



NATION | NEWS

'Marathi manoos' will be powerless if BJP controls civic bodies: Raj Thackeray



WORLD | NEWS

Donald Trump withdraws US from key climate treaty and dozens of other groups



SPORTS | NEWS

Sarfaraz Khan Achieves Huge Record, Slams Top India Star For 30 Runs In One Over In Vijay Hazare Trophy

IN BRIEF

ED raids in six states in govt jobs scam case

NEW DELHI (TSIT): The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday undertook searches at 15 locations in six states as part of a money laundering probe into a scam under which fraudulent joining letters for government jobs were sent, officials said. An organised gang is under the scanner of the agency. The Patna office of the ED is conducting searches in Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, the officials said. They said the scam was initially detected in the name of Railways but an in-depth investigation found that it covers over 40 other government organisations and departments including Forests, RRB (railway recruitment board), India Post, Income Tax Department, some high courts, PWD, Bihar government, Delhi Development Authority, Rajasthan secretariat and others.

ED raids in six states in govt jobs scam case

Telangana to introduce new education policy soon: Revanth



Telangana is set to introduce a unique Education Policy with integrated residential schools where students from all communities study together, promoting inclusive and equal education.

acres of land at an estimated cost of Rs.200 crore. Students from all communities—including SC, ST, BC, minorities, and others—will study together on a single campus,

promoting social harmony and equal opportunities. He further stated that the government plans to introduce pre-primary education in government schools and strengthen them to compete with private institutions. As part of this initiative, free transportation facilities for pre-primary children in rural areas are also being considered.

The Chief Minister also discussed the upgradation of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) into

Advanced Training Centres (ATCs) and the proposal to establish ATCs in every Assembly constituency. He suggested that the Himachal Pradesh Education Minister visit the Mallepally ATC to better understand the model being implemented in Telangana.

Impressed by the integrated residential school concept, Himachal Pradesh Education Minister Rohit Kumar expressed keen interest and sought a detailed report on the initiative. He praised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for introducing what he described as revolutionary reforms to strengthen the government education system.

Education Department Commissioner Yogita Rana, Director of School Education Naveen Nicholas, CM's Special Secretary Ajit Reddy, and senior officials from the Himachal Pradesh government were present at the meeting.

SIR summons to Sen, Shami routine: CEO

KOLKATA (TSIT): The office of the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer has clarified that SIR hearing summonses to Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, cricketer Mohammed Shami and Bengali actor turned-TMC MP Devi were part of a routine electoral verification process, and not targeted actions. Notices issued to these well-known personalities had sparked a controversy. According to the clarification issued by the CEO on Wednesday, scrutiny of the enumeration forms revealed that the mandatory linkage columns had been left blank by the electors concerned. Such cases automatically call for a hearing, and the individuals were summoned along with several other similarly placed electors, as per the Election Commission's notifications. "The Enumeration Form clearly shows that the linkage columns have been left blank by the elector," the state CEO's office said in a post on X. Addressing the case of economist Amartya Sen, it said that his enumeration form, submitted as an overseas elector, was received by a family member, Shantanu Sen, who linked him with his mother, Amita Sen.

Indian AI startups should work towards global leadership: PM Modi

Chairing a roundtable with Indian AI start-ups ahead of the India AI Impact Summit 2026, Modi suggested that Indian AI models should be distinct and should promote local and indigenous content and regional languages, an official statement said.



said. The prime minister said startups and artificial intelligence entrepreneurs are the co-architects of the country's future.

As many as 12 Indian AI start-ups that have qualified for the 'AI for ALL: Global Impact Challenge' summit to be held next month attended the roundtable and presented their ideas and work. During the meeting, Modi highlighted the importance of artificial intelligence in bringing about transformation in society.

He noted that India will host the India AI Impact summit next month, through which the country will play a major role in the technology sector. The prime minister highlighted that India is making efforts to bring about a transformation by leveraging AI. He emphasised that startups and AI entrepreneurs are the co-architects of India's future and said the country has immense capacity for both innovation and large-scale implementation.

India should present a unique AI model to the world that reflects the spirit of 'Made in India, Made for the World', Modi said.

