

Weather Forecast

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

Engaging With US to Prevent Mistreatment of Deportees

Jaishankar says Deportations not a new issue

Opposition slams govt over deportee treatment US

videos show Indians shackled on flight

Deportees claim denial of basic necessities

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar addressed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, responding to opposition concerns over the deportation of Indian nationals from the US. He stated that deportations of illegal migrants have been occurring for years and are not a new development. Jaishankar, after consulting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emphasized that India is engaging with the US to ensure that deportees are not mistreated. He cited statistics showing that the number of deported Indians has ranged from 530 in 2012 to over 2,000 in 2019. "It is in our collective interest to encourage legal mobility and discourage illegal movement. Every country has the obligation to take back its nationals if they are living illegally abroad," he said. Highlighting the need for humane treatment, he added, "US authorities did not restrain



women and children. The needs of deportees, including food, medical emergencies, and other necessities, were attended to." The statement came amid outrage over videos posted by US Border Patrol Chief Michael Banks, showing deported Indian citizens handcuffed and shackled aboard a C-17 military transport plane to Amritsar. Some deportees reported being restrained for long hours and denied toilet breaks,

sparking opposition protests over possible human rights violations. Trinamool Congress MP Saket Gokhale questioned why India did not arrange its own aircraft for deportees, citing Colombia's example of sending Air Force planes to bring back its citizens with dignity. The South American nation had previously objected to shackled deportations and refused to allow US military aircraft carrying deportees to land.

BJP High Command Reaffirms Support for Vijayendra



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
The BJP high command has firmly backed Karnataka party president B.Y. Vijayendra, dismissing attempts by a rebel faction to seek his removal. Sources confirmed on Thursday that senior leaders refused to entertain complaints against him, dealing a blow to the dissenting camp. Additionally, former minister and BJP MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi was reprimanded for falsely claiming that their faction had met BJP National President J.P. Nadda. The high command expressed strong displeasure over the rebel group's actions, warning that such moves tarnish the party's image. The rebel leaders, who had traveled to New Delhi in hopes of convincing the leadership to replace Vijayendra, returned empty-handed. Their efforts were further weakened as Nadda had met only senior Dalit leader Arvind Limbavali a day prior to their arrival. Former MLA Kumar Bangarappa had discussions with BJP National General Secretary (Organisation) B.L. Santhosh, but the party's leadership refused to engage with the larger dissenting group. The faction managed to meet former Chief Minister and BJP MP Basavaraj Bommai, urging him to lead their cause. However, sources revealed that Bommai declined, stating that he would abide by the high command's decision on the leadership issue. With their efforts proving unsuccessful, some rebel leaders are now returning to Karnataka, while others have headed to Prayagraj to attend the Maha Kumbh Mela. The dissenting camp, which includes BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, former Union Minister G.M. Siddeshwara, BJP MLA B.P. Harish, and former MLA Kumar Bangarappa, also sought to file a complaint against Karnataka state in-charge Radha Mohan Das Agarwal. However, despite raising their concerns, the party's central leadership ignored them, sources confirmed. Amid these developments, BJP MLA Suresh Gowda defended Vijayendra's leadership and called for action against the rebels. He also warned against criticizing former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, stating that such remarks hurt party workers. "It is inappropriate to target Yediyurappa, who played a crucial role in bringing BJP to power in Karnataka. Leaders like MLA Yatnal should resolve their grievances internally instead of making public statements," Gowda said.

"Why Did PM Let This Happen?"

Priyanka Gandhi questions Modi over deported Indians in shackles.

Opposition protests, calls it an "insult to India."

Akhilesh Yadav questions govt's silence on inhumane deportation.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the deportation of over 100 Indian nationals from the United States, criticizing their alleged inhumane treatment. "A lot was said about PM Modi and President Trump being good friends. Why did PM Modi let this happen? Couldn't we have sent our own aircraft to bring them back? Is this how humans should be treated—sent back in handcuffs and shackles?" she asked. Opposition parties staged a protest outside Parliament, calling the deportation



an "insult to India" and demanding accountability. Congress MP Gurjeet Singh Aujla symbolically held handcuffs, while leaders carried placards with slogans such as "Humans, not prisoners" and "India in handcuffs—We will not tolerate this humiliation." Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also criticized the government's silence. "Those who spoke of making India a Vishwaguru are now quiet. Indian citizens were deported like slaves in

inhumane conditions. What is the external affairs ministry doing?" he said. Both Houses of Parliament witnessed uproar over the issue, leading to adjournments. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla urged MPs to avoid disruptions, stating that the matter falls under the Ministry of External Affairs, which has taken cognizance of it. The deported Indians arrived in Punjab's Amritsar on a US Air Force plane on Wednesday.

New Income Tax Bill Likely to Get Cabinet Nod Today

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is expected to approve the new Income Tax Bill today, with its introduction in Lok Sabha likely on February 10, sources said. The bill aims to replace the Income Tax Act of 1961 and simplify tax provisions. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the plan in the Union Budget 2025, stating it would be "clear and direct." The Budget session, which started on January 31, will continue until April 4 in two phases. However, no official confirmation on the bill's introduction date has been given yet.

Santosh Lad Alleges BJP Discussing Modi's Replacement

BJP leaders are secretly discussing Modi's replacement.

He alleges Nitin Gadkari is being considered as an alternative.

Says BJP leaders fear speaking out against Modi.



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BJP Rebels Push for Vijayendra's Ouster

BJP rebel faction demands state president Vijayendra's removal. Vijayendra's supporters plan a massive convention on February 12. Yatnal accuses Yediyurappa of a "sympathy drama"



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HC Issues Notice to Banks on Vijay Mallya's Debt Recovery Claims

HC seeks banks' reply on Mallya's over-recovery claim..

Mallya argues Banks took ₹14,000 cr for ₹6,200-cr debt.

Fugitive Mallya remains in UK.



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Kodagu Police Strengthen Security Ahead of Kodava Silent March

TPN Correspondent | Madikeri

With thousands of Kodavas expected to gather in Madikeri on Friday for the 'Kodavame Balo' Cultural Silent March, the Kodagu police have made extensive security arrangements to prevent any disturbances.

As per SP K Ramarajan's statement, over 25,000 people from the Kodava and Kodava-speaking community are anticipated to arrive. To maintain order, additional forces, including six DySPs, 18 Police Inspectors, 35 PSIs, 55 Assistant PSIs, and 430 Head Constables, will be deployed. Additionally, five platoons, comprising 100 KSRP personnel and 70 from the DAR, will be stationed across the city.

Authorities have also imposed a ban on alcohol sales in Madikeri and designated specific parking zones for the participants. Volunteers from the community have been urged to ensure smooth traffic flow during the march. The silent march, which began in Kutta, reached Mereri on Thursday and will conclude at 'Naad Mandh' in General Thimayya Grounds on Friday. A memorandum demanding the protection of Kodava culture, rituals, traditions, and attire will be submitted to the district administration.

Kodavas Demand Protection of Cultural Identity

The 'Kodavame Balo' Cultural Silent March is being organized to highlight the Kodava community's concerns over preserving their unique identity, traditions, and rights. The Kodavas, a distinct ethnic group in Karnataka, have long demanded constitutional recognition as a Scheduled Tribe and protection for their traditional landholding system. They are also seeking government support for safeguarding their customs, rituals, and unique attire, which they fear are gradually being eroded. The march is a peaceful demonstration to urge the authorities to acknowledge these concerns and take steps to protect their cultural heritage, ensuring that the Kodava identity remains intact for future generations.

Karnataka Prepares for Global Investors Meet Targeting ₹10 Lakh Crore Investments

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka is set to host its most ambitious Global Investors Meet (GIM), Invest Karnataka 2025, aiming to attract investments worth ₹10 lakh crore across key sectors, Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil announced on Wednesday. Scheduled from February 12-14, with an inaugural event on February 11, the summit will bring together over 75 top global leaders across 25 sessions, focusing on technology-driven, sustainable, and inclusive development under the theme "Reimagining Growth."

Business leaders such as Anand Mahindra (Mahindra & Mahindra), Kumar Mangalam Birla (Aditya Birla Group), Sajjan Jindal (JSW Group), Geetanjali Kirloskar (Kirloskar Systems), and Martin Lundstedt (Volvo Group) will be present. Policy and governance experts, including MP Shashi Tharoor, former Greek PM George Papandreou, and economist Montek Singh Ahluwalia, will also participate. The event will also feature prominent



figures from technology and investment sectors, such as Oday Abbosh (IBM), Akis Evangelidis (Nothing), Prashant Prakash (Accel), and Nikhil Kamath (Zeroth, True Beacon, Gruhas). With collaborations spanning 18 countries

and nine dedicated country pavilions, the summit is expected to drive significant investment in aerospace, renewable energy, electronics, and advanced manufacturing, strengthening Karnataka's position as a global investment hub.

Kaveri 2.0 Portal Restored After Cyber Attack Disrupts Services

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Kaveri 2.0 portal, which facilitates online property registrations and Encumbrance Certificates (EC), has resumed normal operations after a cyber attack disrupted services for nearly a week, the Inspector General of Registration and Commissioner of Stamps announced. The portal was hit by a Digital Denial of Services (DDoS) attack, significantly impacting property registrations

and document-related services. Officials confirmed that enhanced security measures have been implemented, and the e-Governance department is closely monitoring the system to prevent future disruptions.

On February 1, when the attack was at its peak, registrations dropped to just 556, while ECs issued stood at 1,649, with revenue collection plummeting to ₹15.18 crore. Interim measures on February 3

saw an improvement, with registrations rising to 5,243 and revenue collection reaching ₹52.24 crore.

By February 5, with the portal stabilizing, registrations increased to 7,225, and revenue collection stood at ₹62.59 crore, nearing the average December 2024 figures of 7,721 registrations and ₹62.93 crore in revenue. Officials assured that operations have now fully returned to normal.

Shivakumar, Parameshwara Differ on Bengaluru's 2nd Airport Location

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara have expressed differing opinions on the location of Bengaluru's proposed second international airport, with both leaders advocating for sites in their respective regions. Shivakumar has suggested a location between Bidadi and Harohalli, close to his hometown Kanakapura, while Parameshwara is pushing for Tumakuru, off the Bengaluru-Pune NH-40. Parameshwara claimed to have identified two feasible sites in Tumakuru but acknowledged that final approval rests with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Speaking to reporters, Parameshwara said Large & Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development Minister M B Patil is handling the proposal, but a final decision has yet



to be made. "There are two or three choices that should comply with DGCA guidelines. We have proposed Tumakuru, while others have suggested different locations. The DGCA will assess feasibility," he stated. Shivakumar clarified that the government will finalize the site only after the Global Investors Meet (GIM). "The industries min-

ister is reviewing the plan, but no final decision has been taken. Neither the Chief Minister nor I have been consulted yet," he said. Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram-mohan Naidu recently told the Rajya Sabha that the Centre will move forward with the project once the Karnataka government submits its official proposal.

Karnataka Unveils Indigenous Radio Collars to Track Elephants, Curb Human-Wildlife Conflict

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Forest Department has developed an indigenous radio collar system, KP-Tracker, to monitor elephant movements and reduce human-wildlife conflict. The first-of-its-kind tracker in India has been developed in collaboration with Bengaluru-based Infiction Labs Pvt Ltd.

Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre, speaking at the launch event on Wednesday, said the GSM-based radio collars will be fitted to the lead cow elephant in herds to track movements and alert nearby residents. Previously, the department imported tracking devices from South Africa and Germany at a cost of ₹6.5 lakh per unit. The new indigenous system costs only ₹1.8 lakh per collar, reducing procurement time from 6-9 months to just 15-20 days. The weight of the device has also been reduced from 16-17 kg to 7 kg. Officials noted that since the trackers are locally manufactured, repairs and replacements can be done immediately. The system will store data on local servers and send alerts to field staff and residents through in-house applications, ensuring early warnings to prevent conflicts.



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HC Issues Notice to Banks on Vijay Mallya's Debt Recovery Claims

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday issued a notice to banks on a petition filed by fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya, who claims that the ₹6,200-crore debt owed by him and United Breweries Holdings Limited (UBHL) has been recovered multiple times. Justice R Devdas directed the banks to respond by February 13. Mallya's petition also sought a stay on further asset sales by banks under the amended recovery certificate until a clear statement on full settlement of the debt is provided.

