for a 6% growth in its edible oil business for the coming

year. This segment is expected to be a key driver in helping Adani Wilmar achieve its overall sales target of around 10% growth.

The 10-minute grocery delivery services, a growing trend in urban areas, are expected to further support this growth. The convenience and rapid delivery offered by these services have seen a surge in popularity, particularly in cities where consumers are increasingly looking for ways to shop quickly and efficiently.

With this combination of favorable consumer trends and tax policy changes, Adani Wilmar is positioning itself to benefit from increased demand for quality food and cooking products in the coming year. The company's optimistic sales forecast reflects confidence in the growing food sector and its ability to capture a larger share of the market amidst evolving consumer preferences and consumption patterns. As the fiscal year progresses, the company is closely watching the impact of these trends on its performance and will continue to adapt its strategies to maximize growth opportunities.

SEBI Introduces New Rules for Algorithmic Trading and API Usage

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced new regulations requiring stock exchanges to empanel algorithmic trading providers and establish guidelines for the use of application programming interfaces (APIs). These steps are part of SEBI's ongoing efforts to streamline the algorithmic trading environment and address the risks posed by existing regulatory gaps.

Algorithmic trading, or algo trading, involves executing trading orders through computer programs that follow predefined rules, enabling traders to place orders at speeds and frequencies far beyond human capabilities. This method is already widely used in India, particularly by institutional investors, but has previously lacked adequate regulatory oversight, leaving room for potential risks and irregularities.

To address these concerns, SEBI has mandated that all algorithmic trading providers must be empaneled by the stock exchanges. This means brokers can only partner with algo trading providers that meet the criteria set by the exchanges. Additionally, brokers must seek approval from the exchanges before implementing algorithmic trading strategies. They will also be required to establish mechanisms for handling grievances and ensuring

that prohibited activities, such as market manipulation, are monitored and avoided.

A significant development in the new regulations is the formation of a framework by the Brokers' Industry Standards Forum. The forum is tasked with developing a set of industry standards for algorithmic trading, which will be implemented before April 1, 2025. These standards will take effect from August 1, 2025, and will focus on improving transparency and accountability within the algo trading landscape.

These measures are designed to enhance investor protection by closing the loopholes that existed in previous regulations. SEBI's focus on enforcing stricter oversight and requiring exchanges to play a more active role in regulating algorithmic trading is expected to reduce market manipulation risks, improve trading transparency, and increase overall market efficiency.

As algorithmic trading continues to grow in India, these regulatory updates aim to strike a balance between innovation and investor protection, ensuring that the benefits of advanced trading technologies do not come at the expense of market integrity.



Valentine's Week 2025: A Seven-Day Celebration of Love

Valentine's Day is fast approaching, and with it, the anticipation of a week full of love, joy, and affection. Starting on February 7, the world will celebrate Valentine's Week, a seven-day period dedicated to honoring the people who matter most in our lives. The week is not just about romantic love, but also about showing appreciation for friends, family, and even ourselves.



Valentine's Week begins on February 7 with Rose Day and leads up to Valentine's Day itself on February 14. Each day has its own special theme, providing a unique opportunity to express love and care through gestures, gifts, and words.

February 7, Friday: Rose Day
The first day of the week is dedicated to giving roses, a timeless symbol of love and appreciation. People often present roses to their loved ones to express their admiration and affection, kicking off the celebrations with a colorful display of love.

February 8, Saturday: Propose Day
Propose Day is all about taking the plunge and declaring your feelings. Whether it's proposing to a significant other or confessing your love to a crush, this day encourages romantic gestures and declarations of love.

February 9, Sunday: Choco-

late Day
Sweet treats take center stage on Chocolate Day, with people gifting chocolates to their loved ones. Whether you buy a box of chocolates or make some yourself, this day is all about indulging in the sweetness of life and love.

February 10, Monday: Teddy Day
Teddy Day is a celebration of comfort and warmth. Couples exchange cuddly teddy bears, which symbolize the tenderness and security found in their relationship. It's a simple but meaningful way to show affection and care.

