

POINT

Weather Forecast

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

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TRUMP DUMPING DOESNT EFFECT US



- PM Modi to meet Trump on Feb 12-13 amid deportation concerns.
- 487 Indians face removal orders, but mass deportation unlikely.
- India in talks with US authorities to ensure safe return.
- IT sector impact minimal; large-scale deportations not feasible.

scale deportation of Indian workers, especially those in the IT sector, remains unlikely. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, addressing the issue on Friday, stated that the Indian government is actively in touch with the Trump administration to ensure the safe return of those affected. He acknowledged concerns over the treatment of deportees, affirming that India will take up the matter with US authorities. Misri also noted that US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) follows specific procedures, including the use of restraints, which have been in place for a long time. Beyond the official numbers, there have been reports estimating anywhere between 18,000 to 5 lakh

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Amid rising concerns over the deportation of undocumented Indian immigrants from the US, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on February 12-13 comes at a crucial time. While official data confirms that 487 Indian nationals have been issued final removal orders, large-

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- Counting of votes begins at 8 AM today.
- Exit polls give BJP an edge, AAP dismisses predictions.
- ACB probe ordered into AAP's claims of BJP poaching candidates.



Delhi Awaits Election Verdict: AAP, BJP Locked in Fierce Battle

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi is set for a high-stakes political showdown as votes for the assembly elections will be counted today, deciding whether the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) retains power for a fourth consecutive term or the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ends its 27-year wait for governance in the national capital. Several exit polls have indicated a possible advantage for the BJP, but AAP has dismissed these projections, asserting that it is confident of forming the government again under Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The Congress, which failed to win a single seat in the last two elections, is hoping to make a comeback. The counting process will begin at 8 AM, with early trends expected within the first few hours. The Election Commission has reported a 60.54% voter turnout in the polls held on Wednesday.

BJP, AAP Confident of Victory

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva has claimed that the party is set to win nearly 50 seats, while AAP leaders insist that their internal assessments show a comfortable victory. AAP's senior leader Gopal Rai stated that the party is likely to secure over 50 seats, with a close contest in 7-8 constituencies. The AAP swept the Delhi elections in 2015 and 2020, securing 67 out of 70 seats in 2015 and 62 in 2020, leaving BJP and Congress struggling. A win for AAP would further solidify Kejriwal's position both in Delhi and nationally, while a BJP victory would mark a major shift in Delhi's political landscape, bringing the party back to power after nearly three decades.

Poaching Allegations Spark Political Row

Amid the tense political atmosphere, a major

controversy erupted on Friday when Delhi Lt. Governor VK Saxena ordered an Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) probe into allegations that BJP attempted to poach AAP candidates by offering them ₹15 crore and ministerial positions. AAP leaders have accused BJP of using exit poll predictions as a psychological strategy while trying to engineer defections. The BJP has strongly denied these allegations and has demanded that AAP either retract its claims or face legal action. Following the Lt. Governor's directive, an ACB team visited Kejriwal regarding the allegations. Meanwhile, BJP leader Vishnu Mittal also wrote to the Lt. Governor demanding an investigation into AAP's claims. As Delhi awaits the final verdict, the election results will not only determine the state's political leadership but also have wider implications for national politics.

Indian Startups to Showcase Innovations at India Energy Week 2025



Startups at the Forefront

The startup pavilion will showcase innovative solutions shaping India's energy future.



Government Support

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has fostered innovation through a ₹547.35 crore startup fund, supporting 303 startups with ₹286.36 crore.



Global Engagement

The US-India Business Council (USIBC) will lead a high-level delegation to discuss the Future of India-US Energy Partnership with Minister Puri.

TPN Correspondent, New Delhi

India Energy Week (IEW) 2025, scheduled from February 11-14 at Yashobhoomi, Delhi, will provide a global platform for Indian startups to showcase their innovations in the energy sector. Over 70,000 energy professionals from 120 countries are expected to attend, with a dedicated startup pavilion highlighting groundbreaking developments.

Last week, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri announced the winners of two prestigious startup challenges—Avinya'25 and Vasudha—at a special event at ONGC headquarters. These startups will gain significant exposure at IEW 2025, alongside 14 pub-



lic sector undertaking (PSU) startups, demonstrating India's leadership in energy innovation. The event, organized under the patronage of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI) and dm

events, has significantly expanded from its previous editions in Bengaluru and Goa. IEW 2025 will feature over 700 exhibitors, 500 speakers, and 6,000 delegates. Highlighting the continued

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Arvind Kejriwal Accuses EC of Withholding Polling Data



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal has accused the Election Commission (EC) of refusing to upload polling data for each assembly constituency in Delhi, despite multiple requests. The allegations come a day before the counting of votes for the Delhi assembly elections. Kejriwal claimed that the EC did not publish Form 17C, which records the number of votes polled per booth. In response, AAP has launched a website, transparentelec-

tions.in, where the party has uploaded Form 17C for every assembly constituency. "Through the day, we will present the data of every assembly and every booth in a tabulated format so that every voter can access this information. This is something that the Election Commission should have done in the interest of transparency, but it is unfortunate that they are refusing to do it," Kejriwal stated on X.

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Exit Polls Indicate BJP Edge

While one exit poll suggests the BJP could secure 51-60 seats, two others predict an AAP victory.

P-MARQ Exit Poll: BJP 39-49 seats, AAP 21-31 seats, Congress 0-1 seat.

Matrize Exit Poll: BJP 35-40 seats, AAP 32-37 seats, Congress 1 seat.

WeePreside Exit Poll: AAP 46-52 seats, BJP 18-23 seats, Congress 0-1 seat.

Axis My India Exit Poll: BJP 42-50 seats, AAP 20-28 seats, Congress 0-2 seats.

KK Survey Exit Poll: AAP 37-45 seats, BJP 22-30 seats, Congress 0-1 seat.

SC Dismisses Army Officer's Plea on Kargil War Lapses

- **CJI says judiciary should not interfere in defense matters.**
- **Officer claims his early warnings on Kargil intrusion were ignored.**

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a petition by former Army officer Manish Bhatnagar, who alleged that the Army failed to act on intelligence regarding Pakistan's incursions before the 1999 Kargil war.

A bench led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, along with Justice Sanjay Kumar, stated that judiciary does not interfere in matters of national defense and executive decisions. "There are certain things where the judiciary should not enter. It will be wrong on our part," the CJI remarked.

Bhatnagar, a former officer of the 5th Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, claimed he had informed



his seniors about the Kargil intrusion as early as January-February 1999, but his warnings were ignored. He further alleged that when the war escalated, he was court-martialed on another pretext and dismissed from service.

After sensing the court's stance, Bhatnagar sought to withdraw his petition, which was permitted.

The Kargil war, fought between May and July 1999, was triggered after the Army detected Pakistani fighters on Indian territory.

Woman delivers baby on train at Delhi station, RPF assists

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A woman from Bihar's Samastipur gave birth to a baby girl inside a train coach at Delhi's Anand Vihar Railway Station, with assistance from the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

RPF Sub-Inspector Naveen Kumari, who was on duty on Thursday, swiftly responded to the situation after receiving information about the woman's labour pains. She coordinated with a police constable and fellow passengers to help with the delivery before arranging an ambulance to transfer the mother and child to a hospital.

"I was on duty when I got the information. I called the ambulance. A lady from Bihar's Samastipur was having labour pain. With the help of a police constable and other women in the coach, we helped in the delivery and later sent them to the hospital," Kumari said.

RPF Inspector Shailendra Kumar confirmed that both the mother and newborn are doing well. "We received information from a train heading to Saharsa from Anand Vihar. Our lady Sub-Inspector, along with other staff,



reached the spot and assisted in the delivery. Later, an ambulance took them to the hospital," he said.

In a similar incident in 2024, a woman gave birth on a Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) bus with the help of a bus conductor and fellow passengers. The woman, identified as Shweta Ratnam, went into labour while traveling on a 1Z RTC bus from Musheerabad Depot. The bus conductor, R Saroja, along with other women passengers, assisted in the delivery before ensuring she received medical care.

TGSRTC Managing Director VC Sajjanar later praised their efforts, calling it a humanitarian gesture

462 Road Deaths Daily in India, Tamil Nadu Tops Accident List

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A report by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has revealed that India recorded 462 road accident deaths daily in 2022, with a total of 1.68 lakh fatalities. The country witnessed an alarming 4.61 lakh road accidents in the year, marking a 12% rise from 2021.

Tamil Nadu reported the highest number of accidents at 64,105, while Uttar Pradesh recorded the most fatalities with 22,595 deaths. Other states with high accident counts included Madhya Pradesh (54,432), Kerala (43,910), and Uttar Pradesh (41,746). Maharashtra ranked third in fatalities with 15,224 deaths, following Tamil Nadu's 17,884.

The report highlights that individuals aged 25-35 were the most affected, with 42,671 deaths in this age group. Fatalities among those under 18 years increased from 7,764 in 2021 to 9,528 in 2022, while deaths among senior citizens (60+) rose from 11,739 to 13,636.

Since 2018, road accident numbers fluctuated, peaking at 4.7 lakh in 2018 before declining to 3.72 lakh in 2020, only to rise again to 4.61 lakh in 2022. Lakshadweep recorded the lowest accidents (3) and fatalities (2).

The report stressed the need for stricter enforcement, better driver training, and improved road conditions to curb rising fatalities.

AIG Study on Healthcare's Environmental Impact Published in Top Journal

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

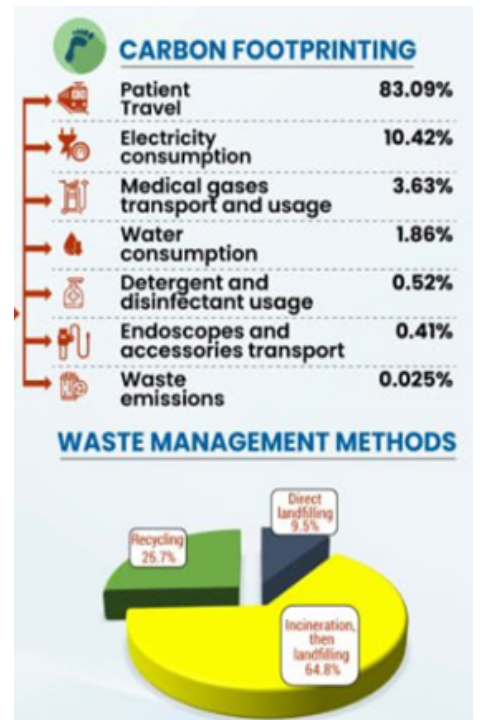
A groundbreaking study conducted by AIG Hospitals on the environmental impact of gastrointestinal endoscopy (GIE) procedures has been published in the prestigious journal Gut, part of the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Group. The study, titled "Carbon Footprinting and Environmental Impact of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Procedures at a Tertiary Care Institution: A Prospective Multi-Dimensional Assessment," highlights the carbon footprint and waste generation associated with GIE procedures and calls for sustainable healthcare practices.

Dr. D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of AIG Hospitals and a researcher in the study, emphasized the urgent need for sustainability in healthcare. "Healthcare activities, particularly in tertiary care centers, have a significant environmental impact. India, with its vast healthcare needs, must lead in adopting sustainable practices. This study provides actionable insights for reducing hospital carbon emissions while maintaining high-quality care," he said.

The study found that each GIE procedure generates an average carbon footprint of 38.45 kg CO₂e. With large-scale procedures performed globally, the cumulative emissions are substantial. A single unit performing 10,000 procedures annually would generate 384,500 kg CO₂e, requiring 17,500 mature trees to offset the emissions. The research also highlights that patient travel contributes 83.09% of total emissions, stressing the need for sustainable transporta-



File photo of Lead Researcher Dr. Hardik Rughwani (R) with Dr. D Nageshwar Reddy (Centre) and Dr. Noriya Uedo (Left) from Osaka International Cancer Institute, Japan who was at AIG Hospitals recently for a training program.



Parameters	Total (n=3,873)	Per procedure
Electricity consumption	19,160 kWh	4.94 kWh
Water consumption	262,800 litres	67.85 litres
Waste generated	1952 kg	0.504 kg
Carbon emissions	148,947 kg CO ₂ e	38.45 kg CO ₂ e (Excluding travel emissions: 6.50 kg CO ₂ e)

tion and improved healthcare accessibility. Lead researcher Dr. Hardik Rughwani called the study a crucial step in addressing healthcare's environmental impact. "By highlighting the significant carbon footprint of endoscopy procedures, we hope to drive change in healthcare practices and inspire policymakers to adopt sustainable solutions," he said. The study underscores the need for greener medical practices to align with global climate change mitigation efforts, urging hospitals to integrate sustainability into their healthcare operations.