Senior advocate Sajjan Poovayya, representing Mallya, argued that despite ₹10,200 crore being

recovered, and even the Union Finance Minister informing Parliament that ₹14,000 crore was retrieved, the recovery process continues. He stated that under the Companies Act, once a debt is fully repaid, the guarantor company (UBHL) should be eligible for revival.

The plea urged banks to disclose the amounts recovered and details of the original owners of the assets sold under the 2017 recovery certificate.

Mallya, who fled to the UK in 2016, is believed to have sought asylum there, stalling India's extradition efforts. In a December 18 post on X, he questioned the legal basis of banks and the Enforcement Directorate recovering more than double the debt amount.



Bengaluru Bridges to Get CCTV Cameras to Curb Illegal Activities

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Dakshina Kannada District In-charge Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has directed officials to install CCTV cameras on both sides of bridges along major highways and roads to curb illegal activities, particularly sand mining.

During an inspection of the strengthening work on Addur Bridge along the Perali-Addur State Highway on Wednesday, Rao emphasized that illegal sand extraction near bridges has been weakening their structures. Despite a ban on sand mining within a 500-meter radius of bridges, violations continue to pose risks to their stability, he said.

To safeguard these critical structures, the minister instructed officials to implement round-the-clock CCTV surveillance at both ends of key bridges, including Addur Bridge. The strengthening work on Addur

Bridge is currently in progress at an estimated cost of ₹6.10 crore.

Rao also acknowledged growing public demand for a new bridge in the area and assured that a proposal for its construction would be submitted to the Public Works Department.

The inspection was attended by MLC Manjunath Bhandari, Deputy Commissioner Mullai Muhilan, former Minister Ramnath Rai, and other senior officials.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara inaugurated the Traffic Police Museum and Experience Centre at the Traffic Management Centre in Bengaluru on Wednesday. The museum, dedicated to the history and evolution of traffic management, features vintage traffic equipment, uniforms, historic photographs, and interactive displays to educate citizens on road safety.

CCTV cameras to be installed on Bengaluru bridges to curb illegal sand mining. Strengthening work on Addur Bridge underway at ₹6.10 crore. Home Minister inaugurates Traffic Police Museum to promote road safety.

Hotels in High Demand as Aero India and Invest Karnataka 2025 Events



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru is witnessing a surge in hotel bookings ahead of two major events—Aero India 2025 and Invest Karnataka 2025—set to take place next week. The influx of international visitors has driven hotel tariffs to record highs, with accommodations in and around the city facing unprecedented demand. Luxury hotels, which typically charge between ₹10,000 and ₹15,000 per night, have now raised their rates beyond ₹20,000. Mid-range hotels have also increased prices, capitalizing on the rush. In areas like Devanahalli and Yelahanka, closer to the Aero India venue, hospitality businesses are offering special packages that include food and transportation to attract guests. The Invest Karnataka 2025 summit is also expected to bring in a wave

of international delegates, entrepreneurs, and investors, further straining the city's accommodation capacity. Reports indicate that the surge in demand has extended beyond Bengaluru, with hotels in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, particularly in Anantapur and Krishnagiri, experiencing a rise in bookings.

Authorities have begun implementing traffic management measures around Yelahanka Air Force Station, the venue for Aero India. Travelers heading to Kempegowda International Airport are advised to use alternative routes such as Hennur-Bagalur Road to avoid congestion. Flight operations may also face temporary disruptions due to airspace restrictions, with airlines expected to issue travel advisories regarding potential delays.

Man Stabs Wife to Death Outside Son's School, Surrenders

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A 28-year-old woman was brutally stabbed to death by her estranged husband outside a private school near Bengaluru's Electronics City Flyover in Hebbagodi on Wednesday morning. The accused, 32-year-old Mohan Raju, later surrendered at the Hebbagodi police station.

The victim, Srigantha, had been separated from Raju for the past eight months. The couple, married for seven years, shared custody of their six-year-old son, who lived with Srigantha. Raju had been warned by the police just days earlier following a ha-

arrassment complaint she had filed against him. According to police, Raju visited Srigantha's residence on Tuesday night, demanding to see their child, leading to an argument. The next morning, as she arrived at the school on her two-wheeler to drop off their son, Raju was already waiting. Once their child entered the school premises, he attacked her viciously, stabbing her multiple times before fleeing the scene. Bystanders rushed Srigantha to a hospital on Hosur Road, but doctors declared her dead on arrival. Shortly after, Raju walked into the police sta-

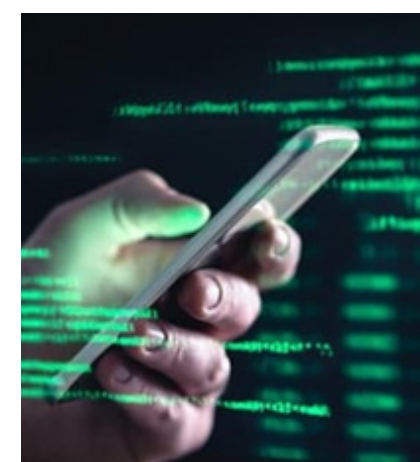
tion and surrendered. Authorities have registered a case, and Srigantha's body has been sent for postmortem at Oxford Medical College Hospital in Attibele.

Meanwhile, in another tragic case, a 28-year-old Bangladeshi woman was found dead on the Kalkere lakebed in east Bengaluru. Authorities suspect she was sexually assaulted and murdered. Police discovered that she had been strangled with her dupatta and bludgeoned with a boulder. Her belongings, including a vanity bag, slippers, churidar, and mobile phone, were found scattered nearby.

Mysterious Calls and Fake Orders Bengaluru Residents Report Unusual Delivery Scams

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru residents are raising concerns over a surge in unusual delivery scams linked to major e-commerce platforms. Reports of mysterious calls and unauthorized orders have surfaced on Reddit, prompting fears of security breaches and fraudulent schemes targeting unsuspecting users. In one instance, a woman received a call from a person claiming to be a Swiggy delivery agent, stating he had a parcel for her in her boyfriend's name. However, she had not received any delivery notifications from her gated community's security system, which usually alerts residents before allowing entry. Adding to the suspicion, neither she nor her boyfriend had placed any orders. When she asked the caller to leave the package at the door, nothing was found upon her return. "Something doesn't feel right," she wrote on Reddit. In another case, a resident received an automated call from a number labeled as "Flipkart" on Truecaller. The voice prompt asked if they had ordered flip-flops and



instructed them to press 1 to confirm or 2 to deny. Choosing not to respond, the user was shocked to find a notification moments later stating the order had been placed due to "no response." Checking the Flipkart app revealed an unauthorized cash-on-delivery order tagged with a cryptic message: "Flipkart customer shared this order with you."

When the user contacted Flipkart's customer service, they were met with indifference, as the representative dismissed the incident as "just feedback." The frustrated user is now consid-

ering filing a cybercrime complaint. The Reddit posts triggered widespread concern, with many users sharing similar experiences and warning others about evolving scam tactics. Some speculated that these incidents could be linked to a broader fraud scheme, where scammers send unsolicited packages and later claim they were associated with illegal activities. One user cautioned, "Scammers keep changing their models. Be safe and don't accept any unexpected deliveries—who knows what they're up to."

Others reported receiving fraudulent emails from international sources falsely claiming they had placed high-value orders in foreign currencies. "I keep getting emails saying I've ordered a laptop or something expensive. The bill name is just 'customer.' I ignore and delete them," one user shared. As these scams grow more sophisticated, cybersecurity experts urge residents to remain vigilant, avoid engaging with suspicious calls, and verify any unexpected transactions directly through official platforms.

Bengaluru Road Rage BMTC Bus Staff and Biker Clash, Traffic Disrupted



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A road rage incident at Konanakunte Signal on Kanakapura Road in Bengaluru led to traffic disruption after a heated altercation between a BMTC bus driver-conductor and a biker. The clash reportedly began when the biker accused the bus driver of running a red light. A video of the incident, which surfaced on X, showed the BMTC conductor arguing with the biker on the busy road, causing a traffic jam. According to reports, the dispute escalated after the bus allegedly crossed the intersection despite the red signal, prompting the biker to confront the driver. As the video went viral, social media users re-

acted with mixed opinions. While some criticized the bus driver for violating traffic rules, others remarked that such incidents were becoming increasingly common in Karnataka.

In another road rage case in Bengaluru's Koramangala, two men on a two-wheeler confronted a cab driver during heavy traffic. Dashcam footage captured one man attempting to open the car door while the other climbed onto the bonnet and kicked the windshield in an apparent act of vandalism. Though the cause of the altercation remains unclear, these incidents have raised concerns about the growing frequency of road rage cases in the city.

Residents Fall Ill After Drinking Contaminated Cauvery Water

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Residents of Promenade Road in Bengaluru's Pulakeshinagar fell ill after consuming contaminated Cauvery water, raising serious health concerns. Locals reported a foul taste and odor in their tap water, prompting independent tests that confirmed the presence of E. coli bacteria, indicating possible sewage infiltration, according to a Deccan Herald report. Following multiple complaints, Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) officials

inspected the system and discovered a major issue—a segment of the Cauvery water pipeline had been laid through a stormwater drain. Corrosion in certain sections of the pipe was found to be the likely cause of contamination. In response, BWSSB shut down the faulty pipeline and provided an alternative water supply to the affected area. Engineers assured residents that clean Cauvery water is now being supplied through the new pipeline.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru's ground-

water crisis has reached a critical stage. The Central Groundwater Board's latest report reveals that both Urban and Rural Bengaluru have recorded a 100% extraction rate in 2024, meaning the city is consuming as much groundwater as it replenishes, leaving no reserves for future needs. Karnataka's overall groundwater extraction stands at 68.4%, keeping it within the "safe" category, but experts warn that the increasing dependency on groundwater is alarming.



SIT Issues Fresh Notice to Youth Congress Leader in Bitcoin Scam

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Karnataka CID has issued a fresh notice to state Youth Congress president Mohammed Haris Nalapad, summoning him for further questioning in connection with the Bitcoin scam. According to reports, the SIT is finalizing two charge sheets—one on police officers accused of destroying evidence and another on the alleged misappropriation of cryptocurrency following hacker Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki's arrest in November 2020. Officials are also probing whether stolen Bitcoin was used by Sriki and his associates between 2017 and 2023. Nalapad and his younger brother Omar Haris were questioned in June 2024 over alleged financial links to Sriki. Investigators suspect they covered expenses related to his luxury stays, travel, and other expenditures between 2017 and 2018. Their father, Congress MLA N A Haris, is the chairman of the Bangalore Development Authority. Sriki first came under police radar in 2017 for hacking Unocoin Technology Pvt Ltd's crypto exchange, stealing 60.6 Bitcoins worth ₹1.14 crore. Following his arrest in 2020, investigators uncovered links between him and several high-profile individuals, including businessmen and politicians. Kolkata-based Bitcoin trader Robin Khandelwal, arrested in 2020, claimed in a voluntary statement that he met Sriki and the Nalapad brothers at a Bengaluru hotel in January 2018, where the hacker allegedly showcased hacked Bitcoin databases. While no direct financial transactions between Sriki and the Nalapads have been recorded, Sriki told CID officials in 2021 that he had invested 150 Bitcoin and 1,100 Ethereum with Mohammed Nalapad after meeting him in 2017. However, those named by Sriki have denied these allegations.

BJP Rebels Push for Vijayendra's Ouster

BJP rebel faction demands state president Vijayendra's removal. Vijayendra's supporters plan a massive convention on February 12. Yatnal accuses Yediyurappa of a "sympathy drama"; Renukacharya hits back.

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The internal rift within the Karnataka BJP has deepened, with a rebel faction intensifying its opposition to state president BY Vijayendra. While dissident leaders have taken their grievances to New Delhi, lobbying for his removal, Vijayendra's supporters have announced a massive convention on February 12 to display their strength.

Several senior BJP leaders, including Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, Ramesh Jarkiholi, GM Siddeshwara, Kumar Bangarappa, Arvind Limbavali, Anna Sahab Jolle, Srinanth Patil, and BP Harish, have openly voiced their discontent with Vijayendra's leadership. In response, Vijayendra's camp held a meeting in Bengaluru at the residence of former minister Katta Subramanya Naidu. Former minister MP Renukacharya announced plans for the convention, stating that after the event, party leaders would visit New Delhi to urge the BJP high command to retain Vijayendra as the state president.