February 11, Tuesday: Promise Day
Promise Day is dedicated to reaffirming commitments and strengthening bonds. It's a day for making promises, whether big or small, to ensure the relationship continues to thrive and grow.

February 12, Wednesday: Hug Day
On Hug Day, people celebrate the simple yet powerful gesture of a hug. A warm embrace can convey love, comfort, and support, bringing people closer together and nurturing their relationships.

February 13, Thursday: Kiss Day
Kiss Day is an opportunity to express love through a kiss, a gesture that speaks volumes. It's a day to show appreciation and remind your partner of how special they are to you.

February 14, Friday: Valentine's Day
The final day of the week is the grand celebration of love. Valentine's Day is marked by thoughtful gifts, heartfelt messages, and spending quality time with loved ones, making it the perfect conclusion to the week-long celebration of love.

Google Pixel 9a Expected to Offer Attractive Freebies and Impressive Specs

Google is gearing up to unveil its budget-friendly Pixel 9a, slated to launch on March 19, marking the earliest release date in the Pixel A series history. The highly anticipated mid-range model is expected to come with some enticing offers and powerful features to attract buyers.



According to a recent leak from Android Headlines, Pixel 9a buyers could enjoy several premium subscriptions as part of their purchase. The freebies include six months of free Fit-bit Premium, three months of free YouTube Premium, and a three-month subscription to 100GB of Google One storage. These offers resemble those provided with the Pixel 9 series, although the Pixel 9a will not come with the 2TB+ AI plan for Google One, and users will need to pay extra for any Gemini Advanced features.

The Pixel 9a is expected to maintain the same Tensor G4 processor found in the flagship Pixel 9 series. The device is likely to feature a 6.3-inch Actua display with a peak brightness of 2,700 nits and Gorilla Glass 3 protection for durability. With 8GB of RAM and 256GB of internal storage, the Pixel 9a promises a smooth and spacious user experience. It is also expected to have an IP68 rating, ensuring dust and water resistance.

For photography, the Pixel 9a is rumored to include a dual-camera setup, consisting of a 48-megapixel primary camera and a 13-megapixel ultrawide camera. The phone is likely to be equipped with a robust 5,100mAh battery, supporting 23W wired and 7.5W wireless charging. Additionally, it is expected to feature an in-display fingerprint scanner for enhanced security and convenience.

NASA Astronaut Shares Stunning Image of Burj Khalifa from Space

Imagine soaring high above Earth, gazing down at the shimmering city of Dubai, where one building stands out as a beacon of human achievement—the Burj Khalifa, the tallest man-made structure on the planet. Now, picture witnessing this architectural marvel from space. Thanks to NASA astronaut Don Pettit, this extraordinary view has been captured and shared with the world. Currently stationed aboard the International Space Station (ISS), Pettit recently shared a captivating night-time image of Dubai, with the Burj Khalifa standing tall like a dazzling jewel in the darkness.

The photo showcases the iconic skyscraper gleaming brilliantly against the backdrop of the Earth's vast, dark canvas, offering a perspective that few have the privilege to see. "Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building from space," Pettit wrote as a caption for the awe-inspiring shot. The image is part of his ongoing tradition of sharing breathtaking photographs from his vantage point in orbit. Over time, Pettit has delighted followers with numerous photos of our planet from space, each one offering a unique and stunning view of Earth's natural beauty and human-made won-

ders. This recent image is a testament to both the wonder of space exploration and the marvels of human ingenuity on the ground. From the quiet expanse of space, Pettit's photos offer a perspective that both humbles and amazes, reminding us of the incredible achievements we've made and the vastness of the world we call home. For many, this image of Burj Khalifa from space is a dream come true—a rare and breathtaking sight captured from the unique vantage of an astronaut, making it an unforgettable visual experience.

Five More Cheetahs Released Into Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park

On Wednesday, five adult cheetahs were released into the wild at Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh, marking another significant step in India's ambitious cheetah reintroduction program. The release took place during a special event attended by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, organized by the state's Forest Department at the park in Sheopur.