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Arvind Kejriwal Accuses EC of Withholding Polling Data

AAP Confident, But Exit Polls Predict Close Contest

AAP is aiming for a third consecutive victory in Delhi, but exit polls suggest a tough fight, with several predicting the BJP crossing the majority mark in the 70-member assembly.

AAP leader Gopal Rai expressed confidence in securing 50 seats based on internal ground reports, a figure significantly lower than the party's sweeping victory in the previous election.

Meanwhile, Kejriwal has alleged that the BJP is attempting to poach AAP candidates by offering ₹15 crore each. The BJP has denied the accusation. Following this, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's office directed an investigation into the claim by the Anti-Corruption Branch.

Delhi recorded a 60.42% voter turnout on Wednesday. With results set to be declared today, all eyes are on whether Kejriwal's AAP will retain power or if the BJP will make a historic comeback in Delhi.

TRUMP DUMPING DOESNT EFFECT US

undocumented Indians living in the US. However, deporting such large numbers would be logistically difficult, and sources indicate that only a fraction of them face immediate action. So far, 102 deported individuals have reached India, with most having entered the US illegally. Those who traveled on valid visas but overstayed may receive some time for legal recourse. For the Indian IT sector, which

heavily relies on smooth bilateral ties, there is no immediate reason to panic. India is a key strategic partner for the US, and Modi's visit is expected to address immigration-related concerns, including work visa policies. Given the economic and political significance of Indo-US relations, the likelihood of sudden and widespread disruption in the IT sector remains low.

Indian Startups to Showcase Innovations at India Energy Week 2025

role of fossil fuels in India, Petroleum Secretary Pankaj Jain recently stated, "Fossil fuel is not going anywhere in India for the next 25 years. We have vast seismic data on open waters for exploration, and I urge innovators to develop solutions that contribute to hydrocarbon exploration

efforts." With India now the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, boasting over 1.57 lakh DPIIT-recognized startups and 100 unicorns, IEW 2025 is set to reinforce the country's commitment to energy innovation and sustainable growth.

Drugs Worth ₹200 Crore Seized in Navi Mumbai, 4 Arrested

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has busted a major drug syndicate, seizing banned substances worth ₹200 crore in Navi Mumbai and arresting four individuals, officials said on Friday.

According to the NCB's Mumbai zonal unit, the syndicate is operated by individuals based abroad. Some of the seized drugs were sourced from the US through couriers, small cargo shipments, and human carriers.

The operation began last month when officials intercepted a parcel containing 200 grams of cocaine bound for Australia. Tracing its origins led them to Navi Mumbai, where they uncovered 11.54 kg of high-quality cocaine, hydroponic weed, and 200 packets (5.5 kg) of cannabis gummies.

The arrested suspects reportedly used pseudonyms in their dealings. Authorities are now investigating the syndicate's larger network to trace its links and suppliers.

Delhi HC Orders Report on Illegal Religious Structures

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has instructed the city's religious committee to gather details on 249 unauthorized religious structures on public land. A bench led by Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela has mandated that the principal secretary or an authorized officer file a status report within six weeks. This directive follows a Supreme Court order regarding the removal of such structures. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) reported demolishing 127 of these illegal constructions, including those in Sanjay Van and Jahanpanah city forest. The structures span across lands managed by various agencies like the New Delhi Municipal Council, DDA, and multiple departments of the Delhi government. The religious committee, after 51 meetings, recommended the removal of these 249 structures. The court has scheduled the next hearing for May 14 to review the progress on this matter.

Delhi LG Orders Probe Into Kejriwal's Poaching Allegations



- LG VK Saxena orders probe into AAP's poaching allegations.
- ACB visits Kejriwal's residence for questioning.
- AAP claims BJP offered ₹15 crore and posts to its candidates.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena has ordered an investigation into AAP's allegations that the BJP attempted to poach its candidates ahead of the Assembly election results. The move comes after AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal claimed that 16 party candidates were offered ministerial positions and ₹15 crore each to switch sides. An Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) team visited Mr. Kejriwal's Civil Lines residence for questioning. AAP, in response,

announced plans to file a formal complaint regarding the alleged attempts to "break" its members. "Why is ACB doing drama instead of taking action? Everything will come out during the investigation," said AAP leader Sanjay Singh. Kejriwal also questioned the authenticity of exit polls predicting a BJP victory. "If they are winning more than 55 seats, why are they calling up our candidates? These fake surveys aim to break AAP candidates. But not one of them will switch

sides," he asserted. Delhi Chief Minister Atishi echoed similar concerns, stating, "If the BJP is confident of winning, why are they trying to break our candidates?" She alleged that exit polls were being manipulated to demoralize AAP leaders. The BJP dismissed AAP's claims as baseless and accused the party of attempting to defame it before results are announced. Following a complaint from the BJP, the Lt Governor directed the ACB to conduct a thorough investigation.

Fadnavis Dismisses Rahul Gandhi's Voter Discrepancy Allegations as 'Baseless'



TPN Correspondent | Maharashtra
Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday hit back at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his allegations of voter discrepancies in the state's assembly elections, dismissing them as "baseless" and politically motivated. Responding to Gandhi's claims, Fadnavis took to X (formerly Twitter) and wrote, "Jab ek hi chutkula baar baar sunaya jaaye, toh uspar hasa nai karte" (When the same joke is told over and over again, people do not laugh at it). He also tagged Rahul Gandhi in his post, indicating that he viewed the allegations as repetitive and unfounded.

Rahul Gandhi's Claims

Earlier, Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, alleged irregularities in Maharashtra's voter regis-

tration process, claiming that "39 lakh voters were added in just five months," a figure that surpasses the entire electorate of Himachal Pradesh. He further suggested that the Congress-Shiv Sena (UBT)-NCP (SCP) alliance had discovered irregularities in the electoral rolls and questioned the legitimacy of these additions. "In the five years between the 2019 Vidhan Sabha elections and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, 32 lakh voters were added. However, in just five months between the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the Maharashtra Assembly elections, 39 lakh voters were added. Who are these voters? Why are there more voters in Maharashtra than the total voting population of the state?" Gandhi was quoted as saying by ANI.

Fadnavis Rejects Allegations

Rejecting the accusations, Fadnavis said that the Election Commission had already addressed the issue and accused Gandhi of attempting to divert attention ahead of the February 8 Delhi elections. "Rahul Gandhi is doing a cover fire because he knows that after February 8, Congress will be nowhere in Delhi. He is already preparing a new narrative to justify the defeat," Fadnavis said. He also criticized Gandhi for not introspecting on his party's losses, adding, "If Rahul Gandhi continues to console himself with lies instead of introspection, Congress' revival will remain impossible." With Delhi elections approaching, the political battle between BJP and Congress continues to intensify, with both parties sharpening their attacks in the final phase of campaigning.

ACB Issues Notice to Kejriwal Over ₹15 Crore Bribery Allegation

TPN Correspondent, New Delhi
The Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Delhi government has issued a notice to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal, asking him to join a probe into his allegation that the BJP attempted to bribe AAP candidates. Calling the claims "extremely serious," the ACB has urged the former Delhi chief minister to make himself available for questioning. The notice, issued on Friday, states that the ACB is conducting an inquiry into Kejriwal's accusations that 16 AAP MLA candidates were offered ₹15 crore each and ministerial positions to switch sides.

Key Questions Raised by ACB:

- Whether the tweet regarding the bribery claims was posted by Kejriwal himself.
- Whether he stands by the claim that 16 AAP candidates were offered bribes.
- Details of the 16 candidates who allegedly received the offers.

- Information about the individuals or phone numbers involved in making the alleged offers.
- Any other evidence supporting AAP's claims on social media and in media reports.

Kejriwal's Allegations:

Following exit polls predicting a BJP victory in the Delhi election, Kejriwal alleged on social media that "16 AAP candidates have received calls offering ₹15 crore each and ministerial positions if they defect to the BJP."

ACB Team Visits Kejriwal's Residence:

Acting on directions from Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, the ACB filed a case and dispatched a team to Kejriwal's residence. However, tensions escalated as AAP leaders prevented the officials from meeting him, accusing the agency of acting under BJP's influence. The development has intensified the political face-off between AAP and BJP ahead of the election results.

Karnataka High Court Rejects CBI Probe in MUDA Case

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a major relief for Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Karnataka High Court on Friday refused to transfer the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) land scam case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The court dismissed a petition filed by activist Snehamayi Krishna, who sought a CBI probe instead of an investigation by the state's Lokayukta police.

The case revolves around allegations that Siddaramaiah's wife, BM Parvathi, was unfairly awarded compensatory land by MUDA after she surrendered another parcel of land she owned. The controversy erupted after claims that the compensatory land grant led to losses worth crores to the state exchequer, with activists also alleging the involvement of top MUDA officials.

Court's Ruling

Justice M Nagaprasanna rejected the petition, stating that a probe could only be transferred to another agency if there was clear evidence of mala fide intent. Senior advocates Kapil Sibal and AM Singhvi, appearing for the state and Siddaramaiah, argued that since the Lokayukta had already submitted its report in a sealed cover, there was no basis to assume bias.

The case has turned into a political flashpoint, with the BJP demanding Siddaramaiah's resignation. The Congress leader has denied any wrongdoing, calling the allegations politically moti-



vated. "The case against me is baseless. I had no role in MUDA's decision regarding the land compensation," Siddaramaiah asserted.

Background of the Case

BM Parvathi received three acres of land as a gift from her brother. Despite the land being privately owned, MUDA developed it, after which she sought compensation and was awarded 14 plots, allegedly worth far more than the original land. Last July, following complaints from activists Snehamayi Krishna, TJ Abraham, and Pradeep Kumar, the Karnataka Governor sanctioned a corruption case against Siddaramaiah. The High Court later directed the Lokayukta to file charges of corruption, cheating, and forgery against him and other accused persons.

With the CBI probe request now dismissed, the case remains under the jurisdiction of the Karnataka Lokayukta.

Amid AAP's Poaching Allegation, MLA Claims ₹15 Crore Offer

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Mukesh Ahlawat, a first-time MLA and a key member of Arvind Kejriwal's cabinet, has alleged that he was offered ₹15 crore and a ministerial berth to the election results.

He claimed he received a call last night from an unknown number, urging him to switch sides. "I could die, I may be chopped, but I will never abandon Arvind Kejriwal," Ahlawat declared, asserting his unwavering loyalty to the Delhi CM.

He also shared the phone number he allegedly received the call from, stating, "They told me their government is being formed and offered me a ministerial post if I joined them." AAP leaders, including Atishi and Sanjay Singh, have echoed

the allegations, questioning why the BJP is attempting to poach MLAs if exit polls predict a comfortable victory for them. "If they are getting more than 50 seats, why are they contacting our candidates? This proves exit polls are a conspiracy to pressure AAP MLAs," Atishi stated. Kejriwal also called the exit polls "fake surveys" designed to create defections within AAP. The BJP has strongly denied the allegations, calling them a reflection of AAP's "frustration" ahead of a likely defeat.

"Sanjay Singh should retract his allegations or face legal action," said Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva, reminding that Kejriwal is already battling a defamation case.

Delhi voted on February 5, and the results will be declared on February 8.

PM to visit US on February 12-13, hold bilateral with Trump amid tariff threat

Talks to focus on trade, defense, and Indo-Pacific cooperation

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit the United States from February 12 to 13, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced on Friday. This visit will mark Modi's first trip to the US since the inauguration of President Joe Biden in January 2021.

During his visit, Modi is expected to hold discussions with President Biden on a range of key issues, including strengthening bilateral ties, enhancing strategic cooperation, and addressing global challenges. The visit is seen as an important opportunity to reaffirm the longstanding partnership between India and the US, especially in the context of the evolving geopolitical situation.

Modi's visit will also focus on deepening cooperation in areas such as trade, technology, climate change, and defense. The two leaders are likely to discuss expanding ties in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as joint efforts to address global issues like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

This will be the first in-person meeting



between Modi and Biden since Biden assumed office, following a series of virtual meetings between the two leaders. The visit also comes as the US seeks to strengthen its relationships with India, a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region.