The infighting escalated further with Yatnal accusing former CM BS Yediyurappa of staging a "sympathy drama" to secure his son's position. He alleged that Yediyurappa sidelined loyal Lingayat leaders for his son's benefit, adding, "His time is over, and no one can save him now."

In retaliation, Renukacharya accused Yatnal of betraying the party and questioned his financial rise. He further alleged that Yatnal was influenced by Karnataka's Industries Minister MB Patil to weaken the BJP.

Meanwhile, rebel leaders met BJP national president JP Nadda in New Delhi on Tuesday night, pressing for Vijayendra's removal. Senior leader Ramesh Jarkiholi stated, "We have conveyed our concerns and will abide by the party high command's decision."

Santosh Lad Alleges BJP Leaders Discussing Modi's Replacement

BJP leaders are secretly discussing Modi's replacement. He alleges Nitin Gadkari is being considered as an alternative. Says BJP leaders fear speaking out against Modi.



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Karnataka Labour Minister Santosh Lad has claimed that several BJP leaders are internally discussing the country's economic struggles and the possibility of replacing Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, he alleged that these leaders hesitate to speak out publicly due to fear.

Lad stated that during his recent visit to Delhi, he learned that BJP members were considering Union Minister Nitin Gadkari as a potential alternative to Modi. "There is a suffocating atmosphere within the party, and BJP leaders lack the freedom to openly

speak about Modi's failures," he remarked. He also cited veteran politician Subramanian Swamy's recent criticisms of Modi,

where Swamy accused the Prime Minister of lacking economic expertise. "BJP leaders who once backed Swamy's attacks on Sonia Gandhi now remain silent on his statements about Modi. They know he is telling the truth," Lad alleged.

Addressing other issues, Lad questioned the government's handling of the Prayagraj Mahakumbh stampede and accused the Centre of withholding data. "The NDA government stands for 'No Data Available.' Instead of addressing national concerns, the Prime Minister is busy performing 'aarti' all day," he remarked. He also criticized the lack of a GST rate reduction, arguing that a lower GST would benefit the public.

On Karnataka's finances, Lad dismissed claims that the ₹60,000 crore allocated for state guarantee schemes was affecting development projects. "MLAs concerned about development have requested additional funds, and we have allocated more resources than the previous BJP government," he asserted.

Krantiveera Brigade Launched to Promote Caste Unity and Hindutva

TPN Correspondent | Vijayapura

Former Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister K S Eshwarappa launched the Krantiveera Brigade in Basavana Bagewadi, emphasizing its mission to unite Hindus beyond caste divisions and safeguard cultural and religious values. The event, marked by the ceremonial 'Pada Puja' for 1,008 saints and seers, underscored the brigade's commitment to Hindutva and the development of mutts for religious leaders. Eshwarappa, the brigade's convenor, stated that the movement draws inspiration from the teachings of 12th-century reformer Jagajyoti Basavanna, who advocated for social equality. He clarified that the brigade has no political affiliations but aims to protect cows and Hindu dharma through collective action. Highlighting concerns over atrocities against Hindu women and illegal cow slaughter, Eshwarappa urged people to embrace a caste-neutral mindset and dedicate themselves to preserving the nation's cultural heritage. He called for unity in safeguarding religious traditions, stating that despite decades of independence, critical issues affecting Hindus remain unresolved. Kanneri Mutt's Adrushya Kadasiddeshwar Swami warned that if the Hindu population falls below 50%, India's democratic system could be at risk, citing examples from Ban-



gladesh and Afghanistan. He noted that Hindus are already a minority in 350 districts across the country. Siddharamananda Swami of Tinthini Mutt reiterated that

the Krantiveera Brigade is a movement led by saints and seers, not a political organization, aiming to strengthen religious and social unity.

Sriramulu Clarifies on State BJP Chief Speculation



TPN Correspondent | Kolar

Former minister B Sriramulu on Wednesday dismissed claims that he is seeking the BJP state president's post, asserting that MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal had suggested his name, not him. He reiterated his support for the current state president, BY Vijayendra, whom he called his "younger brother." Speaking at a press conference, Sriramulu stated, "Yatnal proposed my name based on my contributions to the party and my rapport with the people.

However, I have not asked for the post." He further emphasized his deep respect for former Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, describing him as a father figure. "If Yediyurappa wants to make his elder son (Sriramulu) the state president, it would bring me happiness, but I have not requested the position from any leader," he added. Sriramulu, however, affirmed that if given the opportunity, he would work hard to lead the party to victory in the 2028 elections.

'Congress Hated BR Ambedkar, Rejected His Suggestions': PM Modi



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a sharp attack on the Congress in the Rajya Sabha, accusing the party of rejecting BR Ambedkar's suggestions because they "did not like him." PM Modi alleged that Congress never considered Ambedkar "worthy" and even conspired to defeat him twice in the Rajya Sabha. "The Congress hated BR Ambedkar. Today, we are realising Babasaheb Ambedkar's dreams through the PM Mudra Scheme," he stated. His remarks

follow BJP leader and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's claim that India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, deliberately kept Ambedkar out of the Constituent Assembly. Sarma alleged that Nehru viewed Ambedkar as a "troublemaker" and did not want him in the committee that drafted the Constitution. PM Modi's comments mark a renewed political offensive against the Congress, highlighting past decisions that allegedly sidelined Ambedkar's contributions.

Bengaluru Man Upset Over 'Anaar' on Receipt Sparks Hindi-Kannada Debate



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
A Bengaluru man's disappointment over a fruit shop using the Hindi name 'anaar' instead of 'pomegranate' on a receipt has reignited the Hindi-Kannada debate on social media. The man, a Kannada activist, shared an image of the receipt, questioning the inclusion of a Hindi term in a local shop's billing system. "We were supposed to teach them one word a day... but here they are, teaching us one word a day," he wrote while posting the bill, which listed apples and pomegranates—labelled as 'anaar'. The post quickly went viral, drawing mixed reactions. Some argued that 'pomegranate' should be used on receipts in Karnataka, while others pointed out that 'anaar' is a commonly known term with Persian roots, also used in Punjabi, Nepali, and Bengali. Many users debated the issue in the comments. One stated, "Anaar and pomegranate are the same. Many people don't even know what pomegranate is at fruit juice shops." Others felt that Kannada words should be prioritized, with one user remarking, "It's not about knowing the word, but how easily a foreign language is imposed on us." Some, however, dismissed the outrage. "You asked for a pomegranate, and you got one—what's the problem?" one user questioned, while another added, "If Apple is fine, why go bonkers over Anaar?" The incident reflects the ongoing discussions around language use in Karnataka, especially regarding the increasing influence of Hindi in local businesses.

500 Underprivileged Girls Receive Free HPV Vaccines in Bengaluru

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
In a significant step toward combating cervical cancer, 500 adolescent girls from economically weaker sections in Bengaluru received free HPV vaccinations on Wednesday. The initiative, led by tech company Tekion in collaboration with the Jivika Foundation, aims to protect young girls from cervical cancer through early immunization. The vaccination drive was inaugurated by National Award-winning actress Sruthi Hariharan and renowned gynecologist Dr. Padmini Prasad. Organizers stated that the campaign will continue in multiple phases across Bengaluru and Chennai, targeting underserved communities. Cervical cancer remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths among women in India. According to the National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR), the country records approximately 1.23 lakh new cervical cancer cases and 67,500 deaths annually, making it one of the most affected nations globally. Experts highlight that cervical cancer is primarily caused by prolonged human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, leading to abnormal cell growth in the cervix. With increased awareness and accessibility to the HPV vaccine, medical professionals believe the disease can be significantly prevented. Organizers hope that the initiative will encourage wider adoption of the HPV vaccine and raise awareness about the importance of early immunization in preventing cervical cancer.

Six Opposition States Oppose Draft UGC Rules on VCs

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Ministers from six opposition-ruled states have jointly opposed the draft UGC regulations introduced by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, arguing that they undermine state autonomy in appointing Vice Chancellors. The resolution was passed at a conclave of higher education ministers from Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana in Bengaluru on Wednesday. The ministers criticized the draft regulations for sidelining state governments in the selection process of Vice Chancellors for state universities. "The state governments must have a pivotal role in appointing Vice Chancellors. The draft UGC rules eliminate their role, violating federal principles," the resolution stated. The new rules, introduced on January 6, propose that a three-member search-cum-selection committee—led by the governor's nominee and including members appointed by the UGC chairman and the university's apex body—will oversee the appointment of Vice Chancellors. Ministers argued this move significantly weakens state authority.

Key Concerns Raised

Ministers rejected the provision allowing non-academics to be appointed as Vice Chancellors, stating it would compromise academic integrity. They opposed the removal of the Academic Performance Indicator (API) system, arguing the new evaluation framework intro-



duces excessive discretion. The draft regulations were criticized for favoring private institutions over public universities. Concerns were raised about contractual appointments and eligibility requirements for Assistant Professors, including the removal of the basic degree requirement in core subjects. The conclave also opposed the mandatory implementation of NEP 2020 and punitive measures for non-compliance, calling them "dictatorial." The resolution urged the UGC to withdraw

the draft regulations and adopt a consultative approach with state governments in the spirit of cooperative federalism. Responding to the objections, UGC chairperson M Jagadesh Kumar defended the draft rules, stating that they aim to ensure transparency and enhance education quality while aligning with global best practices. He welcomed constructive feedback to strengthen higher education governance. The conclave, organized by Karnataka's Higher Education Department, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar.

Karnataka Girls Win Gold in National Aerobic Championship

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Five young gymnasts from Karnataka won gold medals in the 14-17 age category at the National Aerobic Championship in Jammu and Kashmir, bringing pride to the state. The team—Riyanshi Patnaik, Poorvi Boopashkumar, Vigya Gupta, Unnati Bokaria, and Nishka Bedi—delivered stellar performances, showcasing precision and dedication. Despite their success, the athletes face challenges due to inadequate infrastructure and financial support. Riyanshi, a two-time gold medalist, expressed her ambition to qualify for international competitions. Her coach, Shivraj GN, praised her dedication and confirmed training plans for the Junior Asian Championship in July. However, the high cost of training remains a hurdle. "A government scholarship would help us achieve our dreams," Poorvi stated. Shivraj emphasized



the need for better facilities, highlighting that gymnastics is still classified as a Group C sport in India. He also pointed out the lack of training spaces, alleging that requests for access to government-run stadiums in Bengaluru were ignored. Comparing Karnataka's situation to states like Punjab and Haryana, where junior gymnasts receive financial aid,

Riyanshi's father, Deepankar Patnaik, urged government intervention. Meanwhile, Karnataka Gymnastics Association President C. Prabhakar revealed that a request has been sent to the Karnataka Olympic Association, which has assured efforts to secure a training facility in Bengaluru soon.

Nurse Suspended for Using Fevikwik Instead of Stitches

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
A nurse at a government hospital in Karnataka has been suspended for medical negligence after using Fevikwik, a commercial adhesive, instead of stitches to treat a deep wound on a seven-year-old child's cheek. The shocking incident took place on January 14 at Adoor Primary Health Centre in Hanagal taluk, Haveri district, where Gurusishan Annappa Hosamani was brought in with a profusely bleeding facial wound. Instead of suturing the wound, the attending nurse, identified as Jyoti, applied Fevikwik, claiming it would prevent a permanent scar. The child's parents, alarmed by the nurse's approach, recorded a video in which she confidently defended her actions, stat-

ing she had been using this method for years. Disturbed by the incident, they filed a formal complaint, submitting the footage as evidence. Initially, authorities transferred Jyoti to another healthcare facility instead of taking stricter action, triggering public outrage. Following intervention from senior officials, a high-level meeting chaired by Karnataka's Chief Secretary led to her suspension. The Health and Family Welfare Services Commissioner confirmed that Fevikwik is not approved for medical use and termed the nurse's actions as gross negligence. Fortunately, the child is reported to be in good health. Health officials are monitoring him for any complications resulting from the improper treatment.