The preparation for the cheetah release was meticulously carried out under the supervision of a steering committee and senior forest officials. This marks the second time adult cheetahs have been released into an open boma (enclosure) at KNP. With this release, a total of seven out of 12 adult cheetahs have now been successfully set free in the park, bringing the reintroduction project closer to its goal of restoring cheetah populations in India after their extinction over 70 years ago.

In an exciting development, five-year-old South African cheetah, Veera, gave birth to two healthy cubs just a day before the release, adding to the growing cheetah population at

Kuno. The first batch of cheetahs, consisting of eight individuals brought from Namibia, was released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 17, 2022. A second batch of 12 cheetahs from South Africa arrived on February 18, 2023.

The Chief Minister expressed optimism that the expanding cheetah population will not only boost wildlife conservation efforts but also positively impact Madhya Pradesh's tourism industry. "With the increase in cheetah numbers, tourism in Madhya Pradesh is getting a boost and opening new doors for employment," he

said. However, reports suggest that the third batch of 18 cheetahs, scheduled to be relocated from South Africa in February 2025, may face delays as authorities are waiting for updates on the progress of the cheetah population. The new batch is expected to be relocated to both Kuno National Park in Sheopur and Gandhi Sagar in Mandsaur.

India's Project Cheetah is part of a bold conservation effort to reintroduce the species to the country, with plans for further releases and support for their long-term survival.

Woman Scammed of Rs 93,600 While Booking Hotel Through Fake Google Listing

In a recent online scam, a woman lost Rs 93,600 while attempting to book a hotel stay through a fraudulent Google listing. The incident occurred when content creator Shreya Mitra was planning a trip to Puri and searched for hotels online. She came across a listing for Mayfair Heritage Puri and, trusting its legitimacy, clicked on the first result that appeared on Google.



After finding the contact number, Mitra called to inquire about booking a stay, and the scammers provided pictures and details of the room, convincing her to proceed with the payment. They even sent her a fake invoice for the booking. However, when she requested an email confirmation, the fraudsters cited a system outage as an excuse and assured her the booking was secure.

The following day, she received another call from the scammers, instructing her to use Google Pay and enter a provided booking ID to receive confirmation. Sensing something was wrong, Mitra refused to com-

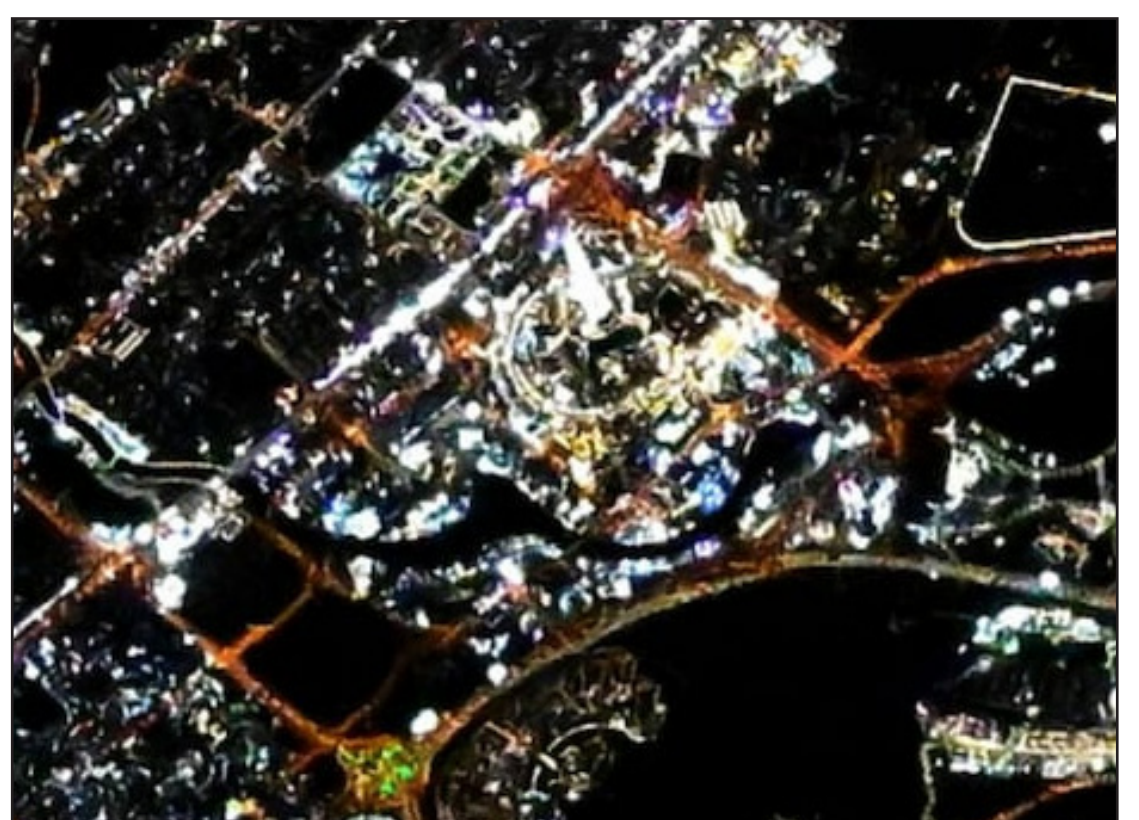
ply and insisted on an official email confirmation. The fraudsters abruptly ended the call, leaving her suspicious of the situation.