These start-ups are working in a diverse set of areas, including Indian language foundation models, multilingual LLMs, speech-to-text, text-to-audio and text-to-video; 3D content using generative AI for e-commerce, marketing, and personalised content creation; engineering simulations, material research and advanced analytics for data-driven decision-making across industries; healthcare diagnostics and medical research, among others. The AI start-ups commended India's strong commitment to advancing the artificial intelligence ecosystem in the country.

KTR alleges Revanth stalled Palamuru project

Hyderabad (TSIT): Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday alleged that Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy deliberately stalled the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Project to satisfy his "former political boss" and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, pushing lakhs of farmers in the region



into distress. Addressing a party meeting at Telangana Bhavan here, Rama Rao said the Congress government's handling of the project reflected a mix of political insecurity and administrative incompetence, which, he claimed, was directly affecting the people of the Palamuru region in Mahabubnagar district. KTR, as the BRS leader is popularly known, said that nearly 90 per cent of the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Project was completed during the tenure of former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR).

South India Times 2026 calendar inaugurated by IPR Commissioner Ch. Priyanka



Hyderabad (TSIT): The SOUTH India Times 2026 calendar was formally inaugurated by Information and Public Relations (IPR) Commissioner Ch. Priyanka on Thursday. The calendar launch ceremony was held in a cordial and dignified atmosphere.

Speaking on the occasion, the IPR Commissioner appreciated the role of the media in strengthening democratic values and ensuring effective communication between the government and the public. She extended her best wishes to the SOUTH India Times team for continued journalistic excellence and responsible reporting.

SOUTH India Times Chief General Manager

(CGM) K. Vijay Dheeraj and General Manager Ravi were present during the inauguration. They briefed the Commissioner about the publication's vision, editorial commitment, and its efforts to provide credible and people-centric news coverage across South India.

Management thanked the IPR Commissioner for inaugurating the calendar and expressed confidence that the 2026 calendar would further strengthen the bond between the media fraternity and the public information system. The event concluded with an exchange of greetings and a group photograph to mark the occasion.

Telangana Congress to launch protests to demand restoration of MGNREGS

Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana's ruling Congress on Thursday decided to organise a series of protests across the state for 45 days, demanding restoration of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The state Congress unit, at its meeting at party headquarters, Gandhi Bhavan, decided to fight against Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act (VB RAM G), which was recently passed by the Parliament to replace the MGNREGS. The meeting, presided over by state Congress unit chief Mahesh



Kumar Goud and attended by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, AICC in-charge, Meenakshi Natrajan and other senior

leaders chalked out the action plan to organise the protests.

The leaders termed VB RAM G a "death sentence" for rural poor and vowed to highlight during the campaign the provisions of the new legislation which are against the interests of poor and farm labourers. The party will organise Gram Sabhas in all 12,000-plus Gram Panchayats from January 20 to January 30 to pass resolutions demanding the restoration of MGNREGS.

Trump withdraws US from India-led international Solar Alliance

New York (TSIT): President Donald Trump has ordered the US out of the Gurugram-headquartered International Solar Alliance (ISA) that promotes solar energy to combat climate change and is led by India. The ISA was among the 66 international entities that he withdrew the US from in an order on Wednesday, January 7, alleging that they worked "contrary to US national interests," the White House said.

Trump, who has called climate change a "hoax", swung the axe hard against entities

– United Nations (UN) and non-UN – with climate and environment mandates, including the ISA Secretary

of State Marco Rubio said that one of the reasons for the US action was "climate orthodoxy" that was working against "our nation's sovereignty, freedoms and general prosperity." The ISA was founded in 2015 jointly by India and France and has 124 signatories, of whom about 100 are full members. Its primary goal is to raise

investments of \$1 trillion for solar energy, besides encouraging related technologies by 2030. It is headed by Director-General Ashish Khanna. Between 2022 and 2025, Washington's contributions to the ISA were \$2.1 million, according to a US government database, which said the funds were "to support the US-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership through ISA programmes to accelerate the deployment of solar in developing and emerging countries."

The United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change, through which the Paris Climate

Agreement was reached, was foremost among the 31 UN-linked organisations that Trump targeted.