India and the US have enjoyed a growing partnership over the years, with both countries collaborating on various fronts,

including defense, trade, and technological innovation. This visit is expected to further bolster the ties between the two nations and pave the way for more robust collaboration in the future. As Modi prepares for his trip, it is expected that the visit will serve as a reaffirmation of the shared values and goals between the two democratic nations, further solidifying their strategic partnership.



Vande Bharat Sleeper Trains to Get a Boost with Nine More Sets by December 2025

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

After successfully completing the long-distance trial of the first 16-car Vande Bharat sleeper train on January 15, 2025, the Ministry of Railways has announced plans to expand the Vande Bharat fleet with additional sleeper trains. The Indian Railways will manufacture nine more 16-car Vande Bharat sleeper trains by the end of December next year, according to official reports. These trains will be produced by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai, which is responsible for manufacturing various rail coaches for Indian Railways.

The Vande Bharat sleeper train project is a significant step toward upgrading the country's rail infrastructure, offering passengers a premium travel experience with enhanced comfort and speed. The 16-car Vande Bharat sleeper trains are designed to cater to long-distance travel needs, and their success during the trial run has spurred the government to expedite the production process.

In addition to the production of 16-car trains, Indian Railways is also working on the manufacturing of 24-car Vande Bharat sleeper trains. The government had placed an order for propulsion electrics on December 17, 2024, for 50 rakes of the 24-car Vande Bharat sleeper trains. The order was awarded to two prominent companies—Medha, based in Hyderabad, and Alstom. Medha will supply propulsion systems for 33 rakes, while Alstom will provide the systems for the remaining 17 rakes. These propulsion systems are crucial for the trains' electricity-powered functionality, which is a step toward increasing the efficiency and sustainability of the Indian railway network.

The decision to expand the Vande Bharat sleeper train program comes at a time when Indian Railways is focused on improving passenger services and modernizing its fleet. The Vande Bharat trains are expected to significantly reduce travel time between cities, offering faster and more comfortable travel options for passengers, especially on long-distance routes.

With the success of the initial trials and the government's commitment to manufacturing more Vande Bharat sleeper trains, the initiative marks a transformative period in India's railway modernization plans. As the production of these advanced trains progresses, Indian Railways aims to enhance its competitiveness on the global stage and cater to the growing demands of domestic travelers.

Bombay High Court Grants Bail to Two Accused in Salman Khan Murder Plot

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has granted bail to two individuals arrested in connection with a conspiracy to assassinate actor Salman Khan. Seven people were arrested last year following the discovery of a plot to kill Khan near his farmhouse in Panvel. The scheme was allegedly orchestrated by the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, and all the accused were reportedly associated with the incarcerated gangster.

The court ruled in favor of Wasim Chikna and Sandeep Bishnoi, citing a lack of substantial incriminating evidence against them. Both individuals were members of a WhatsApp group where the conspiracy was discussed and planned.

The actor had faced multiple threats from the Bishnoi gang, with one incident involving gunfire near his Mumbai residence in April 2024. Later that year, in June, Navi Mumbai Police uncovered the plot to kill Khan during a visit to his Panvel farmhouse. Following the discovery, Khan's security was heightened, and he remains under round-the-clock police protection.

While the court's decision to grant bail has garnered attention, Salman Khan's safety continues to be a significant concern.



India Energy Week 2025: A Global Platform for the Future of Energy

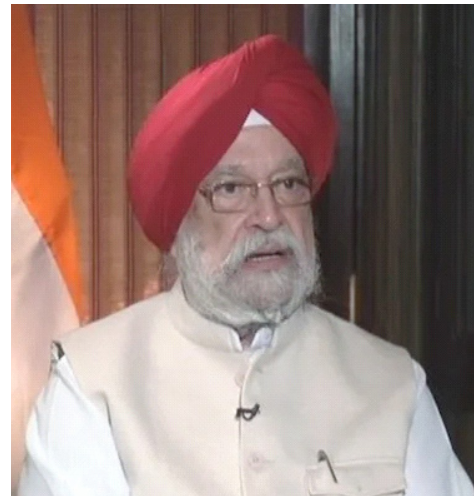
TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Energy ministers from over 20 countries will gather in Delhi for the India Energy Week (IEW) 2025, set to take place from February 11 to 14. The event will feature key energy producers from both advanced economies and the global south, making it a prominent meeting point for energy leaders worldwide.

In addition to government ministers, ambassadors, and heads of international organizations, the event will also be attended by at least 90 CEOs and members of the executive boards from some of the world's largest Fortune 500 energy companies. This level of participation makes IEW 2025 the second-largest global energy event in terms of participation, exhibition space, and sessions.

Building on the success of its previous editions, which were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the third edition of IEW promises to further establish its importance in the global energy sector. As one of the first major energy events of the year, it will set the stage for the industry's challenges and opportunities in 2025.

Held at Yashobhoomi, India's largest convention and exhibition center located in Dwarka, Delhi, IEW will provide a vital platform for discussions on the critical issues facing the global energy landscape. Participants will include key figures like Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Tanzania's Deputy Prime Minister Doto



Mashaka Biteko, and the Republic of Djibouti's Energy Minister Yonis Ali Guedi, alongside leaders of international organizations such as Jassim Al Shirawi, Secretary General of the IEF, and Haitham Al-Ghais, Secretary General of OPEC.

The 90 CEOs attending will come from top energy companies like Petrobras, Baker Hughes, JERA Asia, ADNOC, BP, Vitol, Technip Energies, Weatherford, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, The Boeing Company, and Vedanta Ltd. This high-level representation underscores the global importance of IEW as an influential energy industry gathering.

IEW 2025 will cover a vast area of over 1 lakh square meters and will host 10 country pavilions, representing nations such as the US, the UK, Russia, Japan, Germany, and the Netherlands. The event will also feature eight thematic zones focusing on critical topics including hydrogen, renewables, bio-fuels, and petrochemicals.

Calcutta HC to Deliver Death Penalty Petition for R.G. Kar Rape and Murder Convict

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

The Calcutta High Court is set to deliver its verdict on the admissibility of a petition filed by the West Bengal government seeking the death penalty for Sanjay Roy, the sole convict in the R.G. Kar rape and murder case, on Friday morning. The petition has been jointly filed by the state government and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), both seeking the death penalty for Roy.

While the state government has backed the petition, the CBI has raised objections. The central agency argues that it was responsible for conducting the investigation after the Calcutta High Court's prior order, and that the victim's parents, not the state govern-

ment, should have the right to make the petition.

The hearing on the admissibility of both petitions concluded on January 27, with the Division Bench of Justice Debansu Basak and Justice Shabbar Rashidi reserving their judgment, which will now be delivered on Friday.

The state government's counsel contended that the state had the right to appeal under Sections 377 and 378 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), which allows the state to challenge inadequate sentences or acquittal orders for serious offenses. The crime in question occurred last August, when Roy was convicted for the rape and murder of a junior doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital.



MK Stalin Accuses Centre of Neglecting Tamil Nadu in Union Budget Allocations

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday criticized the Centre for allegedly neglecting the state in the Union Budget, accusing the government of prioritizing BJP-ruled and election-bound states. Stalin expressed his dissatisfaction during a visit to Tirunelveli, a city famous for its sweet halwa, using a Tamil metaphor to describe the Centre's approach. He likened the Centre's treatment of Tamil Nadu to offering "halwa," implying that the state was being deceived with false promises and inadequate financial allocations.

Stalin emphasized that Tamil Nadu, despite its significant contribution to India's economy, has been systematically ignored in financial allocations. He pointed to the aftermath of the devastating floods in December 2023, which severely affected districts like Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Kanyakumari, and Thoothukudi. While two Union Ministers visited the affected regions, Stalin criticized the Centre for providing only a meager Rs 276 crore in aid, a fraction of the Rs 37,907 crore the state had requested. He stated that Tamil Nadu had to approach the court to receive even this minimal assistance.

The Chief Minister also questioned the absence of Tamil Nadu in major budget allocations and criticized the Centre for not announcing special projects for the state. He accused the BJP-led government of focusing on its political interests rather than addressing the concerns of Tamil Nadu. "They visit Tamil Nadu only to seek votes but provide no answers to our issues," he stated. Despite the alleged neglect, Stalin assured that the Tamil Nadu government would continue its development efforts using state resources. He highlighted that the state's Dravidian model of governance has placed Tamil Nadu at the forefront in several national surveys, showcasing the government's commitment to the welfare of its people.



NDA Gears Up for Bihar Elections, PM Modi Meets Key Leaders

BJP and JDU strategize election campaign amid Delhi poll impact

NDA leaders met PM Modi to discuss Bihar poll preparations and strategy.

BJP and JDU to contest together while maintaining Nitish Kumar's leadership.

Delhi election results may influence BJP's approach in Bihar.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Ahead of the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) began its preparations by holding a key meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The delegation, which included Union ministers Rajiv Ranjan Singh and Chirag Paswan, as well as JDU working president Sanjay Jha, expressed gratitude for the Union Budget, which proposed significant development initiatives for Bihar, a state that has historically struggled

with low development indicators.

The delegation, during the meeting, conveyed their readiness for the Bihar elections and discussed strategic moves. This marks the beginning of the NDA's election campaign in Bihar, which will include joint participation from the BJP and JDU. The two parties are expected to contest the elections together, with BJP aiming to regain influence in the state, but without disturbing JDU leader and Bihar Chief

Minister Nitish Kumar's position.

The NDA is closely watching the results of the Delhi elections, as a potential BJP victory there after 27 years could provide momentum for the party's Bihar campaign. The BJP's strategy for Bihar is likely to gain clarity once the Delhi poll results are declared, with the Delhi outcome expected to influence the overall political atmosphere in the lead-up to the Bihar polls later this year.

Jeet Adani Marries Diva Shah, Gautam Adani Announces ₹10,000 Crore Donation

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani's youngest son, Jeet Adani, married Diva Jaimin Shah today in a private wedding ceremony in Ahmedabad. Diva Shah is the daughter of renowned diamond merchant Jaimin Shah. Gautam Adani shared pictures from the intimate affair on social media, expressing gratitude and seeking blessings for the newlywed couple.

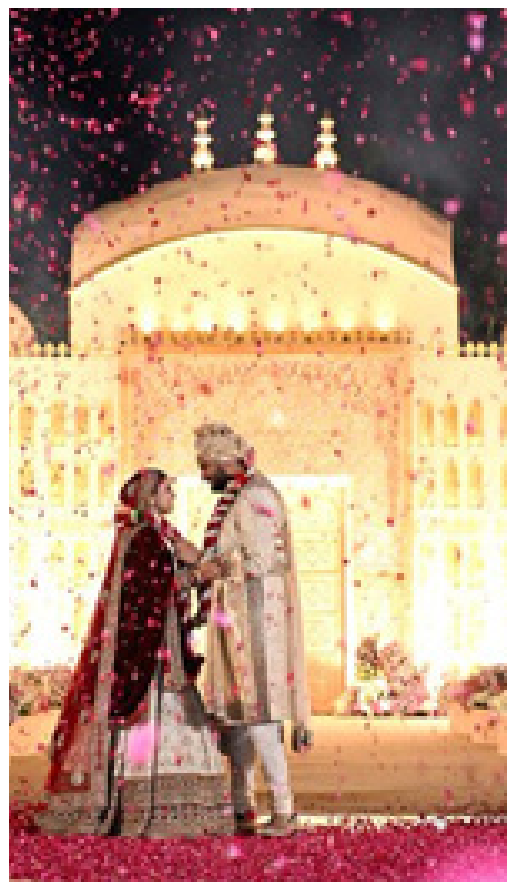
The ceremony, held at the Adani township Shantigram, followed traditional Jain and Gujarati customs and began at 2 pm. In his social media post, Gautam Adani mentioned that the wedding was a small and private event, with only close family and loved ones in attendance. He apologized for not being able to invite all the well-wishers and extended his gratitude for their support.

As part of the wedding celebrations, Gautam Adani announced a generous donation of ₹10,000 crore to various social causes. The donation will be channeled

towards initiatives in healthcare, education, and skill development. The focus will be on making top-tier healthcare, education, and skill development opportunities accessible to all sections of society, including the construction of affordable medical colleges, hospitals, schools, and global skill academies.