Five, Including Three Children, Killed in KSRTC Bus Collision in Yadgir

TPN Correspondent | Raichur
In a tragic road accident near Tinthani in Shorapur taluk of Yadgir district, five people, including three children, lost their lives when their bike collided with a KSRTC bus on Wednesday. The victims were identified as Anjaneya (35), Gangamma (28), Hanamantha (1.5 years), Pavitra (5), and Rayappa (3), all residents of Mettamardoddy village in Lingasugur taluk, Raichur district. Pavitra and Rayappa were the children of Anjaneya's brother. According to sources, the accident occurred while the family was traveling from Halisagar in Shahapur taluk to Gudagunti. The impact was severe, leading to their deaths on the spot. A case has been registered at the Shorapur police station, and an investigation is underway.

New Fungal Disease Threatens Ginger Crops in Kodagu

TPN Correspondent | Madikeri
A newly identified fungal disease has emerged as a major threat to ginger cultivation in Kodagu, with scientists from the Indian Institute of Spice Research (ICAR) confirming its spread across the district. The fungal pathogen, *Pyricularia* spp., which is known for causing blast disease in monocot plants like paddy, has now been detected in ginger crops for the first time. ICAR scientists at the Kozhikode research center noted that the disease leads to yellowing of leaves, followed by dark olive green spots. Once infected, the disease spreads rapidly, covering entire fields within hours and causing severe crop loss. Head Scientist at ICAR-Appangala explained that premature yellowing and drying of leaves directly impact ginger rhizome for-

mation, leading to a 30% reduction in rhizome weight for affected farmers. Researchers have linked the outbreak to specific climatic conditions in Kodagu, particularly the morning dew in August and September 2024, which created an ideal environment for fungal growth. To manage the disease, scientists recommend treating seed rhizomes with fungicides like Propiconazole or a combination of Carbendazim and Mancozeb. Immediate fungicide application is advised at the first sign of infection. Additionally, farmers are urged to avoid cultivating ginger in infected areas temporarily. Further research is ongoing to understand the pathogen's behavior and potential environmental triggers.



Family Movies Making a Comeback, Is South Cinema Finally Done With Violence?

The South Indian film industry seems to be witnessing a surprising shift in 2025, as family-oriented films have gained significant traction at the box office. One standout is the Telugu film *Sankranthiki Vasthunam*, which was released on January 14 this year and has grossed an impressive Rs 300 crore worldwide in just three weeks. Directed by Anil Ravipudi, this film has become the highest-grossing Telugu film for Sankranti 2025, surpassing even the highly anticipated *ame Changer*, directed by Shankar and starring Ram Charan. Notably, both films were produced by Dil Raju.

In Tamil cinema, director Sundar C's **Madha Gaja Raja** has resonated with family audiences, grossing over Rs 55 crore since its release on January 12. Another family film, **Kudumbasthan**, which debuted on January 24, has earned around Rs 18 crore, despite being a modest production. This raises an intriguing question: are family movies making a strong return in South Indian cinema?

The Setback of 2024

The year 2024 was a challenging one for South Indian cinema, with the Malayalam and Tamil industries facing significant financial losses. The Malayalam film industry suffered Rs 700 crore in losses, while Tamil cinema saw a deficit of Rs 1,000 crore. Several big-budget films, such as *Indian 2*, *Kanguva*, and *Game Changer*, failed to meet box-office expectations, leaving the industry in a slump. Against this backdrop, the success of films like *Sankranthiki Vasthunam* and *Madha Gaja Raja* has been a surprise.

Notably, *Sankranthiki Vasthunam* did not feature an A-list cast, starring 64-year-old Venkatesh along-



side Meenakshi Dixit and Aishwarya Rajesh. Similarly, *Madha Gaja Raja*, which was completed in 2013 but delayed due to legal and financial issues, finally made its debut in January 2025. *Kudumbasthan*, starring actor-writer Manikandan, also attracted a significant family audience with its relatable content.

Shifting Trends in Cinema

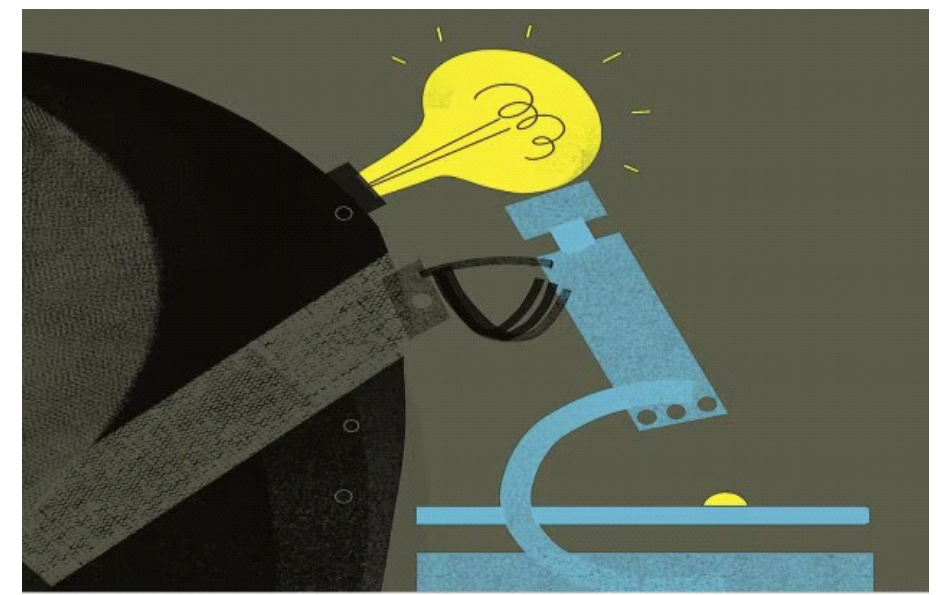
In 2024, Indian cinema leaned heavily toward action-packed films targeting younger audiences, with titles like *Raayan*, *Garudan*, *Captain Miller*, and *Devara: Part 1*. However, this trend shifted with the success of *Amaran*, a family film that grossed nearly Rs 340 crore globally in October 2024. According to film journalist Bharath Kumar, the industry had long focused on action films while neglecting family-oriented stories. However, the success of family films in January 2025 demon-

strates a growing demand for wholesome content that blends comedy, sentiment, and feel-good factors.

A Promising Future for Family Film

Family films provide an alternative to darker genres like thrillers and action. They cater to group viewings, making it easier for families to attend theaters together. **Kudumbasthan**, for instance, explores the struggles of a family man in the digital age with a humorous twist, earning praise for its relatable content.

With 2025 starting strong for family entertainers, it remains to be seen if this trend continues. The success of these films may inspire more producers to invest in similar projects, especially as action films show signs of waning popularity. The tide may indeed be turning in South Indian cinema.



Reimagining Innovation: Empowering Indian Firms for National Growth

oversight. This collaboration produced notable outcomes, such as the successful nuclear test of 1974, showcasing India's growing technological prowess.

However, over time, the landscape of innovation policy—earlier termed Science and Technology (S&T) polic Trump stirs the Gaza pot y—has evolved to encompass a more inclusive, societal-wide approach. The true future of innovation lies not only in government-run institutions but also in the intellectual capabilities within the broader population. It's about fostering intellectual talent across diverse sectors, particularly in private firms, as well as educational institutions, creating an ecosystem of innovation that permeates all aspects of society.

For India to secure its economic future, a vibrant and knowledgeable workforce in both public and private sectors is essential. Intellectual capacity in Indian firms is a vital precursor to economic growth, ultimately contributing to an enhanced GDP. In the modern era, national power extends beyond just military strength or political influence—it is intricately linked to the nation's scientific and technological capabilities.

Take the engineers at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), for instance, who successfully placed a spacecraft on the moon. While this achievement is a remarkable testament to India's technological progress, the real challenge is to ensure that such imaginative, ambitious, and knowledgeable minds are spread across a wide range of sectors. These engineers should not be confined to government agencies but should also thrive in universities and private organizations, where their expertise can stimulate innovation on a much larger scale.

Trump stirs the Gaza pot



US President Donald Trump's recent remarks on Gaza have sparked widespread condemnation and confusion, with many questioning the legality and morality of his proposals. Speaking alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on February 4, Trump declared that the US would "take over the Gaza Strip" and be responsible for its development, describing it as a "long-term ownership position." This statement, delivered in a formal White House press briefing, has been met with both diplomatic outrage and concern for its potential consequences in the Middle East.

Trump's comments were not entirely unexpected, as similar sentiments had been expressed in the days leading up to his announcement. However, his suggestion that Jordan and Egypt should absorb around 2.3 million displaced Palestinians from Gaza has drawn sharp criticism from Arab nations. On February 1, foreign ministers from Arab countries, including Jordan and Egypt, condemned any plan that would forcibly displace Palestinians from their land, warning it could destabilize the region and hinder prospects for peace. Saudi Arabia also issued a firm response, reaffirming its commitment to Palestinian sovereignty and rejecting any attempts to infringe on their rights.

The proposal has placed Egypt and Jordan in difficult positions. Both nations have long-standing relations with the US but now face the possibility of being asked to take in large numbers of Palestinian refugees. Egypt, which has already been involved in numerous ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Gaza, is particularly concerned that Trump's remarks could destabilize its economy and political situation. Similarly, Jordan, home to a significant Palestinian population, would find it difficult to absorb more refugees without exacerbating existing tensions.

Beyond these immediate concerns, Trump's statements raise a host of questions that remain unanswered. How would the US enforce such a proposal? Would it involve military intervention, and what impact would that have on American foreign policy? Moreover, Trump's focus on developing Gaza as a real-estate project has raised alarms, with some questioning whether his administration views the suffering of Palestinians as an opportunity for business development, rather than addressing the region's long-standing humanitarian crisis.

Karnataka Excise Sector Reforms: Committee Proposes Lifting Liquor License Freeze



A committee led by retired IAS officer K P Krishnan has recommended significant reforms in Karnataka's excise sector, including lifting the 33-year-old freeze on new liquor licences for retail stores (CL-2) and bars/restaurants (CL-9), along with an increase in fees for existing licenses. According to the committee's interim report, these reforms could generate an additional Rs 2,200 crore in revenue for the state, offering a potential solution to Karnataka's fiscal challenges.

The freeze on new licences, which has been in place since 1992, has resulted in a market where the existing 3,995 CL-2 and 3,637 CL-9 licences have become highly sought-after assets. This scarcity has led to inflated prices, with licences often changing hands through informal and illegal transactions. As a result, the state has been deprived of substantial legitimate revenue, while an underground market flourishes. Lifting the freeze aims to break this monopolistic system and bring more transparency to the sector.

The growing population of Karnataka, especially in rural areas, has further escalated the demand for liquor outlets. Currently, many rural residents have

to purchase liquor in bulk from nearby towns, only to sell it unofficially at inflated prices, contributing to unregulated bootlegging. By allowing new licences, the government hopes to meet the increasing demand while curbing these illicit operations.

While the proposal may seem like a practical solution to address fiscal concerns, it must be approached with caution. Critics argue that the expansion of liquor outlets could exacerbate social issues, including alcohol abuse and its impact on public health and safety. The increased availability of alcohol might lead to more social and economic costs, potentially offsetting the financial gains from the reforms.

It is essential that the state carefully assesses the long-term effects of lifting the freeze on liquor licences, weighing the potential revenue boost against possible adverse outcomes. Transparent regulation, along with stricter enforcement of licensing rules, will be crucial in ensuring that the benefits of these reforms outweigh the risks. By addressing these concerns, the government can ensure that the excise sector reforms contribute positively to Karnataka's economy while minimizing any negative consequences.

'One Nation One Election' constitutionally unsustainable: Udayanidhi Stalin

TPN Correspondent |
Thiruvananthapuram

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udayanidhi Stalin on Thursday voiced strong opposition to the Union government's proposal for the 'one nation, one election' process, describing it as an attack on federalism and constitutionally unsustainable. Speaking at the sixth edition of the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters (MBIFL), Stalin argued that the move undermines the principles of the Indian Constitution, which affirms federalism as a core value.



Stalin explained that under the 'one nation, one election' system, states would be forced to align their electoral cycles with that of the national elections. He pointed out that if a state government were to fall

due to party defections or a loss of confidence, the state would have to wait for the next national election cycle to hold fresh elections. This, he claimed, would significantly disrupt the functioning of state governments and their autonomy, making them sub-

ject to the whims of the national political landscape.