Realizing she had been scammed, Mitra took immediate action and searched for the official contact details of Mayfair Heritage Puri. Upon contacting the hotel, she confirmed that the listing she had used was indeed fake.

Mitra shared her experience on Instagram, urging others to be cautious and warning travelers,

especially those looking to book accommodations in the East, to avoid falling for similar scams. She highlighted that the scammers' phone number remains active, and they are using multiple bank accounts to carry out fraudulent transactions.

The fake Google listing has since been taken down by the Cybercrime department, but the incident serves as a reminder to always double-check online listings and verify contact details before making any payments.



India vs England: Key Concerns for Rohit Sharma, Gautam Gambhir Ahead of ODI Series

As India enters the final phase of Champions Trophy 2025 preparations, the three-match ODI series against England, starting in Nagpur on Thursday, holds critical importance. Form and fitness of senior players, selection dilemmas, and bowling combinations remain areas of concern for head coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Rohit Sharma.

Rohit and Kohli Under Scrutiny

Both Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have faced criticism after a lackluster run in red-ball cricket. While they were the top two run-getters in the 2023 World Cup, their recent form has raised doubts. The duo played a three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka post-World Cup, but their Test form has been worrying. The upcoming England series is crucial as it serves as India's only preparation for the Champions Trophy.

Wicketkeeper Dilemma: KL Rahul or Rishabh Pant?

The debate over who will take the wicket-keeper-batsman role continues. KL Rahul, who played a vital role in the 2023 World Cup, provides stability, while Rishabh Pant offers an aggressive X-factor in the middle order. If both are included, Shreyas Iyer might lose his place.

Bowling Concerns and Injuries

- Jasprit Bumrah is unavailable due to a back problem.
- Mohammed Shami and Kuldeep Yadav re-



turn from injury, and their performance will be crucial.

- Varun Chakaravathy, India's mystery spinner, might get his ODI debut.
- The spin all-rounder's slot remains open between Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, and Washington Sundar.

England's Struggles

England, having lost consecutive ODI series against Australia and West Indies, will look to bounce back. Joe Root returns, but Jamie Smith is likely to miss the first two ODIs due to injury.

With India eyeing a strong squad for the Champions Trophy, the upcoming series will be a crucial test for their top-order, bowling attack, and team balance.

Rashid Khan Breaks T20 World Record, Becomes Highest Wicket-Taker in History

Afghanistan's Rashid Khan has etched his name in cricket history by surpassing Dwayne Bravo to become the highest wicket-taker in T20 cricket. Rashid achieved this feat during MI Cape Town's Qualifier One match against Paarl Royals in the SA20 league.