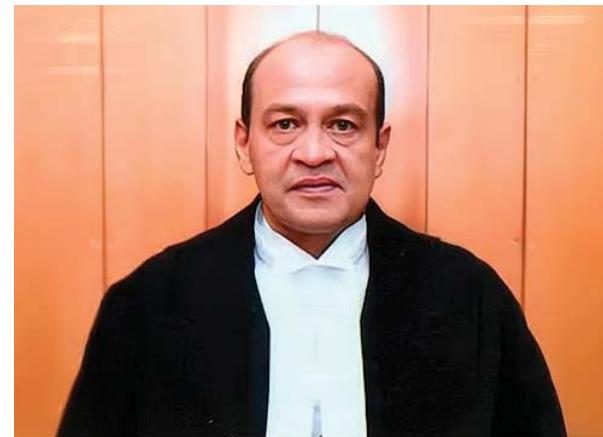
Others included UN entities dealing with water, oceans and energy, and the UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries. The 35 non-UN organisations included nine working in the climate change and environment areas. Among them was the International Panel on Climate Change that was headed by India's Rajendra Pachauri when it won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

SC reserves verdict on plea of Justice Yashwant Varma assailing validity of inquiry panel by LS

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its verdict on a plea of Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma challenging the legality of the parliamentary panel probing corruption charges against him.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and SC Sharma reserved its decision after hearing senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi, Siddharth Luthra, appearing for Varma and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing both houses of Parliament.

During the hearing, Rohatgi and Luthra questioned the procedure adopted in setting up the parliamentary panel and said under the Judges (inquiry) Act of 1968, only the Speaker of Lok Sabha and chairman of Rajya Sabha are entitled to admit the motion for removal of a judge from office. Mehta defended the constitution of the parliamentary panel, and said if the motion has been admitted in both the houses then



The committee submitted its report on May 4, finding Justice Varma guilty of misconduct

the inquiry committee shall be jointly constituted by the speaker and the chairman. On

Wednesday, the top court orally observed that there was no bar under the Judges

Inquiry Act on Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla setting up an inquiry committee to probe corruption charges against Varma after a similar motion was rejected in the Rajya Sabha. Justice Varma was repatriated from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad High Court after burnt wads of currency notes were found at his official residence in New Delhi on March 14. The top court had on December 16 agreed to hear Justice Varma's plea challenging the constitution of the inquiry committee and issued notices to the office of Lok Sabha Speaker and the secretaries general of both Houses of Parliament.

Earlier, then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna had initiated an in-house inquiry and constituted a three-member committee comprising Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice G.S. Sandhawalia, and Karnataka High Court

Justice Anu Sivaraman. The committee submitted its report on May 4, finding Justice Varma guilty of misconduct.

After Justice Varma declined to resign, the CJI forwarded the report and the judge's response to the President and the prime minister, setting the stage for impeachment proceedings.

Subsequently, Birla admitted a multi-party motion for Justice Varma's removal on August 12 and constituted a three-member inquiry committee comprising Supreme Court judge Justice Aravind Kumar, Madras High Court Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava, and senior advocate B V Acharya.

Justice Varma has sought quashing of the Speaker's action, the admission of the motion, and all consequential notices issued by the inquiry committee, contending that the entire process is unconstitutional and contrary to the Judges (Inquiry) Act.

Mahindra launches new XUV 7XO and electric XEV 9S in Hyderabad



HYDERABAD (TSIT)
Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. has officially launched its latest SUV offerings, the XUV 7XO and the electric XEV 9S, marking a significant expansion in its vehicle portfolio.

The launch event took place today, January 8, 2026, at The Park in Somajiguda. The new vehicles were unveiled by senior Mahindra officials, including Mr. Abhishek Kumar (Zonal Manager - MEAL), Mr. Swathik (Regional Manager - Auto Division), and Mr. Naved Khan (Regional Manager - MEAL). They were joined by key dealer part-

ners: Mr. Narayana (CEO, Automotive Mahindra), Mr. Veeran (MD, VVC Mahindra), and Mr. Mahendar (CEO, Landmark Mahindra).

XUV 7XO: Redefining the Benchmark Building on the success of the XUV 700, which has garnered over 300,000 customers since 2021, the new XUV 7XO enters the market with a starting price of Rs.13.66 lakh (ex-showroom). Mahindra aims to democratize high-end technology with this model, ensuring advanced features are available even in base variants. The standard "AX" variant includes:

Coast-to-Coast 31.24 cm Triple HD screens. Intelligent ADRENOX with Wireless Android Auto & Apple CarPlay. Alexa Built-in integrated with ChatGPT. 75 standard safety features.