The Deputy Chief Minister also criticized the Centre's proposal to conduct a new delimitation of Lok Sabha seats based on the latest operational census. He highlighted that this move

would disproportionately affect southern states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which have made significant progress in population control programs. "This is the reward for states that have effectively implemented population control measures," he said. Stalin argued that the proposed delimitation would reduce the representation of these states in Parliament, effectively diminishing their political voice and influence at the national level.

Stalin also questioned the motivations behind the delimitation, suggesting that it was part of a broader agenda to weaken the southern states. If the new delimitation guidelines are implemented, Tamil Nadu and Kerala would lose their current number of seats in Parliament, further sidelining their interests in national decision-making.

India to Launch Chandrayaan-4 in 2027: Union Minister Jitendra Singh

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India is set to launch the Chandrayaan-4 mission in 2027, aiming to bring back samples of moon rocks to Earth, Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh announced. This ambitious mission will involve multiple launches of the heavy-lift LVM-3 rocket, which will carry five different components that will be assembled in orbit to execute the mission.



"The Chandrayaan-4 mission's goal is to collect samples from the moon's surface and bring them back to Earth," Minister Singh told PTI Videos in a recent interview. The mission is expected to mark a significant milestone in India's lunar exploration program.

In addition to Chandrayaan-4, India is gearing up for a number of other important missions. Next year, the country will launch the Gaganyaan mission, which will send Indian astronauts into space in a specially designed spacecraft for a low Earth orbit mission. Singh also announced that in 2026, India will launch the Samudrayaan mission, which aims to explore the deep ocean. This mission will take three scientists aboard a submersible to a depth of 6,000 meters to explore the seabed, further showcasing India's growing scientific capabilities.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also emphasized the significance of the Samudrayaan mission, which has the po-

tential to uncover valuable resources such as critical minerals, rare metals, and marine biodiversity, essential for the country's economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Another milestone for India's space program will be the first uncrewed mission of the Gaganyaan project, scheduled to take place this year. The mission will carry a robot named 'Vyommitra' as part of the preparations for future human space missions. Minister Singh noted that although the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was established in 1969, it took more than two decades to set up the first launch pad in 1993. The space sector, however, has witnessed remarkable growth over

the last decade, with India now building a third launch pad to accommodate heavier rockets and expanding operations beyond Sriharikota. A new launch site is also being developed in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin district for launching small satellites.

India's space economy, valued at USD 8 billion, is expected to reach USD 44 billion over the next decade. Singh emphasized that the recent reforms, including opening the space sector to private players, have led to greater innovation and international collaborations. With new infrastructure, increased private sector participation, and significant investments, India is poised for even greater achievements in the coming years.

Defence Ministry Signs Over Rs 10,000 Crore Deal For Pinaka Rocket System

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Indian government has signed defence contracts worth over ₹10,000 crore to bolster the firepower capabilities of the Indian Army. These contracts, finalized on Thursday, focus on the procurement of advanced munitions, including Area Denial Munition Type-1 (ADM) and high-explosive rockets with enhanced range for the Pinaka Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS).



According to a statement from the Ministry of Defence, the contracts were signed with Economic Explosives Limited (EEL) and Munitions India Limited (MIL) to procure ADM Type-1 (DPICM) and High Explosive Pre-Fragmented (HEPF) Mk-1 (Enhanced) rockets. The total cost of these contracts amounts to ₹10,147 crore.

The HEPF Mk-1 (Enhanced) rockets are an upgraded version of the in-service HEPF rockets, offering an enhanced range to strike deep into enemy territory with precision and devastating impact. The ADM Type-1 of the Pinaka MLRS comes with a specialized warhead capable of dispersing sub-munitions over a larger area. This will target enemy

mechanized forces, vehicles, and personnel, denying specific areas to the enemy.

These advanced munitions are part of the ongoing modernization of India's artillery rocket regiments and will significantly enhance the Army's firepower by enabling long-range and accurate strikes. The procurement is a key milestone in modernizing India's defence infrastructure, empowering domestic industries, and advancing the government's "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiative. In addition to strengthening national defence, these projects will create direct and indirect employment opportunities, particularly by promoting the Indian

MSME sector through component manufacturing. Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh attended the contract signing event in New Delhi, underscoring the strategic importance of these procurements for India's defence preparedness.

The move also aligns with India's broader goal of self-reliance in defence manufacturing, allowing for greater control over critical military assets and reducing dependence on foreign imports. By investing in advanced military technologies, India aims to enhance its tactical capabilities while supporting the growth of indigenous defence industries.



Saif Ali Khan's Attack: Two Staffers Identify Arrested Bangladeshi Man as Assailant

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

In a significant development in the case involving the attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan, two staff members at his residence have identified Shariful Fakir, a Bangladeshi national, as the person who assaulted the actor last month. Fakir, 30, was arrested in connection with the incident and is currently in judicial custody.

The identification took place during an Identification Parade conducted by the Mumbai police at Arthur Road jail on Wednesday. Eliyamma Phillip (56), a staffer at Khan's house, and Junu, a househelp, both confirmed that Fakir was the individual responsible for the attack on Khan, according to police officials. Phillip is considered a key witness, as she was also reportedly attacked by the assailant during the break-in.

On January 16, Fakir allegedly broke into Khan's apartment in the Satguru Sharan building in the Bandra area. Once inside, he reportedly stabbed Khan six times before fleeing the scene. Authorities quickly launched an investigation, which included reviewing CCTV footage from the building. The footage was instrumental in identifying Fakir, and a subsequent facial recognition test confirmed that the man arrested in Thane was the same person seen in the CCTV.

Following the attack, Fakir was apprehended three days later in Thane, a neighboring city. The police revealed that Fakir had entered the apartment in the early hours of the morning and carried out the attack. Investigators have indicated that the motive behind the attack remains unclear, and they are continuing to probe the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The identification parade played a critical role in confirming Fakir's involvement in the attack. Both Phillip and Junu positively identified him as the assailant, which strengthens the case against the accused.

Saif Ali Khan, who sustained multiple stab wounds in the attack, was reportedly in a stable condition after the incident. His family and team members have refrained from commenting publicly on the ongoing investigation.

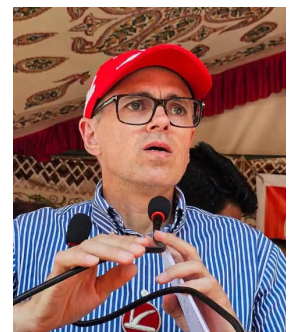
The police are continuing their investigation into the incident and are looking into Fakir's background to determine how he gained access to Khan's residence and if there were any connections that might have led to the attack.

Budget will not be confined to government offices: Omar Abdullah

TPN Correspondent | Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah assured on Wednesday that the upcoming budget would be a "people-friendly" one, emphasizing that it would not be limited to the bureaucratic framework but would cater to the aspirations of the public. Abdullah, who also holds the finance portfolio, made the announcement during his pre-budget consultations with legislators and chairpersons of District Development Councils (DDCs) in Jammu.

In a video conference with elected representatives from Anantnag, Budgam, Kathua, and Samba districts, the Chief Minister emphasized that the budget would reflect the hopes and needs of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, aligning closely with their expectations. Abdullah stated, "You have won your elections because people have placed their trust in you. Their expectations are tied to your leadership. Through this meeting, we aim to align budget priorities with the hopes of those who voted and participated in the democratic process."



The pre-budget discussions were not just aimed at presenting a financial framework, but at ensuring that the people's voices were heard and represented. Abdullah stressed that the budget would be created by the people, for the people, ensuring inclusiveness and transparency in the decision-making process. "We want to ensure that this budget is not just by the government but by the people, for the people. Your voices will be represented, as you represent the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

The consultations, which involved discussions with public representatives, including Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and DDC chairpersons, were a significant step toward building a more collaborative and transparent approach to governance.

US Secretary of State Rubio to Skip G20 Talks in South Africa

Rubio cites "anti-American" agenda, escalating tensions over land reform

- Marco Rubio announced he will boycott the G20 foreign ministers Talk
- US absence could impact G20 diplomacy, including talks on the Ukraine war.

TPN Correspondent | Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced on Wednesday that he would be skipping the upcoming Group of 20 (G20) foreign ministers' talks in South Africa, accusing the host nation of pursuing an "anti-American" agenda. Rubio's decision follows a fiery response from US President Donald Trump, who recently criticized South Africa's land reform policies that aim to address inequalities from the apartheid era.

Rubio, echoing Trump's combative rhetoric, posted on X (formerly Twitter) that he would not participate in the foreign ministers' summit scheduled for February 20-21 in Johannesburg. In his post, Rubio condemned South Africa's actions, claiming the country was "expropriating private property" and using the G20 forum to promote agendas like "solidarity, equality, & sustainability." He accused the South African government of prioritizing initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as well as climate change—both of which have become subjects of scorn for Trump and his supporters.

"My job is to advance America's national interests, not waste taxpayer money or coddle anti-Americanism," Rubio asserted in his post, signaling his frustration with South Africa's position on issues like land reform and international policy agendas.

The tensions over land ownership in South Africa remain high. Despite the



country's transition to democracy three decades ago, most of the nation's farmland is still controlled by white landowners. The South African government has been under growing pressure to implement reforms that would allow for the redistribution of land to rectify the racial disparities left by apartheid policies. These reforms have provoked backlash from critics, including Trump, who has condemned South Africa for what he perceives as "confiscating" land.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa strongly rejected Trump's accusations, calling them misinformation. Earlier this week, Ramaphosa also reached out to Elon Musk, a prominent Trump ally, to express his concerns about what he described as disinformation circulating in the US media. Despite these efforts, the diplomatic rift between the two countries continues to widen.

The absence of the United States, the world's largest economy, from the G20 talks would deal a significant blow to the forum. The G20 is intended to represent the leading global economies, and such a high-profile boycott would undermine the legitimacy of the talks. This diplomatic snub also means that Rubio, a key figure in US foreign policy, would miss an opportunity to engage with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Trump has expressed interest in fostering dialogue with Russia on issues such as the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and this meeting could have offered a first opportunity for such diplomacy.

Overall, the growing tension between the US and South Africa highlights the challenges of navigating global policy while balancing national interests and diplomatic concerns.

Netanyahu Supports Trump's Proposal to Displace Palestinians from Gaza



TPN Correspondent | Washington

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defended former US President Donald Trump's controversial proposal to displace Palestinians from Gaza, despite widespread international condemnation. The proposal, which included suggestions for permanently displacing Palestinians and allowing them to return at will, was met with fierce criticism from rights groups, who labeled it as ethnic cleansing.

During an interview on Fox News, Netanyahu did not specifically address Trump's idea of a US takeover of Gaza but endorsed the concept of giving Palestinians in Gaza the option to leave. He stated, "What's wrong with that? They can leave, they can then come back, they can relocate and come back. But you have to rebuild Gaza."

Netanyahu further downplayed concerns, claiming that Trump's idea didn't involve sending US troops to Gaza or having Washington foot the bill for the region's reconstruction. He characterized Trump's proposal as "the first good idea" he had heard regarding the situation and called for it to be "examined and pursued." Netanyahu argued that the plan could bring about a "different future for everyone," reflecting his approval of the idea despite its controversy. Trump's proposal, first floated on January 25, suggests that Palestinians in Gaza should be resettled in neighboring Arab nations like Egypt and Jordan. This idea has been outright rejected by both Palestinian leaders and the Arab states in question. Trump's aides later attempted to clarify and distance themselves from aspects of the plan in response to the backlash.

This proposal emerged in the context of an ongoing and brutal military campaign by Israel against Gaza. Since the start of the conflict, Israel's airstrikes and ground assaults have resulted in over 47,000 Palestinian deaths, according to Gaza's health ministry. The violence has also sparked accusations of war crimes and genocide, which Israel has denied. Despite a fragile ceasefire, the human toll of the conflict continues to grow, with nearly all of Gaza's population displaced and widespread hunger exacerbating the crisis.