During the match, Rashid took 2/34 in four overs, dismissing Dunith Wellalage and Dinesh Karthik, as MI Cape Town successfully defended their total of 200 runs. This took Rashid's overall tally to 633 wickets in 461 matches, at an astonishing average of 18.07, with best figures of 6/17.

Top 5 T20 Wicket-Takers

- Rashid Khan (Afghanistan) – 633 wickets in 461 matches
- Dwayne Bravo (West Indies) – 631 wickets in 556 matches
- Sunil Narine (West Indies) – 574 wickets in 536 matches
- Imran Tahir (South Africa) – 531 wickets in 428 matches
- Shakib Al Hasan (Bangladesh) – 492 wickets in 444 matches

Match Recap

Paarl Royals won the toss and elected to field first. MI Cape Town's openers Ryan Rickelton (44 off 27) and Rassie van der Dussen (40 off 32) gave a solid start with an 87-run stand in 9.2 overs. A mini-collapse saw them stumble to 91/3, but late fireworks from George Linde (26 off 14), Dewald Brevis (44 off 30), and Delano Potgieter (32 off 17)** powered them to 199/4. In response, Paarl Royals struggled, despite David Miller's fighting 45 off 26 balls and Dinesh Karthik's 31 off 28. Rashid Khan's historic landmark wicket came when he clean-bowled Wellal-



age, helping MI Cape Town restrict Royals and win comfortably.

What's Next?

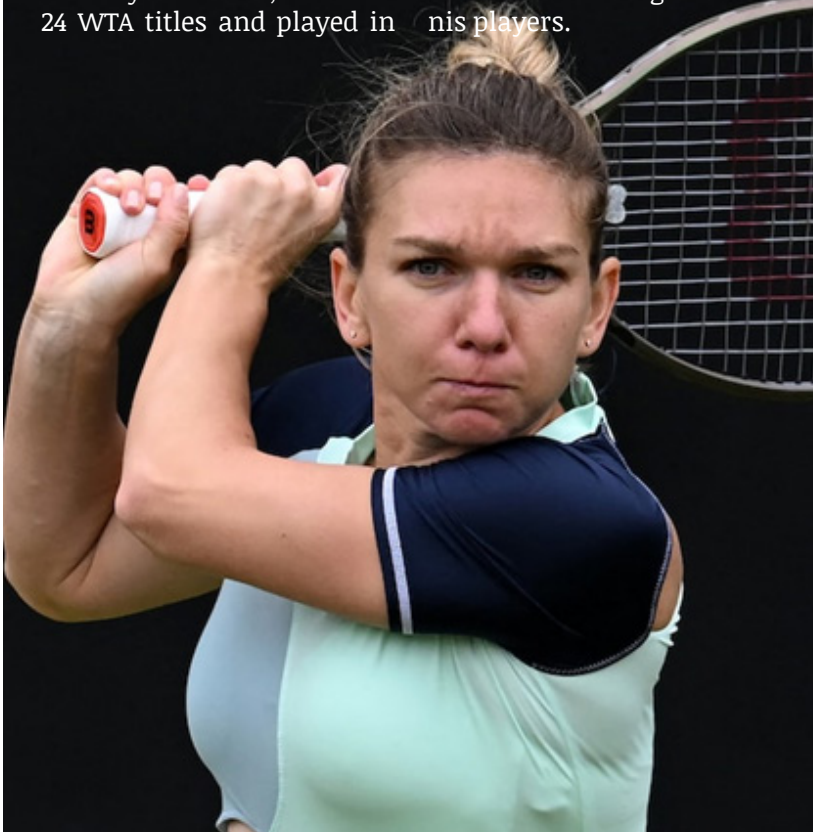
With this victory, MI Cape Town advances to the final at Wanderers on Saturday, while Paarl Royals will play in Qualifier 2 on Thursday for another shot at the title. Delano Potgieter was named Player of the Match for his all-round performance.