Moreover, Jeet and Diva pledged to contribute ₹10 lakh annually towards the weddings of 500 women with disabilities, an initiative aimed at enhancing the lives of Divyang women and their families. Just before the wedding, Jeet Adani met with 21 newlywed Divyang women and their husbands to kickstart this cause.

Jeet Adani, who joined the Adani Group in 2019, currently leads Adani Airports and Adani Digital Labs. Despite the lavish scale of the donation and initiatives, the couple had expressed their intention for the ceremony to remain a simple and traditional event, without any grandeur or celebrity involvement.



Kerala Budget 2025-26

Rs 750 Crore Rehabilitation for Wayanad Landslide Survivors



TPN Correspondent | Kerala

Kerala's Finance Minister, K N Balagopal, presented the state budget for 2025-26 on Friday, announcing a significant Rs 750 crore rehabilitation project for the survivors of the Wayanad landslides. The initiative aims to support the affected families and rebuild the region's infrastructure. Balagopal highlighted that despite financial constraints, Kerala's economy had shown remarkable resilience, with the state's growth rate reaching 10.5 percent. He also pointed out that the revenue deficit had been successfully reduced, reflecting the government's commitment to fiscal discipline. This marks the fifth budget presented by the Pinarayi Vijayan-led government in the Legislative Assembly.

The rehabilitation project for Wayanad's landslide survivors is part of a broader push for infrastructure and disaster management improvements in Ker-

ala. The state government has prioritized the well-being of the people affected by natural disasters, recognizing the long-term impacts on their livelihoods and homes. The Finance Minister further emphasized that Kerala's economic progress remains robust, with development continuing despite external challenges. This budget outlines comprehensive plans for further infrastructural development, social welfare schemes, and economic growth, aiming to improve the standard of living for the people of Kerala.

The announcement of the rehabilitation project comes at a crucial time, offering hope to the communities affected by the devastating landslides in Wayanad. Balagopal's budget also reinforces the government's focus on sustainable development and disaster preparedness, which are essential to ensuring the state's continued growth and stability.

Dhaka mob torches home of Hasina father, Delhi slams vandalism



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India strongly condemned the destruction of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic residence in Dhaka, a day after a mob attacked and demolished the building. The residence, once the home of Bangladesh's founding leader and father of the ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was destroyed on February 5, 2025, sparking widespread outrage.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal expressed India's regret over the incident, stating, "It is regrettable that the historic residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a symbol of the heroic resistance of the people of Bangladesh against the forces of occupation and oppression, was destroyed." The attack on the property, which holds immense historical significance for the people of Bangladesh, has drawn international attention and concern.

The residence, located on Dhanmondi Road in Dhaka, was not only the home of Sheikh Mujib but also a symbol of Bangladesh's

struggle for independence. The incident follows escalating political tensions and public unrest in Bangladesh, particularly surrounding the leadership of Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League. The mob's actions have raised concerns about the country's political climate and the safety of key historical sites.

The destruction of the residence is seen as an act of political defiance and a symbol of the deepening divisions within Bangladesh. The attack underscores the growing dissatisfaction with Hasina's leadership, especially among those who feel marginalized by her administration's policies and electoral practices.

India's condemnation of the incident reflects its longstanding diplomatic relationship with Bangladesh, particularly its support for the country's stability and its historical ties to Sheikh Mujib's legacy. As tensions in Dhaka continue to rise, the international community will likely keep a close watch on how the situation unfolds in Bangladesh.

India Summons Bangladesh Envoy Over Hasina's Comments and Vandalism

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India on Thursday clarified its position regarding comments attributed to former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, stating that these remarks were made in her personal capacity and not reflecting India's official stance. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, issued a statement emphasizing that conflating Hasina's comments with India's position would not benefit bilateral relations.

Jaiswal expressed concern over repeated statements from Bangladesh authorities that paint India in a negative light, blaming India for internal governance issues in Bangladesh. He stressed that these statements were contributing to ongoing tensions and negativity in the relationship between the two countries. India, he reiterated, desires a positive and mutually beneficial relationship with Bangladesh, which has been affirmed in several high-level meetings. The MEA also addressed the vandalism of the historic residence of Bangladesh's founding leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which occurred on February 5, 2025. India condemned the act, highlighting the importance of the residence in Bangladesh's national consciousness and the freedom struggle. The incident was linked to protests that erupted following a speech by Sheikh Hasina, where demonstrators demanded a ban on the Awami League.

India's message was clear: while the government seeks a constructive relationship, it expects Bangladesh to reciprocate without exacerbating tensions. The summoning of Bangladesh's Acting High Commissioner Md Nural Islam was a formal step to convey these concerns. India's call for respect and mutual understanding underlines the importance of maintaining diplomatic decorum in sustaining the relationship between the two nations.



RBI Raises GDP Growth Forecast to 6.7% for 2025-26, Expects Inflation to Moderate

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday increased the country's real GDP growth forecast for 2025-26 to 6.7%, citing positive factors such as a strong rabi crop output and a projected recovery in industrial activity. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted that household consumption would remain robust, fueled by tax relief in the Union Budget for 2025-26, while fixed investment is expected to pick up, supported by higher capacity utilization and strong financial institution balance sheets. Despite these positive expectations, Malhotra highlighted risks to growth from global uncertainties and climate change. He also mentioned that global economic growth is below historical averages, with continued geopolitical tensions and policy uncertainties affecting the global outlook. The RBI had previously revised its GDP growth forecast in December, lowering it to 6.6% from 7.2%. However, Malhotra stated that the risks to growth were "evenly balanced," with the first quarter

of 2025-26 expected to see growth at 6.7%, rising to 7.0% in the second quarter, and moderating to 6.5% in the third and fourth quarters. In terms of inflation, the RBI expects CPI inflation to moderate, forecasting 4.8% for the current financial year, with a further decline to 4.4% in the fourth quarter. For 2025-26, inflation is projected to decrease to 4.2%, with a slight increase in the first quarter but moderating thereafter. The RBI highlighted that food inflation is expected to soften due to good crop production, though volatility in global financial markets and energy prices, along with adverse weather conditions, could pose risks to inflation. Malhotra also reassured that the RBI is closely monitoring the depreciation of the rupee and financial market volatility, taking steps to stabilize the Indian currency amid the global challenges. Despite the challenges, the central bank remains optimistic about India's economic prospects, especially with resilient services exports contributing to growth.

Panama president to US: stop 'lies and falsehoods' about canal

- President Mulino denied US claims that Panama waived tolls for American vessels.
- The Panama Canal Authority confirmed no changes were made to existing fees.
- Tensions rise after Trump suggested the US should "take back" the canal.



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, Rama-

phosa 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.



US Plane with 10 aboard goes missing in Alaska, search on

TPN Correspondent | Washington

A search is currently underway in rural Alaska after a plane carrying 10 people, including the pilot, failed to arrive in Nome as scheduled. According to local media reports, the Bering Air Caravan flight, traveling from Unalakleet to Nome, was reported overdue to Alaska State Troopers around 4 pm local time.

The Alaska Department of Public Safety confirmed the report and stated that the plane's position was lost about 12 miles offshore, while en route from Unalakleet to Nome. The Coast Guard has been alerted and has initiated a search, along with an active ground search effort by the Nome Volunteer Fire Department, which issued a statement on social media.

The US Coast Guard's Alaska maritime division said that the notification for the emergency response was received by the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center at 4:30 pm local time. The aircraft in question was identified as a Cessna Caravan with 10 people onboard.

In the wake of the disappearance, authorities are continuing to search the area, as no additional information has yet been provided on the whereabouts of the plane or its occupants.

In other recent aviation news, a US-contracted surveillance plane crashed in the Philippines on Thursday, killing all four crew members, including one US military personnel, as reported by US Indo-Pacific Command. Additionally, a mid-air collision occurred on January 29 between an American Airlines flight and a Black Hawk helicopter near Washington, D.C., resulting in the deaths of 64 people aboard the airliner.

Relief For Indians In US, Court Blocks Donald Trump's Citizenship Order Indefinitely



TPN Correspondent | Washington

In a significant relief for Indian students and professionals in the United States on visas, a federal judge in Seattle has indefinitely blocked President Donald Trump's executive order aimed at ending birthright citizenship. The order, which sought to deny US citizenship to children born in the US to parents who are not permanent residents, was slammed by US District Judge John Coughenour. The court criticized the order, accusing Trump of attempting to bypass the rule of law for political purposes.

Judge Coughenour issued a preliminary injunction, marking the second major legal defeat for Trump's efforts to alter US immigration law, following a similar ruling by a federal judge in Maryland. The judge remarked that the president's actions were undermining the Constitution, stating, "The rule of law is a bright beacon which I intend to follow." He emphasized that any change to birthright citizenship would require a constitutional amendment, not a presidential order.

The Seattle court's ruling expands a previous short-term block issued by Judge Coughenour shortly after Trump signed the executive order. This nationwide injunction will remain in effect while the legal case progresses. The Justice Department, however, has expressed its intent to appeal the decision, which will likely be taken up by the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals and may eventually be heard by the US Supreme Court.



Vandalism and Arson Erupt in Bangladesh as Protesters Target Awami League Leaders

TPN Correspondent | Bangladesh

Protests across Bangladesh have erupted into violent unrest, with demonstrators targeting the homes of leaders from the ruling Awami League (AL) and defacing murals of the nation's founder, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The violence began after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's live online address, where she condemned the ongoing protests.

Protesters set fire to the house of Sheikh Selim, an AL presidium member, in Dhaka's Banani at around 1:30 a.m. on Friday. However, the fire service was delayed in responding due to security concerns, and they did not arrive until 2:45 a.m. This attack followed similar incidents, including the torching of the Dhanmondi-32 residence of Sheikh Mujib, and the ransacking and arson of houses belonging to key AL leaders, such as Obaidul Quader, general secretary of AL, and Shahriar Alam, former state minister for foreign affairs.

The protests intensified across the country, with demonstrators targeting murals and statues of Sheikh Mujib in several districts. In Cumilla,

protesters used bulldozers to demolish two murals of Sheikh Mujib, with one being destroyed at the Cumilla Judge Court and the other at the City Park. In Narayanganj, pro-BNP lawyers similarly demolished murals and a bust of the national leader, as workers were instructed to tear them down with hammers and crowbars.

The protests have a broader political context. The student-led movement, which earlier called for the abolition of Bangladesh's 1972 Constitution, is also demanding an end to the "Mujibist" legacy. These calls have been accompanied by far-right groups suggesting changes to the national anthem and other symbols associated with Sheikh Mujib's post-independence government.

Prime Minister Hasina, who fled the country in August following massive protests that led to the collapse of her 16-year regime, condemned the destruction, stating, "They can demolish a building, but they can't erase history." Amid the unrest, Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has issued arrest warrants for Hasina and several former officials for alleged crimes against humanity and genocide.



Israel Orders Army To Prepare For Palestinians' "Voluntary" Exit From Gaza

TPN Correspondent | Jerusalem

US President Donald Trump's proposal to move Palestinians out of Gaza has sparked widespread outrage, with world leaders and international bodies condemning the idea. The proposal, which was first revealed during a press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, suggested that Palestinians could leave Gaza and go to any country willing to accept them. The move was immediately met with criticism, particularly from the United Nations, which labeled it as "ethnic cleansing."

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz confirmed that the military had been instructed to prepare a plan for the voluntary departure of Gaza residents, although the execution of such a plan remains uncertain. Katz stated that the Palestinians could relocate to countries that are open to hosting them. The proposal was reportedly devised as part of efforts to ease the impact of the ongoing war in Gaza, which has been severely devastating the region.

Trump doubled down on the idea, claiming that the US could take over Gaza once the fighting concludes, though details on how such a plan would be executed remain scarce. Trump's plan would not require US soldiers, he argued, and claimed it would lead to stability in the region. Israeli leaders, including Netanyahu, praised the idea as "the first original concept" in years and suggested that it was a viable solution for Gaza's future.

However, the plan has drawn strong condemnation from both Palestinians and the international community. Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that controls Gaza, condemned Trump's remarks as "absolutely unacceptable," calling it a declaration of intent to occupy Gaza. Palestinians in Gaza, who have long experienced displacement and hardship, expressed their refusal to leave their homeland, recalling the Nakba, the forced exodus that occurred during the creation of Israel in 1948.