Australia Passes Strict Anti-Hate Crime Laws in Response to Rising Antisemitism

TPN Correspondent | Sydney

On Thursday, Australia passed tough new anti-hate crime legislation aimed at combating the recent surge in antisemitism. The laws introduce mandatory minimum sentences for various hate crimes, including terror-related offences and the display of hate symbols. The new legislation mandates prison terms ranging from 12 months for less severe offences, such as publicly giving a Nazi salute, to six years for individuals convicted of terrorism-related crimes.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who had previously opposed mandatory minimum sentences, voiced his strong support for the new laws, emphasizing the importance of holding those engaged in antisemitism accountable. "I want people who are engaged in antisemitism to be held to account, to be charged, to be incarcerated," Albanese stated in an interview with Sky News.

The government's hate crimes bill, which was first introduced to parliament last year, also creates new criminal offences for any acts of force or violence targeting individuals based on factors like race, religion, nationality, political opinion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status. The legislation is designed to address a significant uptick in antisemitic incidents across the country.

In recent months, Australia has witnessed a disturbing rise in attacks on Jewish community sites, including synagogues, Jewish-owned businesses, and cars. One particularly alarming incident involved the discovery of a caravan loaded with explosives and a list of Jewish targets in Sydney.

Panama Canal Denies Fee Waiver for US Vessels

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

The Panama Canal Authority (PCA) has clarified that it has not made any changes to the fees for US government vessels transiting the Panama Canal, following a statement from the US State Department suggesting otherwise. The PCA took to social media platform X to refute claims that Panama had agreed to waive the tolls for US government ships, emphasizing that the Authority, which has the power to set tolls and fees, had not altered its fee structure.

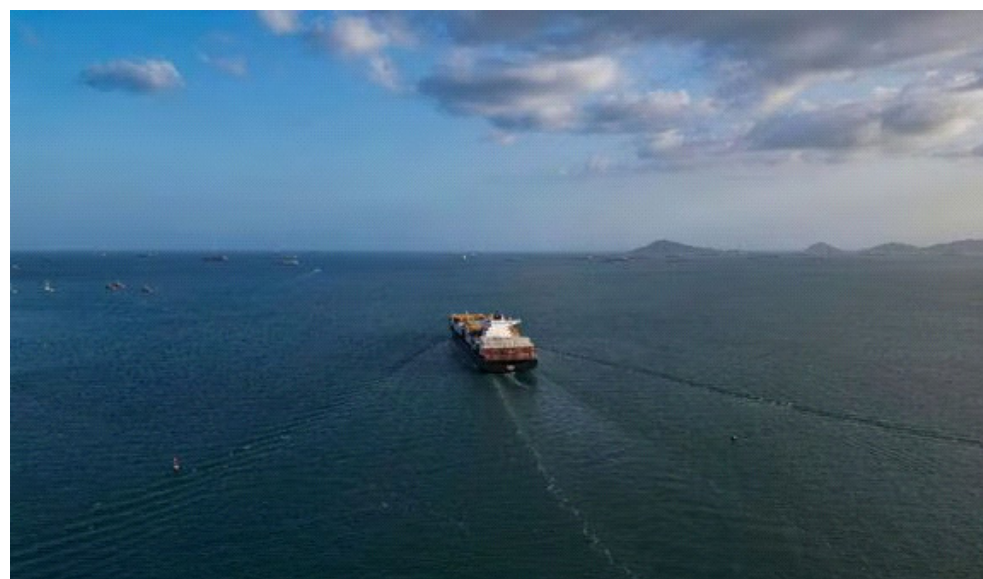
The official post from the Panama Canal Authority stated, "In response to a publication released by the United States Department of State, the Panama Canal Authority, which is authorized to set tolls and other fees for transiting the Canal, reports that it has not made any adjustments to them. The Panama Canal Authority, as it has indicated, is fully prepared to engage in dialogue with relevant United States officials regarding the transit of U.S. warships."

This clarification came after a US State Department announcement claimed Panama had agreed to waive the tolls

for US government vessels using the Canal. According to the statement, this move would save the US government millions of dollars annually. The announcement was made public following US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's trip to Panama on February 1, marking his first official visit to the country since assuming the role.

The US State Department's post on X read, "US government vessels can now transit the Panama Canal without charge fees, saving the US government millions of dollars a year." The decision was positioned as a significant financial relief for the United States, especially given the strategic importance of the Panama Canal for naval and commercial shipping.

However, the Panama Canal Authority's response casts doubt on the claim, insisting that no official policy changes had been implemented and that further discussions with the United States would be necessary to address the situation. The PCA's statement underscores the importance of transparent communication between the two governments, particularly when it involves a key international shipping route.



DeepSeek Faces Global Scrutiny and Bans Over Security Concerns

TPN Correspondent | Italy

DeepSeek's rapid rise to prominence has sparked widespread concern among regulators and governments worldwide, leading to multiple countries imposing restrictions or outright bans on the Chinese AI app. Privacy watchdogs and national security officials have raised alarms about the app's data collection practices and potential security risks, prompting actions in several regions.

Italy was one of the first to act, banning the app after an investigation by the Italian Data Protection Authority (Garante) into DeepSeek's compliance with EU data protection laws. The authorities found the app's response to their inquiries "completely insufficient," leading to the removal of DeepSeek from the Apple and Google app stores in Italy. The Italian regulators also noted that the app claimed not to operate in Italy, further complicating its legal standing within the European Union. Taiwan followed suit, banning government agencies, state-owned businesses, and public schools from using DeepSeek. The Ministry of Digital Affairs expressed concerns over the app's potential to endanger national security, pointing out that it is a Chinese product with implications for cross-border data transmission. Taiwan's restrictions were particularly focused on the risk of information leaks, a concern amplified by the app's Chinese origins.

Australia also acted swiftly, prohibiting government workers from using DeepSeek. The country's Department of Home Affairs issued a directive that forbids the installation or use of DeepSeek products on any government systems or devices, citing unacceptable security risks. However, the ban does not extend to private citizens, though Australians have been urged to exercise caution regarding their online data usage and privacy.



Markets Slip Amid Rate Concerns; Nifty Faces Resistance at 50-DMA

Domestic stock markets ended with moderate losses for the second consecutive session. They moved in a range-bound pattern throughout Thursday. The indices, which had gained initially, gradually fell due to mixed signals from international markets. Interest rate-related stocks were dealt a blow in the wake of the RBI monetary meeting. FMCG, realty, banking and finance shares fell as investors remained cautious and did not buy. Once again, the 50-day moving average became a resistance for Nifty. In the end, Nifty lost 90 points and Sensex lost 200 points.



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The BSE Sensex, which closed at 78,271 in the previous session, opened at 78,513 on Thursday. It touched an intraday low of 77,843. It reached an intraday high of 78,551. It ended at 78,058, down 213 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,761, hit a low of 23,556 and a high of 23,773. It closed at 23,603, down 92 points. The Nifty Bank rose 39 points to settle at 50,382.

In the Nifty50, 21 companies gained while 30 lost. IT, pharma and private bank indices gained the most. Realty, consumer durables, media, metal and FMCG indices rose the most. Cipla, Adani Ports, ITC Hotels, Dr. Reddy's, HDFC Life were the top gainers. Trent, BEL, Airtel, Titan, ONGC were the top losers.

Today, the market breadth in NSE slightly favored sellers. Out of a total of 2905 stocks traded, 1334 gained and 1495 lost. Shares of 38 companies reached 52-week highs. Only 32 reached 52-week lows.

The rupee fell to a fresh low of 87.57 against the dollar. NMDC's net loss increased to Rs. 757 crore from Rs. 568 crore. REC's net profit increased by 23.2% from Rs. 3296 crore to Rs. 4029 crore. MQURE's net profit increased by 30% from Rs. 119 crore to Rs. 156 crore. Aarti Pharma's margin increased from 21.40 to 23.88 percent. Net profit increased by 39.6%. Bernstein has given an Outperform rating to Swiggy with a target price of Rs 575. Minda Corp's net profit rose to Rs 64 crore from Rs 52 crore. SBI's net profit rose 84% to Rs 16,890 crore. Chambal Fertilizers' profit rose 16.3% to Rs 534 crore from Rs 459 crore.

1. Axis Bank (NSE: AXISBANK)



Axis Bank is one of India's largest private sector banks, offering retail banking, corporate banking, and treasury services. It has a strong digital banking presence and a large customer base. Strong digital banking and fintech partnerships Expanding SME and corporate banking portfolio Stable loan book growth and improving asset quality Positive, driven by strong credit demand, digital expansion, and cost efficiency improvements.

2. Zydus Lifesciences

Zydus Lifesciences is a leading pharma company specializing in generics, biosimilars, specialty drugs, and vaccines, with a strong presence in India and the US. Strong US generics pipeline and biosimilars expansion Leadership in domestic formulations business High investment in R&D for new drug discovery Steady growth expected due to strong product pipeline, global expansion, and higher R&D spending.



3. HDFC Life Insurance (NSE: HDFCLIFE)



HDFC Life is one of India's top private life insurance companies, offering term insurance, annuities, and ULIPs. It benefits from a strong bancassurance tie-up with HDFC Bank. Increasing insurance penetration in India Strong digital insurance sales and bancassurance network Expanding annuity and pension products Long-term positive due to increasing demand for insurance and strong financial stability.

4. Cipla (NSE: CIPLA)

Cipla is a global pharma company with a strong presence in respiratory, chronic diseases, and US generics. It is a leader in inhalers and respiratory therapies. Leadership in respiratory and chronic therapies. Expansion in US generics market High-margin specialty drugs and biotech growth. Strong growth potential with consistent expansion in global markets and new drug launches.



5. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (NSE: UJJIVANSFB)



Ujjivan SFB is a leading small finance bank focused on microfinance, affordable housing, and MSME lending, with a strong presence in rural India. Strong expansion in microfinance and SME lending Increasing focus on affordable housing loans Digital banking adoption for rural banking Strong growth expected, supported by rising credit demand and improving financial inclusion.

housing loans Digital banking adoption for rural banking Strong growth expected, supported by rising credit demand and improving financial inclusion.

FM Sitharaman Stresses Commitment to Disinvestment and Privatisation Plans

After presenting the Union Budget on February 1, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman outlined the government's ongoing commitment to disinvestment and privatisation, emphasizing that these steps remain integral to the government's economic strategy. Speaking on the subject, Sitharaman asserted that there would be no reconsideration of the cabinet's decision regarding privatisation.

"Privatisation is a commitment given to the cabinet, and there is no rethink on this matter," Sitharaman said. "We are fully committed to moving forward with the privatisation agenda as planned."

She also highlighted the government's efforts in improving the valuation of public sector companies, a key factor in the success of the disinvestment process. According to Sitharaman, the government has worked



hard to bring in professional management, enhancing the performance of several companies that were previously underperforming. This has allowed these companies to achieve better market valuations, with many of them now performing well on the stock markets.

"The valuations of these companies have been a major focus. We have introduced professional management, and that has contributed significantly to the

improved performance and market valuations," she said. "Many of these companies, which were earlier struggling, are now delivering respectable results."

Sitharaman's comments come at a time when the Indian government is making strides in its disinvestment and privatisation efforts as part of a broader plan to reduce fiscal deficits, optimize public sector enterprises, and encourage private sector participation in the economy. The government's

approach includes selling stakes in state-run companies, thereby generating funds for infrastructure development and other priority sectors.

The government has already made progress in privatising various public sector units (PSUs), with several companies achieving success in their listing on the stock exchanges. These positive outcomes have bolstered confidence in the privatisation agenda, with experts noting that professional management and strategic changes have played a key role in improving the financial health of these entities.

As the government continues its disinvestment and privatisation drive, Sitharaman's statement reaffirms the administration's firm stance on this issue, underscoring its commitment to implementing reforms in public sector enterprises and strengthening the Indian economy.

Clean Energy Transition with Amazon's Investments, Targets 50% Non-Fossil Fuel Power by 2030

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday praised India's growing role as a global leader in the clean energy transition, following Amazon's announcement of investments in three new wind energy projects across the country. Vaishnaw, who oversees the Ministries of Railways, Electronics and Information Technology, and Information and Broadcasting, emphasized the significance of such investments in accelerating India's clean energy journey under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi ji, India is rapidly emerging as a global leader in the clean energy transition. Investments from companies like Amazon are accelerating this progress," Vaishnaw said, applauding Amazon's commitment to sustainable energy solutions.