Simona Halep Announces Retirement After Emotional Home Defeat

Former world number one Simona Halep has announced her retirement from professional tennis, following a 6-1, 6-1 first-round defeat at the WTA Cluj-Napoca tournament in Romania. The 33-year-old addressed her home crowd, revealing that her body could no longer keep up with the demands of the sport. "I don't know if it is with joy or sadness that I speak to you, but I made this decision with a clear conscience. My body no longer follows, but today I wanted to play and say my goodbyes on the court," Halep said to an emotional Romanian audience. A Storied Career Comes to an End

three other Grand Slam finals (French Open 2014, 2017; Australian Open 2018). Doping Controversy and Comeback Struggles Halep's career took a dramatic turn in 2022 when she tested positive for roxadustat, a banned substance. She was handed a four-year ban, later reduced to nine months after appealing to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). Despite maintaining her innocence, Halep struggled to regain form upon her return in March 2024.

Citing persistent knee and shoulder pain, she withdrew from the 2025 Australian Open qualifiers. Her loss at Cluj-Napoca marked the end of her career, as she struggled to reclaim the dominance that once made her a household name in women's tennis. With her farewell on home soil, Simona Halep leaves behind a remarkable legacy, inspiring future generations of Romanian and global tennis players.



Ranji Trophy Quarterfinal: Mumbai vs Haryana Shifted to Eden Gardens

The Ranji Trophy quarterfinal clash between defending champions Mumbai and Haryana has been shifted from Lahli to Eden Gardens, Kolkata, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed. The quarterfinals will be five-day matches, scheduled from February 8 to 12. While the BCCI has not provided an official reason for the venue change, it is believed that receding winter conditions in northern India, particularly morning fog in Lahli, could have disrupted the match proceedings.

Mumbai vs Haryana: A High-Stakes Clash

Mumbai, the most successful team in Ranji history with 42 titles, will have a star-studded lineup, including:

- Suryakumar Yadav (India's T20 captain)
- Ajinkya Rahane (Skipper)



- Shivam Dube (All-rounder)
 - Shardul Thakur (Pacer)
- Haryana, on the other hand, will be banking on its pace sensation Anshul Kamboj, who has been in brilliant form this season.

Other Quarterfinal Fixtures

Apart from the Mumbai-Haryana clash, the other three Ranji Trophy quarterfinals will take place at the following venues:

- Saurashtra vs Gujarat – Rajkot
- Vidarbha vs Tamil Nadu – Nagpur
- Jammu & Kashmir vs Kerala – Pune

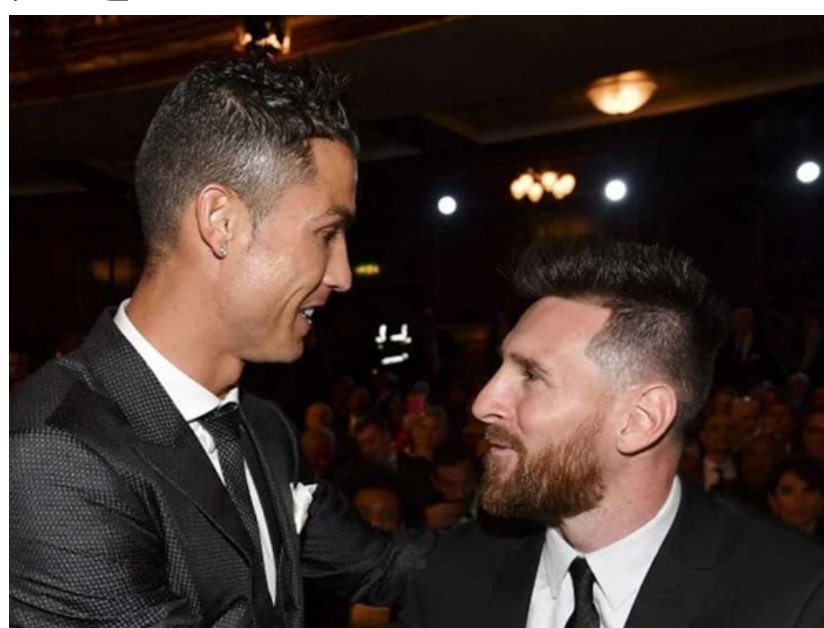
With the quarterfinals promising intense competition, fans can expect thrilling cricket as teams battle for a place in the semifinals.