Explosion Kills Five Suspected Pakistani Militants Along LoC in J&K



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
At least five suspected Pakistani militants were killed in a landmine explosion on Friday along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Battal sector of Poonch district, Jammu and Kashmir. According to official sources, the incident occurred when one of the militants, who was attempting to infiltrate into India from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, accidentally stepped on a landmine that had been planted on the Indian side of the border.

Sources confirmed that the explosion triggered by the landmine killed the militants instantly. In addition, the militants were reportedly carrying an improvised explosive device (IED), which also detonated during the blast, further intensifying the explosion and confirming the presence of hazardous materials with the militants.

The attack marks yet another instance of cross-border infiltration attempts along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. While infiltration from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir remains a constant concern for Indian security forces, such incidents highlight the ongoing threats posed by militant activities in the region.

Security forces in Jammu and Kashmir have been on high alert in recent months, particularly in border areas such as Poonch, which have witnessed a series of militant attempts to infiltrate the Indian side. These efforts are often thwarted by the Indian Army and other security agencies, who have strengthened surveillance and counter-infiltration measures to prevent such attacks.

Saab to Pitch Gripen E at Aero India 2025 with 'Make in India' Focus

TPN Correspondent | Delhi
Swedish defense major Saab is set to make a strong pitch for its Gripen E fighter jet at Aero India 2025, highlighting its advanced capabilities, rapid delivery timeline, and commitment to the Indian government's 'Make in India' initiative. The air show, taking place from February 10 to February 14 in Bengaluru, will feature a full-scale replica of the Gripen E alongside its Gripen E Cockpit Simulator.

Saab will also display cutting-edge weapon systems, including the Carl-Gustaf M4, AT4CS AST, and the Next-Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapon (NLAW). A significant highlight is the Carl-Gustaf M4, which will be manufactured locally at Saab's upcoming facility in Jhajjar, Haryana, aligning with India's push for self-reliance in defense manufacturing.

The Gripen E is being positioned as the ideal choice for the Indian Air Force (IAF), which is looking to procure 114 Medium-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) to replenish its depleting fleet. Saab claims that the Gripen E will be the fastest-delivered fighter jet, offering advanced weapons, sensors, counter-measure systems, and user-friendly Human-Machine Collaboration (HMC) for pilots.

Saab is emphasizing its extensive technology transfer plans, which include local production of aircraft components, engine assembly, and the establishment of a Gripen Design Centre in Bengaluru for avionics and software development. Saab has also proposed making India a global export hub for the Gripen E, allowing for the local production of jets to cater to international markets.

PM Modi to Co-Chair AI Summit in Paris, Strengthen India-France Ties



France's technology transfer to India under 'Make in India' is seen as unmatched. Talks on aerospace, submarines, and nuclear reactors are progressing well. Bilateral agreements, student exchange programs, and global issues will be discussed.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi
Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to co-chair the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit in Paris on Monday, marking another milestone in India's growing role in global technological advancements. France extended the invitation for India to co-lead the sum-

mit, reflecting the strong bilateral relationship between the two nations. Previous AI summits were held in London and Seoul, and this marks a significant step as the global AI discourse continues to evolve.

The summit will also see the participation of top representatives from major countries, including US Vice President and Chinese Vice Prime Minister, along with industry leaders, startups, and other key stakeholders. The event is expected to span a week, focusing on AI governance and inclusivity. French President Emmanuel Macron has emphasized that the summit is an "action summit," aiming to bring together all countries in the AI revolution. A major highlight will be the launch of the AI Foundation, setting the stage for future global collaborations on AI development.

This marks Prime Minister Modi's sixth official visit to France. In addition to co-chairing the summit, PM Modi will attend a VIP dinner hosted by the French government on February 12. Diplomatic sources have noted that the summit will highlight the growing convergence between India and France, showcasing innovation and the spirit of collaboration. The message behind the summit is clear: all nations must come together to manage the challenges and opportunities presented by AI.

After the summit, PM Modi will meet with the CEOs of leading French companies at the CEO Forum. France stands as India's 11th largest foreign investor, with over 800 French companies operating in India. According to diplomatic sources, French companies have been particularly successful in complying with India's 'Make in India' initiative and technology transfer, further solidifying the trust and strong strategic partnership between the two countries.

PM Modi will also hold bilateral discussions with French President Macron in the city of Marseille. Talks are expected to cover a range of important sectors, including aerospace, engines, submarines, and nuclear reactors, all of which are progressing well. Sources have indicated that tangible bilateral agreements, as well as announcements, are expected to come out of these discussions, including the unveiling of the India-France bilateral roadmap.

In addition to the technological and defense topics, the discussions will also focus on people-to-people connections. France has ambitious plans to attract more Indian students, strengthening the cultural and educational ties between the two nations. Global issues, including cybersecurity, space exploration, and sovereignty, will also be on the agenda during this visit.

Pakistani pilgrims join Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, praise India's hospitality

TPN Correspondent | Mahakumbh
A group of Pakistani pilgrims has arrived in Prayagraj to participate in the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela, expressing their gratitude for the hospitality extended by the Indian government and the meticulous organization of the spiritual event.

Speaking with ANI, the pilgrims shared their joy and appreciation for the arrangements made to facilitate their participation. They praised the Indian government for processing their visas swiftly, allowing them to join the massive cultural and spiritual gathering. The pilgrims were delighted by their experiences visiting various camps and meeting with spiritual leaders present at the Mela.

Govind Ram Makhija, one of the pilgrims, expressed immense happiness at being able to attend the event. He mentioned that the experience surpassed his expectations, and he felt grateful for the smooth arrangements. "We are here and we are very happy. It is



very well organized, and we have been very well served. We never even imagined that it could happen," he said, unable to fully express his joy in words. Ishwar Lal Makhija, another devotee, echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing the excellent facilities provided to them throughout their journey. "We are thankful to the Indian government

who had made a very good arrangement for us right from the station till here (the camps)," he stated.

First-time visitor Priyanka shared her excitement about visiting India and participating in such a sacred event. "Feels great. It feels like we are very close to our culture here... Everything here feels like we belong. Like our worship, our religious place, everything that we see, it feels very good," she said.

Kavita, another woman devotee, described the immense joy she felt at being part of the Maha Kumbh Mela. "We consider ourselves very fortunate. We are excited to learn more about our religion here. We are very thankful to the Indian Government. They gave us a 25-day visa in 3 days," she said.

Gobind Ram, another devotee, reflected on the peaceful atmosphere of the Mela. "As soon as we reached here, we were listening to bhajans and all night we were feeling peaceful. We are very happy and peaceful," he shared.

Kshama Sawant's Visa Denial Sparks Law and Order Issue at Indian Consulate in Seattle

TPN Correspondent | Delhi
The Indian Consulate in Seattle faced a law and order issue after Indian-American politician Kshama Sawant and her supporters attempted to protest against the denial of her emergency visa. According to the Consulate General of India in Seattle, the situation arose when certain individuals tried to enter the premises after office hours without authorization and refused to leave despite repeated requests. The consulate had to call in local authorities to manage the situation as the individuals engaged in aggressive and threatening behavior toward the staff. The consulate did not provide further details

on the incident, but Sawant, a former Seattle City Council member, claimed that her visa was rejected because her name appeared on a "reject list." This was not the first time Sawant had faced visa denial. She said her visa application to visit her sick mother in Bengaluru was rejected three times, while her husband, Calvin Priest, was granted an emergency visa to do the same. On Thursday, Sawant, along with members of Workers Strike Back, staged a "peaceful civil disobedience" at the consulate, demanding an explanation for the repeated visa rejections. In a series of posts on social media, Sawant shared her frustration, stating that she was



informed that her name was on the "reject list" due to her outspoken criticism of the Indian government, particularly Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies.

India, Israel hold 13th round of Staff Talks, focus on improving defence cooperation

TPN Correspondent | Delhi
India and Israel successfully concluded the 13th round of Staff Talks from February 3 to 6 in New Delhi, focusing on enhancing defence cooperation in key areas such as joint training, technology sharing, and regional security. The Additional Directorate General of Public Information of the Indian Army shared the details of the talks on social media, highlighting the importance of the discussions in strengthening bilateral defence ties.

The Indian Army emphasized that the strategic dialogue reaffirmed the commitment to mutual growth in defence capabilities between the two nations. The talks were aimed at fostering deeper cooperation and addressing shared regional security concerns. Both countries have long enjoyed a robust relationship marked by trust and shared inter-

ests, particularly in defence and technology sectors.

The Staff Talks come as part of the ongoing effort to enhance India-Israel strategic relations. In 2024, the two countries held the 17th round of India-Israel Foreign Office Consultations, which reflected the strength of their broader partnership.

These discussions focused on key geopolitical issues, including the evolving situations in West Asia and the Indo-Pacific, underscoring the importance of India-Israel cooperation on the global stage.

Israel has been a significant partner for India in areas such as defence technology and military collaboration. Both countries have cooperated extensively on intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism measures, and joint military exercises, enhancing their mutual strategic interests.



Not the end of immigration challenges for India



A recent deportation of 104 illegal Indian immigrants aboard a US military aircraft has sparked widespread controversy. The deportees, escorted by 45 US officials, were subjected to a grueling and humiliating experience. For every two passengers, there was one official overseeing their journey, which lasted over 40 hours. The immigrants were handcuffed, their feet shackled, and were not allowed to move from their seats. Despite repeated requests, they were only allowed limited access to the restroom, with US crew members forcibly opening the lavatory door to monitor them.

What has drawn attention, however, is India's response to this treatment. The Indian government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, seemed to passively accept this harsh protocol, which portrayed the deportees as hardened criminals, even

though they were, in reality, just illegal immigrants seeking to return home. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar defended the situation in Parliament, citing that the deportation procedures by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which have been in place since 2012, involved restraints for deportees. He clarified that women and children were excluded from being restrained, but this statement failed to address the broader concerns over the degrading treatment faced by adult male deportees.

India's acceptance of such treatment raises questions about the government's stance on the dignity of its citizens and whether such brutal measures are necessary to enforce immigration laws. Many have criticized the Indian government for not standing up to the US and for allowing the deportation process to unfold without protest or action. In stark con-

trast, Latin American countries have shown more resistance to similar deportation tactics. Mexico, for example, refused to accept the deportation of illegal immigrants via US military aircraft, while Colombia insisted on sending its own planes to bring back deported citizens.

This incident sheds light on the growing concerns over the treatment of illegal immigrants and the power dynamics between countries when it comes to deportation protocols. Critics argue that the US should reconsider its use of military aircraft for deportation, which subjects immigrants to inhumane treatment. It is clear that India's response—or lack thereof—has left many questioning whether the government truly values the human dignity of its citizens, or whether international pressure and relations with the US outweigh the protection of its own people.

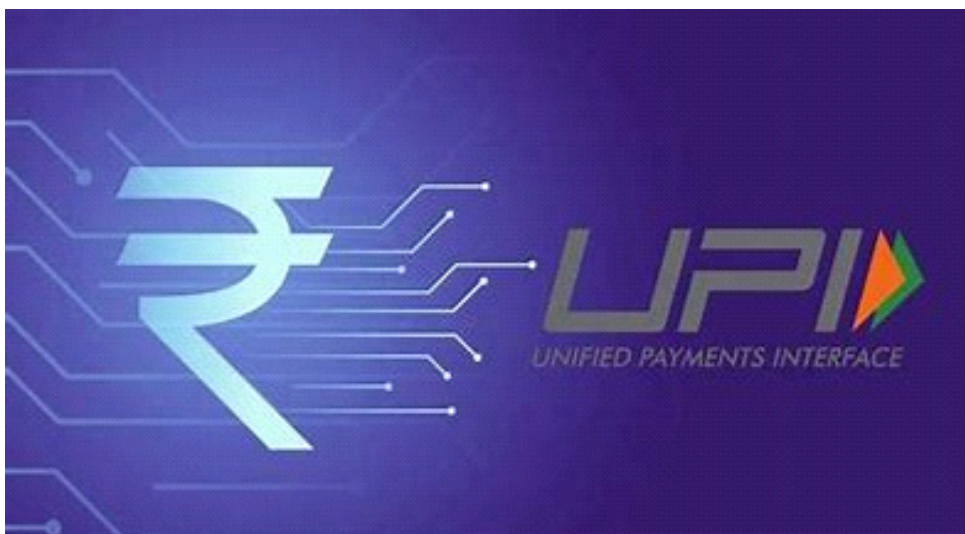


Is Donald Trump Interested in Pakistan?