Earlier in the day, Amazon revealed its investments in three wind energy projects in Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. The projects, which will add over 379 MW of clean energy, reinforce Amazon's pledge to power its operations using 100% renewable en-

ergy. The new wind farms — CleanMax Koppal (100 MW) in Karnataka, BluPine Solapur (99 MW) in Maharashtra, and JSW Energy Dharapuram (180 MW) in Tamil Nadu — will contribute to India's ambitious target of producing 50% of its electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

"Clean energy is not only about sustainability; it is central to our goal of producing 50 percent of our electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. As we expand our digital and transportation infrastructure, renewable energy will play a crucial role in powering the next wave of connectivity and innovation," Vaishnaw added.

Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State for Power and New and Renewable Energy, also welcomed Amazon's continued investments in wind and solar projects, which he said are crucial for achieving India's renewable energy targets and ensuring energy security. He noted that these projects will not only help in creating a cleaner environment but also generate employment and boost local economies.



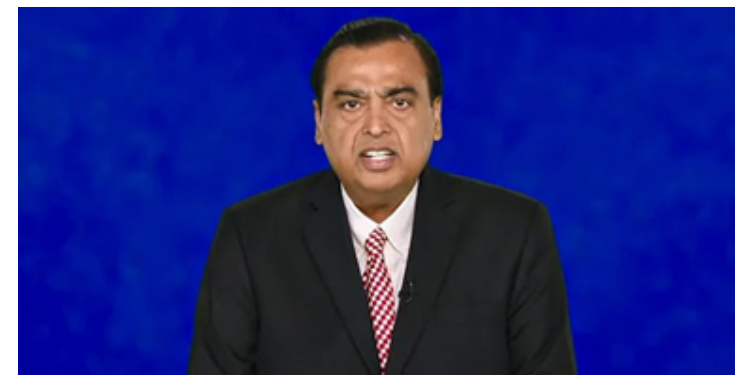
Amazon's commitment to renewable energy goes beyond its operations in India. Avinash Shekhar, Head of APJ Energy and Water Strategy at AWS, highlighted that Amazon has invested in over 600 solar and wind projects globally, including more than 50 in India, as part of its Climate Pledge to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.

With these new projects, Amazon has now enabled 53 renewable energy initiatives in India, providing over 4 million megawatt hours (MWh) of carbon-free energy, enough to power over 1.3 million homes. These efforts further Amazon's goal of supporting sustainable development while creating new jobs and business opportunities within local communities.

Jio building world's best AI infrastructure in India: Mukesh Ambani

In a significant statement made on Wednesday, Mukesh Ambani, the chairman of Reliance Industries (RIL), emphasized the company's strong commitment to advancing artificial intelligence (AI) in India. Ambani revealed that RIL's digital arm, Jio, is focused on constructing the best AI infrastructure in the world, right here in India. During his address, Ambani stated, "AI is indispensable for India's transformation into a Deep-Tech Nation with advanced manufacturing capabilities." This remark underscores his vision of leveraging AI to drive India's technological and industrial growth in the coming years.

Ambani highlighted the importance of AI as a central element in the global competition for technological dominance, specifically in the rapidly evolving landscape of AI. With this in



mind, Reliance's digital initiatives aim to place India at the forefront of the global AI revolution.

Jio, under Ambani's leadership, has been a pioneer in India's digital transformation. From building an extensive telecommunications network to venturing into a diverse array of technology and digital services, Jio's latest focus on AI is seen as a bold step toward advancing India's position in the digital ecosystem. Ambani envisions the development of AI technologies

that can empower Indian industries, facilitate innovations in healthcare, education, manufacturing, and infrastructure, and contribute to creating new job opportunities.

The initiative comes at a time when many global tech giants and governments are vying for leadership in AI, with countries like the United States, China, and the European Union investing heavily in AI research and development. With Reliance's deep resources and its ambitious goals for dig-

ital and technological innovation, Jio's AI-driven infrastructure could significantly enhance India's competitiveness on the global stage.

Ambani's announcement also aligns with India's broader push toward fostering advanced technological capabilities. Through initiatives like Digital India, the country aims to boost its position as a global leader in technology and innovation. By harnessing the power of AI, Ambani believes that India can revolutionize various sectors, ensuring that the nation's digital transformation is both sustainable and inclusive.

As Jio continues to evolve, this AI initiative could play a pivotal role in ensuring that India keeps pace with global tech advancements, solidifying its place as a powerhouse in the digital world.

Mysterious Brain Disease Found in Dead Great White Sharks Along Atlantic Coast



A string of unexplained great white shark deaths along the North American Atlantic Coast has raised serious concerns among marine scientists. The first case was reported in August 2023, when a 500-pound juvenile male shark, measuring 8 feet 9 inches, was found dead on a beach in Prince Edward Island, Canada. The shark's carcass was sent to the Atlantic Veterinary College at the University of Prince Edward Island for examination. Initial findings revealed no external injuries, and starvation was ruled out due to a healthy liver. However, a necropsy revealed meningoencephalitis—an inflammation

of the brain tissue—as the cause of death, prompting further investigations. As additional shark deaths surfaced across the region, a study by the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (C.W.H.C.) found similar brain inflammation in tissue samples from four other great white sharks. Dr. Megan Jones, a veterinary pathologist and regional director of C.W.H.C., noted that three of the five sharks examined showed signs of a potential infectious disease affecting the brain. In total, nine cases of great white sharks with brain swelling have been recorded since July 2022. While brain inflammation has

been linked to bacterial infections in other shark species, no such cause has been identified in these cases. The lack of baseline mortality data for white sharks in the western North Atlantic complicates the investigation. Dr. Alisa Newton, chief veterinarian for OCEARCH, a Florida-based shark research organization, pointed out that it is difficult to determine whether the deaths are an anomaly or a natural occurrence. Meningoencephalitis was first identified in a white shark in 2022 in Long Island, New York, and has since been found in sharks from South Carolina and Massachusetts. While investigations continue, experts are exploring various possibilities, including the potential role of viral or bacterial pathogens. Some, such as Tonya Wimmer, executive director of the Marine Animal Response Society (MARS), believe the rising number of beached sharks could be due to population growth, not a new disease. The cause of these deaths remains uncertain, and further research is needed to uncover the truth. A day for making promises, whether big or small, to ensure the relationship continues to thrive and grow.

Viral AI Video Shows Tiny Construction Workers Building Food, Gets 18 Million Views

A viral AI-generated video is taking the internet by storm, showing tiny construction workers meticulously building food items as if they were constructing houses. The creative video, shared by AI video creator Pablo Prompt on Instagram, in collaboration with nutritionist Carlos Hugo Jimenez Dominguez, has gained an astounding 18 million views. The video imagines a whimsical world where miniature construction workers, dressed in hard hats and uniforms, are responsible for preparing dishes in a highly detailed and mechanical way. The scene begins with the tiny workers garnishing a piece of salmon, followed by an excavator placing lemon slices on top of a perfectly grilled fish. The surreal sight continues with a worker transferring an Indian gravy dish onto a bed of steaming rice,



showcasing a variety of food preparations, from pizza to prawn rice, and even a sunny-side-up egg. The workers are seen using various construction tools like cranes and excavators, adding a layer of quirky realism to the cooking process. Social media users quickly flocked to the comments section of the post, ex-

pressing a mix of awe and amusement. One user commented, "This is the weirdest thing I've ever seen but it's so good!" Another added, "Oddly satisfying to watch!" Many others admired the creative use of AI, with one user saying, "Now, this is the type of AI I can mess with." However, some expressed a more humorous, albeit slightly disturbed, reaction, with a comment saying, "I find this both delicious and disturbing." Despite the mixed reactions, the video's creative concept has captivated viewers, leaving them in awe of the potential AI has in blending art, food, and entertainment. With such a unique and imaginative take on food preparation, this AI video is certainly one for the books, showing just how far artificial intelligence can go in reshaping our understanding of food creation.

OpenAI Expands ChatGPT Search Feature to All Users Worldwide



OpenAI has announced the global expansion of its ChatGPT Search feature, making it available to everyone, including those who have not signed up for the platform. This feature was initially introduced in November 2024 for paid subscribers and was extended to users on the free tier in December 2024. Now, it can be accessed by anyone visiting the ChatGPT website, offering users the ability to ask real-time queries and receive answers sourced directly from the web.

The official announcement was made on X (formerly known as Twitter) on Wednesday, where OpenAI confirmed that the search feature would be widely accessible. This change allows anyone worldwide to use ChatGPT's native search engine-powered functionality

to ask questions and receive up-to-date answers sourced from the internet. The rollout of this feature was initially observed on Android devices, though it has not yet appeared on the iOS app at the time of writing. However, it is expected to be available on iOS soon. For those who do not have an OpenAI account, the feature is powered by the GPT-4o AI model. Users will see a globe icon next to the "Attach file" icon in the text field within the ChatGPT interface. By tapping the globe icon, users can activate the web search mode, where the chatbot will exclusively pull information from the web to answer queries. An interesting aspect of the feature is that it provides transparency about the sources of the information. Each sentence in the response is followed by a

clickable icon that directs users to the original source of the information. Additionally, a full list of sources is displayed at the bottom of the response, and these can also be clicked for further details. OpenAI has yet to announce any rate limits for using the ChatGPT Search feature, even for users who have not registered. This means that users on the free tier can use the search feature without restrictions, a notable benefit for those seeking up-to-date web-based information. With this expansion, OpenAI is offering a more accessible, real-time way for users worldwide to interact with its AI-powered chatbot and receive information from the web, making ChatGPT a more comprehensive tool for knowledge seekers everywhere.

New Study Reveals How Aliens Could Detect Earth's Technosignatures



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 Fitbit 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 promis-

es 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.

Nagpur Golegappa Vendor Offers Lifetime Supply for Rs 99,000: A Viral Deal

Golegappas, also known as pani puri or puchka in some parts of India, are a beloved street food across the Indian subcontinent. With their irresistible combination of spicy, tangy, and sweet flavors, golegappas have earned a special place in the hearts of food lovers worldwide. From weddings to local markets, these bite-sized treats are a common sight at street food stalls, offering a quick and satisfying snack for people from all walks of life. Recently, a golegappa vendor in Nag-

pur has captured attention and gone viral with a unique offer that has intrigued many social media users. The vendor has come up with an unconventional deal that allows customers to enjoy golegappas for free, for life, by paying a one-time fee of Rs 99,000. According to the offer, anyone who pays this amount will have unlimited access to golegappas from the stall for the rest of their lives—without needing to pay again. This extraordinary deal has sparked

considerable discussion on social media platforms, with users expressing a mix of amusement and curiosity. The concept of paying a large sum upfront for a lifetime of free food has caught the imagination of many who love golegappas and are willing to make a long-term investment in their favorite snack. The post has quickly gained attention, with people debating the value of such an offer and whether it's worth the hefty price tag.



Real Madrid Edge Past Leganes with Last-Minute Winner to Reach Copa del Rey Semifinals



Young Real Madrid striker Gonzalo Garcia sealed a dramatic 3-2 victory for Los Blancos with a 93rd-minute header, securing a place in the Copa del Rey semifinals at the expense of Leganes. In a thrilling contest at Butarque Stadium, Juan Cruz's brace helped Leganes fight back after Luka Modric and teenage sensation Endrick put Madrid ahead early in the game. With the match seemingly heading to extra-time, Brahim Diaz delivered a superb cross, allowing 20-year-old Gonzalo to nod home the

winner. Despite missing Jude Bellingham and Kylian Mbappe due to minor injuries and dealing with a defensive injury crisis, Carlo Ancelotti's side showcased resilience, with Jacobo Ramon and Raul Asencio making key contributions. Madrid started strong, with Modric scoring in the 18th minute, followed by Endrick's close-range finish. However, Leganes responded, with Cruz converting a penalty after Jacobo handled the ball. In the second half, Madrid squandered multiple chances,

with Vinicius Junior missing two golden opportunities before Cruz equalized with a deflected shot. Just when extra-time loomed, Gonzalo's last-gasp goal kept Madrid's Copa del Rey hopes alive. Madrid will now face Atletico Madrid in La Liga on Saturday before a crucial Champions League encounter against Manchester City on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Atletico thrashed Getafe 5-0 to reach the semifinals, while Barcelona take on Valencia and Real Sociedad face Osasuna in the remaining quarter-finals.