Cristiano Ronaldo on Ballon d'Or: "You Can't Win," Questions Award's Credibility

Football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo has spoken candidly about the Ballon d'Or awards, acknowledging that he used to feel frustrated when Lionel Messi won the prestigious honor more times than him. However, he now believes the award has lost its credibility, stating that Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr. deserved to win in 2024 over Manchester City's Rodri.

In an interview with Spanish outlet La Sexta, Ronaldo admitted that while he used to be angry when Messi edged him in the Ballon d'Or race, he has now come to terms with it.

"There is no credibility, Vinicius should be the Ballon d'Or winner. I have felt it many times and I felt angry. Over time I understood it, these are battles that you cannot win," said Ronaldo.



Ronaldo: "I Am the Most Complete Player"

When asked about his position in football history, Ronaldo confidently declared himself the "most complete" player ever, despite fans debating between Messi, Pele, and Maradona.

"Taste is one thing, whether you prefer Messi, Pele, or Maradona, I hear it and I respect it. But to say that Cristiano isn't complete is a lie. I'm the most complete. I don't see anyone better than me, and I say that with all my heart," he stated.

At 39 years old, Ronaldo continues to play at the highest level

with Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia, proving his longevity in football. His comments have reignited discussions on the GOAT debate, with fans and pundits weighing in on his legacy compared to Messi's.

Despite winning the Ballon d'Or five times, Ronaldo trails Messi, who has won the award eight times, further intensifying the long-standing rivalry between the two legends.



Marvel Unveils First Teaser for 'The Fantastic Four: First Steps' – Meet the New Superheroes

Marvel Studios has finally released the first teaser for its highly anticipated film, 'The Fantastic Four: First Steps', offering fans a glimpse into the retrofuturistic world of the iconic superhero team. The film is set to hit theatres in July this year and marks the grand introduction of the Fantastic Four into the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

The teaser opens with Reed Richards (Mr. Fantastic) and Sue Storm (Invisible Woman) walking a guest through their headquarters at the Baxter Building, while H.E.R.B.I.E. (the robotic assistant) and Ben Grimm (The Thing) prepare a meal.

One of the standout moments of the teaser is an emotional exchange between Reed and Sue as they reflect on their past transformations.

"Before we went up the first time, you couldn't turn invisible, Ben wasn't a rock, and Johnny never caught fire," says Reed. "Ben has always been a rock. Johnny is... Johnny. And I am right here. Whatever life throws at us, we'll face it together, as a family," Sue replies.

Other thrilling visuals include Johnny Storm (Human Torch) flying into outer space without a spacesuit, fire clouds over Manhattan, and John Malkovich in a mysterious role.



Cast and Crew

The film stars Julia Garner as Shalla-Bal (a version of Silver Surfer) alongside Paul Walter-Hauser, Natasha Lyonne, and Sarah Niles. Directed by Matt Shakman (WandaVision) and written by Ric Pearson, Josh Friedman, Jeff Kaplan, and Ian Springer,

the film was shot overseas from July to November 2024.

Produced by Kevin Feige for Marvel Studios, 'The Fantastic Four: First Steps' is set in an alternate 1960s and promises to redefine the MCU's next chapter. Fans are eagerly awaiting the film's release this July.

Asif Ali's Thriller Becomes Biggest Malayalam Hit of the Year! 6 Crore Budget, 75 Crore Box Office Collection

The Malayalam crime investigative thriller, starring Asif Ali and Anaswara Rajan, has become a massive box office success, earning over ₹75 crore despite a modest budget of ₹6-9 crore. Directed by Jofin T. Chacko and produced by Venu Kunnappilly, the film has emerged as the first blockbuster of 2025 in the

Malayalam film industry. Released on January 9, the film received immense appreciation for its gripping storyline and strong performances. The story follows police officer Vivek Gopinath, who is suspended but later assigned to a high-profile murder case. During his investigation, he discovers a connection to a 40-year-old homicide,

leading to shocking revelations.