The relationship between the United States and Pakistan has had its fair share of ups and downs over the years. Pakistan's strategic location has allowed it to play a key role for the US during pivotal moments, such as during the Cold War and the War on Terror. However, as the world changes, so too does the dynamic between the two nations.

Since his return to power, Donald Trump has shown little interest in reviving US-Pakistan relations. His policy, which has largely focused on issues like immigration and geopolitical competition with China, suggests that Pakistan will not be a priority for him. Trump's past interactions with Pakistan have been far from warm, notably when he suspended \$1.3 billion in military aid in 2018 and labeled Pakistan a "country of particular concern." His foreign policy is typically driven by personal biases and the relationships he maintains with other leaders, rather than diplomatic tradition. While Pakistan's strategic importance has historically been linked to conflicts such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, its role has significantly diminished in the absence of such a crisis. Under Trump, it is unlikely that Pakistan will regain its former significance in US foreign policy. The US may continue to engage with Pakistan on a limited basis, particularly in areas like intelligence-sharing and defense partnerships. However, with Trump's transactional view of global relations, this cooperation is unlikely to expand beyond essential security concerns.

Moreover, Pakistan's growing relationship with China may further strain its ties with the US. Trump's administration is likely to view Pakistan's proximity to China as a negative, and this could worsen relations. The US's focus under Trump will likely shift toward strengthening alliances in the Indo-Pacific region to counter China, further sidelining Pakistan. In conclusion, it appears that Pakistan will not play a significant role in Trump's foreign policy agenda. Without direct threats to US interests, the US-Pakistan relationship is expected to remain minimal, with any cooperation relegated to intelligence-sharing and counter-terrorism efforts.



Time for India to blaze the trail further on UPI: Build guardrails for data privacy

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has revolutionized digital payments in India, positioning the country as a global leader in financial technology. Offering a costless, reliable, and ubiquitous payment solution used by millions, UPI is one of India's most significant contributions to the 21st century. It has facilitated the bypassing of traditional card networks, accelerating the digital payment ecosystem by decades.

However, the ongoing policy discourse around the dominance of third-party app providers (TPAPs) like GooglePay and PhonePe, and the attempts to impose market share limits on these players, are misguided. Some argue that reducing the market share of these platforms below 30% is essential for ensuring competition. While these concerns are valid in traditional markets, applying such arbitrary market share caps to UPI may lead to unintended consequences.

The concentration seen in the UPI market is a natural outcome of positive network externalities. In essence, the more users and merchants adopt a particular platform, the more valuable it becomes for everyone. UPI's success lies in its simplicity and reliability, and platforms like GooglePay and PhonePe have leveraged these strengths to become dominant players. Attempting to break up this dominance through arbitrary market share caps would undermine the very network effects that have fueled UPI's success.

Instead of focusing on reducing market share, policymakers should address the core issues that could hinder UPI's continued growth and fairness. One of the most pressing concerns is personal data protection. As UPI becomes more integrated into the daily lives of millions of Indians, the risks associated with personal data breaches and misuse increase. Currently, there is a lack of clarity around data ownership, storage, and usage practices of third-party apps. Stronger regulatory frameworks around data privacy and user consent are necessary to ensure that UPI remains secure, trustworthy, and user-centric.

South India curious about ChatGPT, Bihar & Northeast the least, shows Google search data

According to the latest Google Trends data analyzed by India in Pixels, Telangana is the leader in searches related to ChatGPT in India, followed closely by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The data, which tracks Google searches from November 3, 2024, to February 3, 2025, reveals that Telangana has the highest score of 100, indicating the most interest in ChatGPT compared to other states. Tamil Nadu scores 94, Karnataka 92, Maharashtra 85, and Kerala 81.

The ranking system used is relative, not absolute, meaning the score represents how much more or less a state searched for ChatGPT compared to others. The high-ranking states all have strong IT sectors and educational institutions known for AI adoption.

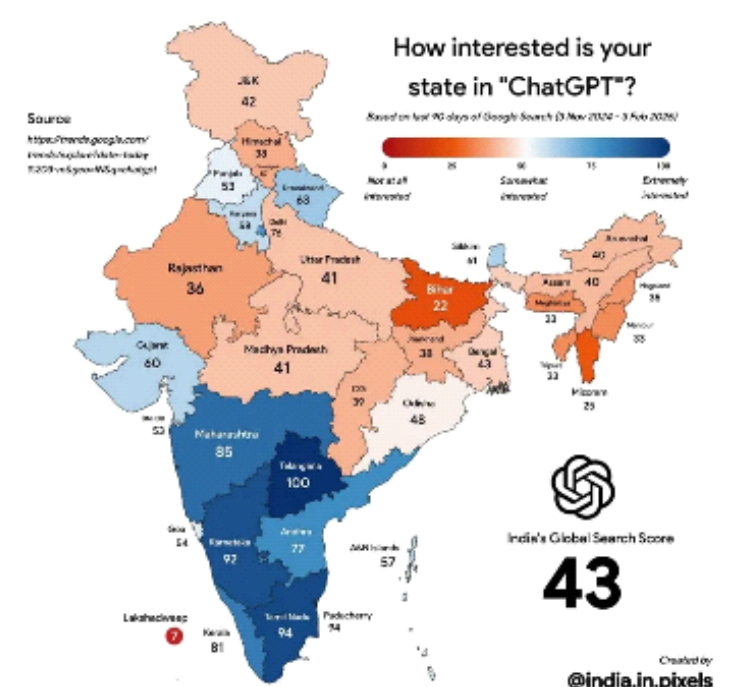
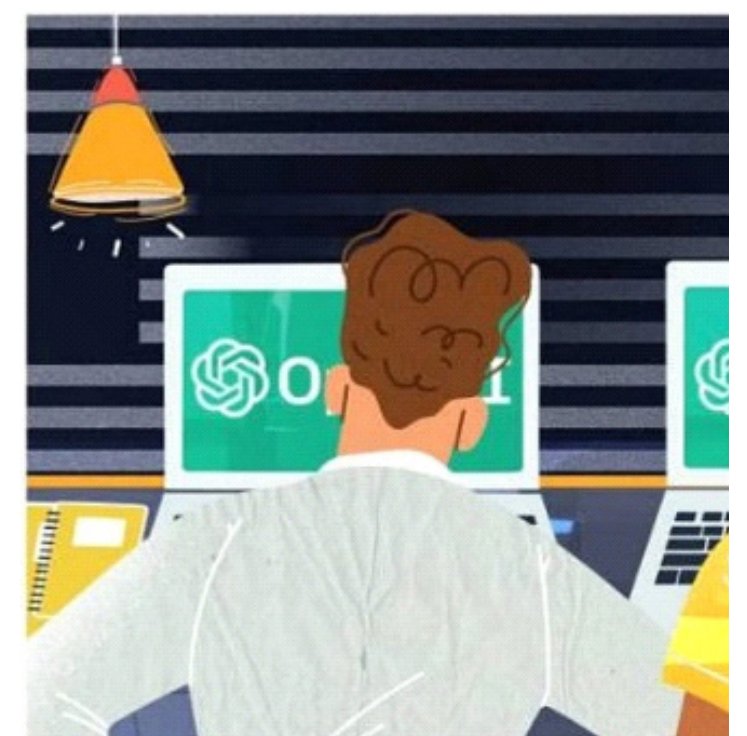
On the other end of the spectrum, Bihar recorded the lowest score of 22, indicating minimal curiosity about the AI tool. Other northeastern states, such as Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur, and Nagaland, also show relatively low engagement with ChatGPT, with scores ranging from 25 to 35.

Delhi, home to a vibrant startup culture, scored 76, while Gujarat and Punjab had scores of 60 and 53, respectively. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh scored 41, and Rajasthan 36, suggesting relatively low AI engagement. Lakshadweep, a union territory, had the lowest score of 7.

Ashris Choudhury, the data visualizer behind India in Pixels, explained that the disparity in interest between regions is largely due to differences in education, employment trends, and economic factors. States with higher technical education and employment in IT sectors, such as in the south, show more interest in AI tools like ChatGPT.

Choudhury also pointed out that AI's "strong English bias" might be limiting its reach, suggesting that India needs to develop AI tools in regional languages to ensure broader access.

The data reflects the growing interest in AI in India, with the national average score for ChatGPT searches standing at 43. However, accessibility and economic factors play a key role in determining which regions are more engaged with AI technology.



Repo Rate Cut Has Limited Impact, Markets End Lower



Domestic stock markets closed with moderate losses on Friday despite an initial surge following the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to cut the repo rate. The indices, which had remained flat due to mixed global cues, reached intraday highs after the RBI's announcement.

However, with US job data awaited and no unexpected policy moves from the central bank, investors booked profits in FMCG, finance, and banking stocks, dragging the indices to intraday lows before a slight recovery reduced losses.

The BSE Sensex, which ended at 78,058 in the previous session, opened at 78,119 and touched an intraday low of 77,475 before climbing to a high of 78,356. It finally closed at 77,860, down by 197 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,649, fluctuated between a low of 23,443 and a high of 23,694 before settling at 23,649, down 43 points. The Nifty Bank index fell 223 points to close at 50,158.

In the Nifty50 index, 28 stocks advanced while 23 declined. The top gainers included Tata Steel, ITC Hotels, Bharti Airtel, JSW Steel, and Trent. Among the worst performers were ITC, SBI, Britannia, Adani Ports, and TCS. Sectorally, banking, finance, FMCG, IT, media, PSU bank, and oil and gas stocks declined, while auto, metal, pharma, healthcare, and consumer durables stocks saw gains.

Market breadth in the NSE favored sellers, with 1,756 stocks declining out of 2,895 traded, while 1,042 advanced. A total of 31 stocks hit a 52-week high, while 69 touched a 52-week low.

RBI Cuts Repo Rate After Five Years

The RBI reduced the repo rate from 6.50% to 6.25%, marking the first rate cut in five years. This move is expected to lower home loan interest rates. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra stated that inflation is gradually coming under control, and India's GDP growth rate for the next year is projected at 6.7%. The rupee appreciated by 15 paise, settling at 87.42 against the US dollar.

Stock Ratings and Earnings Reports

Investment firm Nomura gave SBI a "buy" rating with a target price of ₹1,000, while Jefferies maintained a "hold" rating on BSE with a target price of ₹5,250 and on Trent with a target of ₹5,800.

In corporate earnings, Balrampur Chini reported a 73% decline in net profit to ₹17.35 crore from ₹44.6 crore. Meanwhile, Mazagaon Dock saw a 29% rise in net profit to ₹807 crore from ₹627 crore, and Alkem Laboratories' net profit grew by 5.2% to ₹626 crore from ₹595 crore. On the other hand, Ola Electric's losses widened to ₹564 crore from ₹376 crore. Mahindra & Mahindra posted a 20.8% increase in net profit, rising from ₹2,454 crore to ₹2,964 crore.

Tata Chemicals Shares Drop 4% After Q3FY25 Loss Announcement



Tata Chemicals' shares fell by 4% on Tuesday, February 4, hitting a 52-week low of Rs 906.65 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) following the company's announcement of a net loss of Rs 21 crore for Q3FY25. This marks a sharp decline from the net profit of Rs 194 crore reported in the same quarter last year.

At 09:48 AM, Tata Chemicals shares were trading at Rs 905.40 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). The company's disappointing performance in Q3FY25 was largely attributed to lower soda ash prices and a one-time exceptional loss of Rs 70 crore. This loss was linked to employee termination benefits, decommissioning of plant and machinery, and other closure-related expenses following the cessation of soda ash production at the Lostock plant in Northwich, UK.

In addition to the exceptional loss, the company's revenue from operations dropped by 3.8% year-on-year, totaling Rs 3,590 crore compared to Rs 3,730 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal year. The operating margin also saw a contraction, falling to 12.1% in Q3, down from 14.5% in Q3FY24.

Tata Chemicals' financial performance in the latest quarter has raised concerns among investors, contributing to the drop in share prices. The decline in soda ash prices, which directly affects the company's key business segment, combined with the additional expenses from the plant closure, has put pressure on Tata Chemicals' overall profitability.