Italian Qualifier Mattia Bellucci Stuns Daniil Medvedev to Reach Rotterdam ATP Quarterfinals

Italian qualifier Mattia Bellucci pulled off a major upset at the Rotterdam ATP 500, stunning former world No. 1 Daniil Medvedev in three grueling sets on Wednesday. The 23-year-old, ranked 92nd in the world, secured a 6-3, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3 victory to register the biggest win of his career and reach his first ATP quarterfinal of the season.

"It was a three-hour battle, and I really enjoyed every moment of it," said Bellucci after the match. "I'm pretty tired but extremely happy. I went for serve-and-volley tactics, something I don't usually do, but today it worked perfectly."

The Italian held his nerve in the final set, saving six break points, after missing a match point in the second-set tiebreak against defending champion Medvedev.

Bellucci, who previously reached the Atlanta Open quarterfinals in 2024, will now face sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas or Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor for a place in the Rotterdam semifinals.

For world No. 7 Medvedev, it was another disappointing outing in early 2025, following his second-round exit at the Australian Open. The 2021 US Open champion had earlier defeated Stan Wawrinka in the first round but was un-



able to overcome Bellucci's aggressive game. With this stunning win, Bellucci continues his breakthrough run on the ATP circuit and will look to maintain momentum in Rotterdam.

Marcus Stoinis Announces Surprise ODI Retirement Ahead of Champions Trophy

In a surprising move, Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis has announced his retirement from One Day Internationals (ODIs) with immediate effect, just days before the ICC Champions Trophy. His decision means Cricket Australia (CA) will now name a replacement in their squad for the tournament.

Stoinis, who played 74 ODIs for Australia, expressed gratitude for representing the national team and stated that he will now focus entirely on T20 cricket. "Playing ODI cricket for Australia has been an incredible journey, and I'm grateful for every moment in

the green and gold. This wasn't an easy decision, but I believe it's the right time for me to step away and fully focus on the next chapter of my career," said Stoinis in a CA statement.

Stoinis made his ODI debut in 2015 against England and became a key figure in Australia's limited-overs setup. His standout performance came in 2017 when he smashed 146 against New Zealand at Eden Park* while also taking three wickets. He played a vital role in Australia's 2023 ODI World Cup-winning campaign in India. Australia's head coach Andrew McDonald praised Stoinis for his

contributions, calling him a natural leader and an exceptional team player. However, his retirement adds to Australia's growing concerns ahead of the Champions Trophy, with Mitchell Marsh ruled out due to a back injury and injury worries surrounding Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood. With Stoinis' exit, Cricket Australia's National Selection Panel (NSP) will finalize replacements after the Sri Lanka Test series. Australia, placed in Group B alongside England, South Africa, and Afghanistan, has until February 12 to submit its final 15-member squad for the tournament.

India vs England 1st ODI Highlights: Shubman Gill, Bowlers Shine as India Clinch 4-Wicket Win in Nagpur

India took a 1-0 lead in the three-match ODI series with a convincing 4-wicket victory over England in the first ODI at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium. Shubman Gill led the chase with a composed 87, while debutant pacer Harshit Rana and Ravindra Jadeja starred with the ball to restrict England to a below-par total of 248.

England Innings: Buttler, Bethell Shine Amidst Indian Bowling Attack

Opting to bat first, England started aggressively, with openers looking to capitalize on the batting-friendly conditions. However, India's disciplined bowling and sharp fielding turned the game around.

- Jos Buttler (64) and Jacob Bethell (57) were the only bright spots in England's batting order.
- Debutant Harshit Rana (3/53) impressed with a fiery spell, claiming three crucial wickets.
- Ravindra Jadeja (3/26) put on a stellar all-round show, breaking partnerships and maintaining control in the middle overs.
- England, who looked set for a big score at 180/4, collapsed to 248 all out in 45.3 overs.

India's Chase: Shubman Gill, Iyer, and Axar Deliver



- Chasing 249, India lost early wickets, but a brilliant knock from Shubman Gill (87 off 91) stabilized the innings.
- Shreyas Iyer (59 off 36) provided a counterattacking fifty, keeping India in command.
- Axar Patel (52 off 47) played a vital supporting role, ensuring there were no hiccups in the chase.

- Despite a few late wickets, India comfortably chased down the target in 38.4 overs, winning by 4 wickets.
- With this win, India take a 1-0 lead in the series. The second ODI will be played in Pune, where England will look to bounce back and level the series.

Sachin Tendulkar Shares Hilarious Story About Virender Sehwag at Rashtrapati Bhavan Event

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar was the special guest at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Vimarsh Shrinkhala event, where he shared stories from his illustrious career. In attendance were President Droupadi Murmu, his wife Anjali, and daughter Sara. The former India captain presented a signed Indian Test jersey to the President as a token of his appreciation.

Speaking at the event, Tendulkar emphasized the importance of teamwork and trust, recalling how different players required different motivational tactics. He narrated a hilarious anecdote about Virender Sehwag, revealing how he had to manipulate Sehwag's mindset to get the best out of him. "Sehwag Would Do the Opposite of What I Said" Tendulkar explained how Sehwag, known for his aggressive style, would always do the opposite of what he was asked to do.

"If I wanted him to defend for a few overs, I would say, 'Viru, go



and blast the bowlers, hit sixes.' And he would reply, 'No paaji, I think I should defend for four overs first.' That was the way to get what I wanted from him." Tendulkar also recounted his 2011 World Cup chat with Yuvraj Singh, who looked low on energy before the tournament. "Yuvi told me he wasn't timing the ball well, so I advised him to focus on fielding instead. I

told him, 'Yuvi, you will matter when it matters.' That motivated him, and he went on to have a phenomenal World Cup," he added. During the event, Tendulkar reminisced about his journey in cricket and his past visits to Rashtrapati Bhavan, where he received multiple awards, including the Bharat Ratna in 2014.





Ed Sheeran And A.R. Rahman's 'Shape of You' And 'Urvashi' Mash-Up Goes Viral!

It was a musical extravaganza in Chennai as two Grammy-winning artists, Ed Sheeran and A. R. Rahman, took the stage together for a sensational performance. The duo delivered a mesmerizing mash-up of Sheeran's global hit 'Shape of You' and Rahman's iconic 'Urvashi', blending Western pop and Indian beats seamlessly. Sheeran strummed his guitar while Rahman rendered the vocals, with the metronome of 'Shape of You' syncing perfectly with the lyrics of 'Urvashi'. The electrifying performance has now gone viral, captivating music lovers worldwide.

Jonita Gandhi Opens the Show

The concert kicked off with a stunning performance by singer Jonita Gandhi, known for chartbusters like 'Gilehriyaan', 'What Jhumka', and 'Dil Ka Telephone'. Expressing her excitement, she shared, "I've been a huge fan of Ed's for quite a while! I love how seamlessly he crosses over into different genres. It's a dream come true to share the stage with him in Chennai."

Sheeran's India Love Continues

This isn't the first time Ed Sheeran has collaborated with Indian artists. Last year, he



performed in Mumbai alongside Punjabi superstar Diljit Dosanjh, and their jam session went viral. The Chennai concert proved to be another

legendary musical moment, bringing together global music icons and showcasing the power of cross-cultural collaborations.

Grammy Winner Chandrika Tan don Thanks PM Modi For His Appreciation

Indian-American vocalist Chandrika Tandon, who recently won a Grammy Award for Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album for her album Triveni, has expressed her gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his appreciation and recognition.

Taking to social media, Chandrika shared a throwback picture with PM Modi, writing, "It is an extra special moment when the Prime Minister of India gives public appreciation to global artists from India -- such a gracious and encouraging gesture! Feel so honoured and proud. Thank you @narendramodi ji. Love Light Laughter." PM Modi's Congratulatory Message



PM Modi had earlier extended his congratulations to Chandrika on X (formerly Twitter), saying,

"Congratulations to @chandrikatandon on winning the Grammy for the album Triveni. We take great pride in her

accomplishments as an entrepreneur, philanthropist, and of course, music."

Chandrika's Grammy-Winning Album Chandrika shared the Grammy honour with South African flautist Wouter Kellerman and Japanese cellist Eru Matsumoto. The category featured other prominent Indian nominees, including Ricky Kej, Anoushka Shankar, and Radhika Vekaria. Chandrika, an accomplished musician and entrepreneur, is also known as the elder sister of former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi. Her Grammy win has been widely celebrated in India and among the global Indian diaspora.

Kadhalikka Neramillai OTT Release Date Reportedly Revealed: When and Where to Watch Romantic Drama Online



The much-loved romantic drama Kadhalikka Neramillai, starring Ravi Mohan and Nithya Menen, is reportedly set for its OTT release on Netflix on February 14, 2025. The film, which hit theaters on January 14 during Sankranti and Pongal, received a warm response from audiences, and now, its digital release is anticipated to be a Valentine's Day special.

When and Where to Watch Kadhalikka Neramillai Online

According to reports, Netflix has secured the streaming rights for Kadhalikka Neramillai, and it will be available for subscribers starting February 14, 2025. However, an official announcement from the makers is awaited.

Plot Summary

The film follows Shriya, an architect, who marries Karan through a registered marriage in 2017 but later discovers his infidelity. Seeking motherhood, she undergoes IVF with anonymous donor sperm, unknowingly using Sid's (a structural engineer from Bengaluru) sample due to a hospital mix-up. Eight years later, Sid relocates to Chennai, unknowingly forming a deep bond

with Parthiv, Shriya's son. As Shriya and Sid cross paths professionally, their rivalry and growing interactions lead to emotional revelations. Parthiv embarks on a journey to uncover his father's identity, setting off a chain of unexpected events.

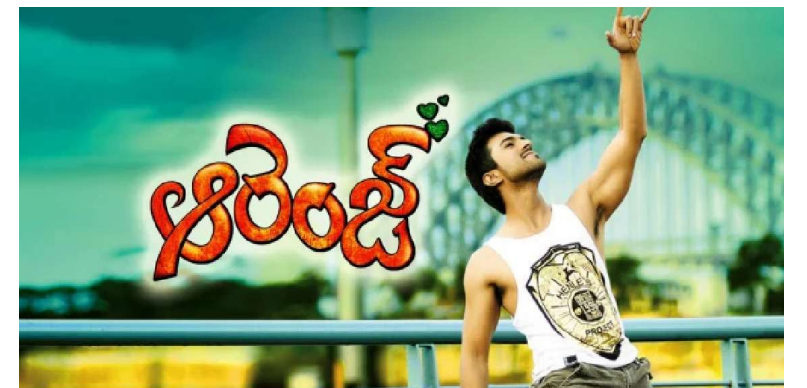
Cast & Crew

Directed and written by Kiruthiga Udhayanidhi, Kadhalikka Neramillai is produced by Udhayanidhi Stalin under Red Giant Movies. The film boasts an impressive crew:

- Cinematography: Gave-mic U. Ary
- Editing: Lawrence Kishore
- Music: A. R. Rahman
- Reception & Expectations
- Critics and audiences have praised the film's engaging storytelling, lead performances, and emotional depth. While official box office figures remain undisclosed, the movie is said to have performed well during its theatrical run.

With its upcoming Netflix release, Kadhalikka Neramillai is expected to reach a wider audience, making it a perfect pick for Valentine's Day streaming.

Ram Charan Starrer 'Orange' to Re-Release After 15 Years on Valentine's Day



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)



Huma Qureshi Dismisses North vs South Cinema Debate as 'Clickbait'

Actress Huma Qureshi has brushed off the ongoing North vs South cinema debate, calling it petty and irrelevant. Instead, she urged the Indian film industry to unite and focus on creating globally competitive content, akin to hit franchises like Avatar, Squid Game, and Money Heist.

Speaking at the recently concluded Kerala Literature Festival, Huma emphasized that India has one film industry, and any creative individual would recognize the importance of collaboration over division.

"It is such a silly debate; we are one country. A film like Drishyam is loved across India. Rather than engaging in these petty debates, we should ask: where is India's Squid Game? Why can't we make our own Avatar? The whole industry should come together for that."

Huma, who has worked in Tamil and Malayalam films, including Kaala (2018), Valimai (2022), and White (2016), said that cross-industry collaboration has always existed.

"I have been fortunate to work in the South, and I hope for more opportunities because you learn so much."

The actress, who debuted as an author last year with her fantasy fiction novel Zeba: An Accidental Superhero, continues to advocate for a unified Indian cinema that competes on a global scale rather than engaging in regional rivalries.