The movie, which also features Siddique, Jagadeesh, Sai Kumar, and a special appearance by Mammooty, collected ₹50 crore in just 13 days and surpassed the ₹75 crore mark within 25 days.

Fans eagerly await its OTT release on SonyLIV later this month.



Bada Naam Kareng OTT Release Date: When and Where to Watch it Online?



The highly anticipated series Bada Naam Kareng, produced by Rajshri Productions, is set to premiere on Sony LIV on February 7, 2025. Directed by Palash Vaswani, the series explores modern relationships, family

values, and ambition, making it a relatable watch for contemporary audiences. This marks Rajshri Productions' first OTT venture, bringing their signature storytelling style to the digital platform.

When and Where to Watch Bada Naam Kareng?

The series will be exclusively available on Sony LIV from February 7, 2025. Subscribers of the platform can stream all episodes upon release.

Plot and Trailer Details

The official trailer introduces a heartfelt story about love, family expectations, and dreams. The plot revolves around Rishabh and Surbhi, played by Ritik Ghanshani and Ayesha Kaduskar, as they balance their aspirations while respecting traditional values.

Cast and Crew

The series features an ensemble cast, including Kanwaljeet Singh, Alka Amin, Rajesh Jais, Jameel Khan, Rajesh Tailang, and Anjana Sukhani. Directed by Palash Vaswani, with Sooraj Barjatya as the showrunner, the series promises a blending of emotions, drama, and romance in a fresh OTT format.

Game Changer OTT Release: When and Where to Watch Ram Charan's Action Film Online



Ram Charan and Kiara Advani's highly anticipated political action thriller, Game Changer, is set to arrive on OTT after its theatrical release on January 10, 2025. Directed by S Shankar, the film made waves during its Sankranti release, drawing attention for its gripping storyline centered on political corruption and electoral reforms.

When and Where to Watch Game Changer Online?

Amazon Prime Video India has officially announced that Game Changer will be available for streaming from February 7, 2025. The film will be accessible in Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam, while the Hindi-dubbed version's release date is yet to be confirmed.

Plot and Trailer

The teaser was unveiled at a grand event in Lucknow, attended by the film's team, including director Shankar, Ram Charan, and Kiara Advani. The movie follows Ram

Charan as an IAS officer who takes on corrupt politicians in a battle for justice and electoral transparency. The film blends high-energy action sequences with an intense political drama backdrop.

Cast and Crew

Alongside Ram Charan and Kiara Advani, the movie features SJ Suryah, Prakash Raj, Sunil, Nassar, and Jayaram in pivotal roles. Produced by Dil Raju under Sri Venkateswara Creations, the music is composed by Thaman S.

Box Office Performance and Reception

Game Changer opened with a ₹51.25 crore collection in India and grossed ₹130.1 crore domestically. While Ram Charan's performance received praise, the screenplay faced criticism. The film holds an IMDb rating of 6.1/10.

Fans who missed the theatrical release can now experience the action-packed Game Changer on Prime Video starting February 7, 2025.

'Dark' (Amazon Prime) Movie Review: A Thrilling Sci-Fi Horror Experience

The much-anticipated Tamil sci-fi horror thriller 'Black' has been released on Amazon Prime Video under the title 'Dark' in Telugu. Originally hitting theatres on October 11, 2024, the film gained widespread attention, grossing ₹50 crore worldwide against a modest ₹5 crore budget.

Directed by KG Balasubramani, 'Dark' seamlessly blends science fiction and supernatural horror. The story revolves around Vasanth (Jeeva) and Aranya (Priya Bhavani Shankar), who buy a luxurious villa near Chennai for a romantic getaway.

However, their dream vacation soon turns into a nightmare as they experience strange occurrences, eerie noises, and an unseen presence watching them. Their investigations lead them to a shocking mystery from 1964, connecting their fate to a gruesome double murder.

With stunning cinematography by Gokul Benoy, haunting music by Sam CS, and engaging performances, 'Dark' delivers a gripping thriller. Fans of sci-fi horror can now stream it on Amazon Prime Video.

Rating: *** (3/5)