Looking ahead, investors will be closely monitoring the company's strategy to recover from this setback, particularly in terms of addressing challenges in its soda ash business and navigating the effects of the plant closure. Despite the challenges, Tata Chemicals' long-term outlook will depend on its ability to adapt to these market conditions and regain stability in its revenue and profit margins.

India Remains Net Importer of Steel as Imports Surge 20%



India continued to be a net importer of steel, with inbound shipments rising over 20% during the April-January period of the 2023-24 fiscal year. Official data released on Friday revealed that the country imported 8.29 million tonnes (MT) of steel in this period, up from 6.89 MT in the same period the previous year.

The data shows a year-on-year growth of 20.3% in finished steel imports, underscoring India's growing reliance on steel imports to meet domestic demand. Steel industry players, particularly those in the stainless steel sector, have repeatedly raised concerns over the rising volume of imports, especially from a select group of countries, including China. These increasing imports are reportedly affecting the competitiveness of India's steel manufacturers, who are facing challenges from the cheaper steel flooding the market.

The growing influx of imported steel has sparked debates within the industry, with domestic producers pushing for government intervention to address the issue. They argue that the surge in imported steel

not only undermines the competitiveness of local producers but also puts pressure on domestic prices, making it difficult for Indian manufacturers to maintain profitability. Additionally, the increasing volume of steel imports could have broader implications for the local economy, including job security within the steel production sector.

While the Indian government has taken steps in the past to safeguard local industries through anti-dumping duties and import tariffs, the steel sector continues to grapple with the issue of rising imports. The government's response and any potential future policies aimed at curbing steel imports will be closely monitored by industry stakeholders, as they seek measures that can support the growth and sustainability of domestic production.

In summary, India's role as a net importer of steel continues to expand, with imports from countries like China posing a significant challenge to the domestic steel industry. Industry players are calling for more stringent measures to protect local producers from the influx of cheaper foreign steel.

Infosys Faces Backlash Over Layoffs of 700 Freshers at Mysuru Campus



Infosys has come under fire after nearly 700 freshers were reportedly laid off from its Mysuru campus, as claimed by the IT employees' union, Nascent Information Technology Employees Senate (NITES). The union alleges that the fresh recruits were terminated only a few months after being onboarded, which has sparked controversy regarding the company's practices.

According to NITES, these freshers were reportedly forced to sign confidentiality agreements as part of the termination process, potentially to suppress details about the layoffs. The union also raised concerns about the company's alleged use of "bouncers and security per-

sonnel" during the termination process, which they believe was intended to intimidate employees and prevent them from documenting the incident or seeking help. Harpreet Singh Saluja, president of NITES, expressed shock over the layoffs, calling the move unethical and forceful. He criticized Infosys for its treatment of employees, especially given that they had been recently hired and were not given enough time to prove themselves in the company.

However, Infosys has defended its actions, stating that the terminated freshers failed to clear the internal assessments they were required to take as part of the onboarding process. According to the

company, all new employees are given three attempts to clear these assessments, and failure to do so results in termination, which has been part of the company's policy for over two decades.

NITES has expressed its dissatisfaction with the way Infosys handled the layoffs and announced that it would be filing an official complaint with the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The union is calling for immediate intervention and strict action to protect the rights of Indian IT workers.

As the dispute escalates, the handling of layoffs in the Indian IT sector continues to raise questions about job security and the ethical treatment of employees.

REUTERS

UK Firm Launches 'World's First Cruelty-Free' Dog Bites Made Of Cultivated Chicken



A groundbreaking innovation has arrived in the UK with the launch of lab-grown meat dog treats, marking a world-first for the pet food industry. Chick Bites, created by the collaboration between Meatly and Pets at Home, combines plant-based ingredients with cultivated chicken. These revolutionary dog treats will initially be available in limited quantities at a single pet store, with plans for wider availability as production scales up. Meatly, the company responsible for creating the lab-grown chicken, uses a process that involves a single chicken egg cell sample, allowing for the sustainable production of meat indefinitely. The cultivated chicken preserves the

flavor and nutritional benefits of traditional chicken breast, offering essential amino acids, fatty acids, minerals, and vitamins crucial for pet health. This innovative approach eliminates the need for animal slaughter, aligning with the growing demand for ethical and sustainable food options. The UK became the first European country to approve the use of cultivated meat in pet food, receiving approval from both the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Animal and Plant Health Agency. As a result, Pets at Home claims to be the first company globally to offer lab-grown meat for pet food, highlighting their commitment to pioneering sustainable and

ethical pet care solutions. Owen Ensor, founder and CEO of Meatly, expressed excitement over the milestone, stating, "Just two years ago, this felt like a moonshot. Today, we take off. It's a giant leap forward towards a healthier, more sustainable meat market that's kind to our planet and animals." Anja Madsen, COO of Pets at Home, shared similar enthusiasm, emphasizing the potential of this innovation to drastically reduce the environmental impact of pet food production. With this launch, the pet food industry is set to experience a major shift, opening the door to a more sustainable, ethical future for our pets and the planet.

Apple iPhone SE 4 Launch Imminent, Will Go on Sale Later in February

Apple's highly anticipated iPhone SE 4 is expected to be launched in the coming days, with the device potentially going on sale later this month, according to a report from Bloomberg. The iPhone SE series has been a popular budget option since its first release in 2016, and the upcoming fourth-generation model is set to bring significant design and feature upgrades.



The iPhone SE 4 is expected to resemble the iPhone 14, departing from the previous models with its smaller 4.7-inch LCD screen. The new device is rumored to feature a larger 6.1-inch OLED display, offering better color contrast and sharper visuals. Notably, the home button and Touch ID will be removed, with Apple adopting gesture-based navigation and Face ID for enhanced security.

Another major change for

the iPhone SE 4 is the shift from Apple's traditional Lightning port to a USB Type-C port, aligning with the company's move toward standardizing USB Type-C across all devices. The new phone is also expected to include Apple's first-generation modem, which is designed to replace the Qualcomm component currently used in iPhones, and provide enhanced connectivity.

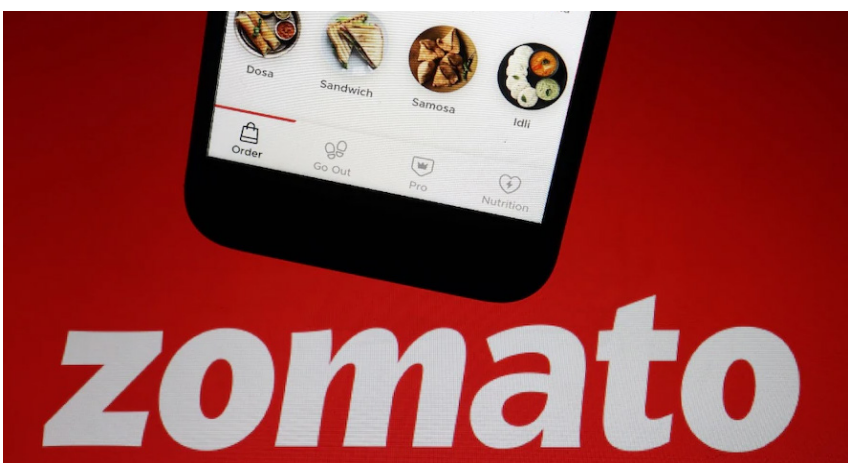
Powering the iPhone SE 4 will be a chip as advanced as

the A18 chip, featured in the upcoming iPhone 16, paired with 8GB of RAM. This hardware upgrade will enable improved performance and support for Apple Intelligence features, which could offer smarter capabilities for users.

The iPhone SE 4 is expected to be announced soon, possibly via a release on Apple's website instead of a formal launch event. While its predecessor, the iPhone SE 2022, was unveiled at Apple's "Peak Performance" event in March 2022, this new model is likely to arrive at a higher price point than the 2022 version, which started at Rs. 43,900 for the base 64GB variant.

With these exciting upgrades, the iPhone SE 4 is poised to become a compelling option for consumers seeking a powerful device with the latest technology at a more affordable price.

Zomato Rebrands to "Eternal" as It Expands Beyond Food Delivery



Indian food delivery and grocery platform Zomato announced on Thursday that it would be renaming the company to "Eternal" and unveiling a new logo. This decision follows over two years of using the name internally and comes as the company diversifies its business beyond food delivery. The rebranding reflects the company's broadening scope, which now includes four key business sectors. Alongside its original food delivery service, Zomato now operates the

quick-commerce service Blinkit, the live events business District, and kitchen supplies unit Hyperpure. Founder Deepinder Goyal shared in a letter to shareholders that the company felt it was time to publicly rebrand after these new ventures became significant drivers of its future. "We thought of publicly renaming the company when something beyond Zomato became a significant driver of our future," Goyal explained. He also mentioned that with Blinkit's suc-

cess, the company has officially reached this point of transformation.

The shift marks a significant change from just a few years ago when investors were initially skeptical about Zomato's acquisition of Blinkit in 2022. Since then, however, the quick-commerce sector has seen rapid growth, especially with Blinkit and Swiggy's Instamart leading the charge. These platforms have reshaped consumer shopping habits in India, prompting major retailers like Reliance Industries' JioMart and international giants Amazon and Walmart to launch their own quick-commerce services to compete.

The rebranding to Eternal highlights Zomato's evolution from a food delivery app to a multi-faceted business with a strong foothold in the fast-growing quick-commerce sector, signaling the company's forward-looking vision and its commitment to expansion across various industries.

World's First Kangaroo Embryos Created via IVF

In a significant step for conservation science, researchers have successfully created the first kangaroo embryos through in vitro fertilisation (IVF), a breakthrough that could prove crucial in saving endangered marsupial species. The study, led by the University of Queensland in Australia, highlights the potential of assisted reproduction techniques for the conservation of native marsupials, with an emphasis on protecting species like koalas, Tasmanian devils, and Leadbeater's possums.



Published in the journal *Reproductive, Fertility and Development*, the research demonstrates the successful development of kangaroo embryos, opening doors for the use of IVF in preserving the genetic material of these iconic Australian animals. Lead researcher Andres Gambini, a senior lecturer in animal science at the University of Queensland, explained that the ultimate goal is to develop preservation methods to safeguard endangered marsupial species. "Our focus is on ensuring the survival of these unique species by developing techniques that will allow us to store their genetic material

for future conservation efforts," Gambini said. IVF technology has been gaining traction in the global effort to conserve endangered species. In January 2024, scientists in Germany successfully transferred a rhino embryo into a surrogate, marking the world's first IVF rhino birth. In the kangaroo study, researchers used eastern grey kangaroos, a species that is overabundant, to test and refine IVF methods. They cultured 32 ovarian follicles from a single female kangaroo, with 78 percent of the follicles showing some growth and 12 percent doubling in size. The embryos were cre-

ated through a technique called intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), where a sperm is injected directly into a mature egg. Although the timeline for successful marsupial births through IVF remains uncertain, Gambini expressed optimism about the future. "With continued collaboration, funding, and technological advancements, we hope to see the birth of a marsupial through IVF within the next decade," he said. This groundbreaking achievement brings new hope for the future of marsupial conservation and the preservation of Australia's endangered wildlife. people.

Dr. James Advocates for Rethinking Hygiene Routines: Is Daily Showering Necessary?

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BCCI Rewards Rohit Sharma-Led T20 World Cup Winners With Diamond-Studded Rings



The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has honored the Rohit Sharma-led Indian T20 World Cup-winning team with personalized diamond-studded rings to commemorate their historic victory. The team, which went unbeaten in the 2024 T20 World Cup, received the prestigious rings during the Naman Awards 2025 in Mumbai last week.

Taking inspiration from NBA and NFL traditions, BCCI's specially designed "Champions" rings feature each player's name and jersey number, along with an Ashok Chakra embedded on top. The

rings also highlight India's dominant campaign, showcasing the win margins of every match. BCCI announced the recognition with a heartfelt message: "Diamonds may be forever, but this win is immortalized in a billion hearts. These memories will 'Ring' loud and live with us forever."

India lifted the T20 World Cup title in Barbados after defeating South Africa in a thrilling final. The Proteas, at one stage, needed just 30 runs off 30 balls, but India's bowlers delivered a stunning comeback.

The victory marked India's first ICC trophy since

the 2013 Champions Trophy and led to emotional farewells from key players. Following the win, captain Rohit Sharma and star batter Virat Kohli announced their retirements from T20Is, with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja joining them the next day.

"This was my last T20 World Cup, and this is what we wanted to achieve," said Virat Kohli. "It was now or never, and I wanted to lift the cup." Rohit Sharma echoed the sentiment, saying, "No better time to say goodbye. This was my last T20I game, and I desperately wanted this title."

Carlos Alcaraz Dominates, Stefanos Tsitsipas Battles Through to Rotterdam Quarter-Finals



World No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz stormed into the quarter-finals of the Rotterdam Open with a commanding straight-sets victory over Italian qualifier Andrea Vavassori on Thursday. The top-seeded Spaniard dominated the match, securing a 6-2, 6-1 win in just over an hour.

"I had no ups and downs today, which is something I've been working on," Alcaraz stated after his victory. Playing with a breathing aid as he recovers from illness, the 20-year-old star showed no signs of weakness, breaking his opponent early in both sets. He wrapped up the match with a powerful forehand

winner, ensuring his spot in the next round.

In contrast, Stefanos Tsitsipas endured a grueling three-hour battle against Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor, ultimately winning 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (8/6), 7-5 after saving a match point. "I feel like I played for 10 hours today," Tsitsipas joked post-match.

Alcaraz will now face Pedro Martinez, who stunned Danish fifth seed Holger Rune 6-4, 6-1, while Tsitsipas is set for a showdown against Italian qualifier Mattia Bellucci, who earlier shocked Daniil Medvedev. Elsewhere, Alex de Minaur advanced by defeating Jakub Mensik 6-4, 6-4, keeping his title hopes alive.

Steve Smith Equals Rahul Dravid, Joe Root in Elite Test Century List



Australian batting stalwart Steve Smith has etched his name among cricket's greatest by registering his 36th Test century on Day 2 of the second Test against Sri Lanka at the Galle International Stadium on Friday. With this milestone, Smith has equaled the legendary Rahul Dravid and England's Joe Root, making him the joint-fifth highest century-maker in Test history. Leading Australia in the absence of Pat Cummins, Smith delivered a captain's knock after Australia suffered early blows. Walking in at 37/2, Smith held firm, showcasing resilience despite early pressure.

He navigated through a close lbw appeal on his first delivery and steadily built his innings. Smith formed crucial partnerships—first with Usman Khawaja (36) and later a century stand with Alex Carey, which solidified Australia's dominance. His fifty came off 98 balls, executed with finesse through classical stroke play. As the innings progressed, Smith looked in total control, dispatching boundaries with elegant cover drives and tactical strike rotation. His moment of glory arrived when he pulled Kamindu Mendis for a boundary, securing his second

consecutive century in the series following his 141 in the first Test. Smith Surpasses Ponting in Asia In addition to his century, Smith surpassed Ricky Ponting to become Australia's highest Test run-scorer in Asia, crossing Ponting's tally of 1,889 runs. Just a day earlier, Smith had broken Ponting's record for the most Test catches (197) by an Australian outfielder. Smith's latest feat cements his place as one of the most prolific Test batters in history, further strengthening Australia's position in the Test series against Sri Lanka.

Lovlina Borgohain Clinches Gold, Shiva Thapa Settles for Silver at National Games

Tokyo Olympic bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain bagged gold in the women's 75kg category, while six-time Asian champion Shiva Thapa settled for silver in the men's 63.5kg division at the National Games on Friday.

Lovlina, representing Assam, dominated her younger opponent Pranshu Rathore from Chandigarh, winning convincingly 5-0 across all three rounds. This victory marks her first major competition since the Paris Olympics, reaffirming her dominance in the ring.

In the men's light welterweight (63.5kg) final, Shiva Thapa faced a tough battle against Services Sports Control Board boxer Vanshaj, narrowly losing 3-4 in a close encounter.

The day saw several other notable performances:

- Mandengbam Singh (Services) defeated Anshul Punia (Chandigarh) in the men's flyweight (51kg) category with a 4-1 split decision.
- Commonwealth Games bronze medalist Jaismine Lamboria (Services) dominated World Championship bronze-winner Manisha Moun (Haryana) in the women's 60kg event, securing a 5-0 win.



- Sakshi (Services) outclassed Vinakshi (Himachal Pradesh) 5-0 to grab gold.
- Divya Panwar (Madhya Pradesh) defeated Sonia Lather (Uttar Pradesh) 4-1 in the women's bantamweight category.
- Nivedita Karki (Uttarakhand) showcased agility and precision, overpowering Kalpana (Haryana) to clinch gold in the women's flyweight (50kg) category.
- Additionally, former youth world champion Ankushita Boro (Assam) secured gold in the women's welterweight (66kg) category, defeating

FIFA Suspends Pakistan Football Federation Over Constitutional Amendments

The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has been suspended by FIFA after failing to implement the necessary constitutional amendments mandated by the world football governing body. The suspension will remain in place until the PFF congress enacts the required changes to ensure transparent governance of the sport in the country. Pakistan football has been overseen by a FIFA-appointed Normalisation Committee (NC) since June 2019, with a mandate to conduct elections and resolve internal disputes. How-

ever, repeated failures in executing these reforms, along with conflicts between the NC and the state-run Pakistan Sports Board, have led to continued administrative deadlock. PFF Normalisation Committee chairman Haroon Malik had earlier warned that February 15 would be the final day of his tenure and that Pakistan risked suspension if the amendments were not made. He clarified that his role was not to contest elections but to oversee the reforms necessary for fair governance.

Despite repeated interventions, the PFF Congress has remained resistant to making the amendments, leading to FIFA's decision. This marks Pakistan Football Federation's third suspension since 2017, reflecting ongoing governance issues that continue to plague the sport in the country.

Pakistan now faces an uncertain footballing future, with domestic and international football activities put on hold until FIFA's requirements are met.





“Pattudala” Movie Review: A Lackluster Thriller That Fails to Impress

The much-anticipated film Pattudala, starring Ajith Kumar and Trisha Krishnan, has hit theaters with minimal publicity. Originally released in Tamil as Vidaa Muyarchi, the film has been dubbed into Telugu but failed to generate significant buzz. Directed by Magizh Thirumeni and produced by Lyca Productions, the movie takes audiences on a road trip-based thriller with a mix of action and drama.

Plot Overview

Set in Azerbaijan, the story revolves around Arjun (Ajith Kumar) and Kayal (Trisha), a married couple on the verge of separation after 12 years of marriage. Before officially divorcing, they decide to embark on one last road trip together. However, their journey takes an unexpected turn when their car breaks down, leading to Kayal's encounter with mysterious individuals, Rakshit (Arjun Sarja) and Deepika (Regina Cassandra). The film unfolds as Arjun searches for Kayal and faces unforeseen dangers.

Analysis

The movie suffers from a lack of gripping narrative and engaging screenplay. The road-trip thriller theme feels repetitive, failing to deliver the necessary suspense.



The pacing, particularly in the second half, tests the audience's patience. Even the emotional depth between Ajith and Trisha's characters lacks impact. Ajith's restrained performance may not sit well with his mass-action hero image.

Verdict

With weak storytelling and uninspiring execution, Pattudala turns out to be a disappointment. Despite its star cast, the film fails to engage audiences.

Rating: 2/5

“Thandel” Movie Review: A Gripping Tale of Love, Survival, and Patriotism

Telugu cinema has often explored real-life events, and Thandel is the latest addition to that list. Directed by Chandu Mondeti and produced by Bunny Vasu under the Geetha Arts banner, the film stars Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi in lead roles. With music by Devi Sri Prasad, the film hit theaters today, carrying strong emotions, thrilling sequences, and a powerful patriotic message.

Plot Summary

Set in a fishing village in Sri-kakulam, Thandel follows the story of Raju (Naga Chaitanya), a leader among the local fishermen. He is in love with Satya (Sai Pallavi), a young woman who fears for his safety whenever he ventures into



the sea. One such trip turns into a nightmare when Raju and his crew mistakenly enter Pakistani waters, leading to their arrest. The story then

follows Satya's relentless fight to bring Raju back, highlighting the struggles, sacrifices, and emotional turmoil of families affected by such incidents.

Analysis

The film successfully blends romance, emotion, and patriotism. The first half focuses on the love story, while the second half shifts into a gripping survival drama. The screenplay maintains an engaging pace, making the audience feel the emotional weight of the situation. Sai Pallavi delivers a compelling performance, while Naga Chaitanya excels in emotional scenes.

Verdict

Thandel is a heartfelt film that combines romance, action, and patriotism. With strong performances and a well-crafted narrative, it is a must-watch.

Rating: 3/5

Megastar Chiranjeevi to Grace 'Laila' Pre-Release Event



- Tollywood's young actor Vishwak Sen and director Ram Narayan are coming together for the film Laila, set to release on February 14, coinciding with Valentine's Day. In this movie, Vishwak Sen will be seen in a lady getup for the first time, creating excitement among fans.
- As part of promotions, the makers are gearing up for a grand pre-release event, and reports suggested that Megastar Chiranjeevi will be the chief guest. Adding weight to these speculations, Vishwak Sen confirmed the news through an Instagram post, which has now gone viral.
- Producer Sahu Garapati and Vishwak Sen personally visited Chiranjeevi's residence to invite him to the event. The Megastar graciously accepted the invitation, and a picture of the meeting was

shared by Vishwak on social media.

- Expressing gratitude, Vishwak wrote, "Thank you, Megastar Chiranjeevi Garu, for always supporting us unconditionally." The confirmation has heightened excitement for the film's pre-release celebrations.
- 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.

Bollywood Star to Share Screen with Prabhas in Fauji



Prabhas, one of Indian cinema's biggest stars, is currently working on multiple high-profile projects. Following the success of Kalki 2898 AD, he has now begun filming Fauji, a war drama directed by Hanu Raghavapudi. The latest buzz suggests that a renowned Bollywood actor has joined the project, further raising anticipation among fans. According to reports, veteran actor Anupam Kher has been roped in for a crucial role in the film, marking his third Telugu project after Karthikeya 2 and Tiger Nageswara Rao. However, the makers have yet to officially confirm this news. The film is currently being shot at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad.

Prabhas as an Army Officer

In Fauji, Prabhas will portray an army officer in a high-intensity action drama. Produced on a grand scale by UV Creations, the film promises powerful storytelling and breathtaking visuals.

Production and Cast

The movie is being backed by Mythri Movie Makers, with Imavi as the female lead opposite Prabhas. Vishal Chandrasekhar is composing the music, while Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao is handling the editing, and Sudeep Chatterjee is in charge of cinematography. Alongside Fauji, Prabhas is also working on The Raja Saab, a horror-comedy directed by Maruthi Dasari.

ICC Unveils Official Song for Champions Trophy 2025

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has officially released the Men's Champions Trophy 2025 anthem titled "Jeeto Baazi Khel Ke", performed by renowned Pakistani singer Atif Aslam. With just 12 days to go until the high-stakes tournament kicks off on February 19, the release of the song aims to build further excitement for the 15-match event taking place in Pakistan and the UAE. The official song is produced by Abdullah Siddiqui, with lyrics penned by Adnan Dhool and Asfandyar Asad. The accompanying music video captures the vibrant culture of Pakistan, highlighting the love for cricket that unites people from the streets to the stadiums. Fans can stream the song across popular audio platforms worldwide.

Excitement Builds for Champions Trophy 2025

The two-week tournament will witness eight of the world's top teams battling across 15 intense matches, with every game crucial in the pursuit of the prestigious Champions Trophy.

Atif Aslam, sharing his excitement, said:

"I have always been passionate about cricket and dreamed of being a fast bowler. I understand the adrenaline rush of the fans, especially during high-stakes matches like India vs. Pakistan. It's an honor to be part of this global event's official song."

ICC Chief Commercial Officer Anurag Dahiya expressed enthusiasm for the launch, stating, "The song celebrates Pakistan's



identity and builds excitement for the Champions Trophy. We encourage fans to secure their tickets before they sell out."

Stadiums to Buzz with Energy Sumair Ahmad Syed, ICC Champions Trophy 2025 Tournament Director and PCB Chief Operating Officer, called it a "thrilling milestone" and praised Atif Aslam for delivering another cricket anthem. He expressed confidence that the song would ignite fan enthusiasm, especially in Pakistan, where the tournament will see packed stadiums.

Ticket sales remain open for all matches, with Final tickets set to be available after the first semi-final in Dubai. The grand finale is scheduled for March 9, 2025.