XEV 9S: India's Big New Electric Priced at Rs.19.95 lakh (ex-showroom), the XEV 9S is positioned as "India's Big New Electric." Designed for families and creators requiring ample space, the SUV is powered by MAIA, described as India's fastest automotive mind. The vehicle combines Mahindra's expressive design philosophy with a focus on "electric freedom," catering to modern Indian lifestyles.

GITAM Hyderabad hosts pre-Sankranti festivities and film festival



HYDERABAD - GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, came alive on January 8, 2026, hosting two vibrant events: a colorful Pre-Sankranti celebration and an engaging Film Festival.

Sankranti Festivities

Organized by the student club Anveshna and the Directorate of Hospitality and Campus Life, the Sankranti celebrations showcased the rich agrarian heritage of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

The event began with the lighting of the traditional

Bhogi bonfire, symbolizing renewal and unity.

The campus featured

traditional muggu (rangoli) with gobbemmas, kite flying, and classical dance performances. A major highlight was the Gangireddulu (decorated ox) and symbolic bullock-cart rides, designed to familiarize students with age-old harvest traditions. The festivities con-

cluded with a traditional sit-down lunch served on banana leaves.

Film Festival

Simultaneously, the university hosted a Film Festival under the banner 'GITAM 70MM' by The Filmmakers Club.

Coordinated by Pranay Mula, the event provided students with industry exposure through workshops led by professionals. Celebrated writer Gopi Mohan conducted a scriptwriting workshop, while editor Sai Murali

led a session on editing. The day culminated in an interactive session with acclaimed filmmaker Venky Atluri, giving aspiring filmmakers a rare opportunity to learn from leading voices in cinema.

SRM University-AP unveils pioneering AI and quantum initiatives



AMARAVATI - SRM University-AP has announced a series of landmark initiatives in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum Computing, and Green Energy, aiming to establish Andhra Pradesh as a global hub for emerging technologies. The announcement was made by Vice Chancellor Prof. Satish

Kumar during a leadership meet on January 8, 2026. Pioneering AI and Quantum Institutes A central highlight is the university's collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) to establish a dedicated AI Institute. This partnership will integrate AI education

across all disciplines—including liberal arts and management—and includes faculty capacity-building programs, the first batch of which is set to depart for CMU this weekend. To build a "quantum-ready" workforce, the university is also launching a Quantum Institute.

In a strategic move with the Government of Andhra Pradesh, SRM AP will host a Quantum Reference Centre and a Quantum Computer, making high-level quantum tools accessible to the broader scientific community. Green Hydrogen and Future Engineering

Aligning with the state's declaration of Amaravati as a Green Hydrogen Valley, the university is launching an Energy Institute. This hub will focus on scalable clean energy solutions and workforce development through applied research and pilot projects. Furthermore, the university is introducing specialized academic programs in: Defense Engineering, Financial Engineering, Semiconductor Technologies, Health Engineering, and more.

KU VC Prof Pratap Reddy releases a book "Rivers of Grace"



Warangal, Jan 8 (TSIT): 'Rivers of Grace' is an immersive journey through India's most iconic and lesser-known rivers, revealing the magnificent interplay between nature, culture, and history that each waterway embodies," said Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Kakatiya University (KU) Prof. K Pratap Reddy. Releasing a book on "Rivers of Grace: Exploring the Majestic Waterways and Timeless Beauty of India" authored by Prof. B. Suresh Lal, Prof. Reddy, said that the book's narrative begins with the sacred Ganges, tracing its origins in the Himalayas and exploring the spiritual practices centred on its life-giving waters. Alongside this, the story delves into the Brahmaputra's fierce rapids and expansive floodplains, highlighting its role in sustaining diverse wildlife and communities, he added. Participating as the Guest, Chief Convenor of the Indian Economic Association (IEA) Dr. Anil Kumar Thakur stated that

as the book progresses, readers are taken to the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, where the intricate network of rivers and canals paints a serene landscape inhabited by unique flora and fauna. "The journey continues along the Yamuna, sharing tales of ancient cities and legends that have flourished on its banks, contrasting with modern conservation challenges. The book also explores the Narmada and Godavari rivers, illustrating their significance in regional cultures and economies. Throughout, personal stories, historical anecdotes, and environmental

'Marathi manoos' will be powerless if BJP controls civic bodies: Raj Thackeray



Mumbai: MNS chief Raj Thackeray has launched a scathing attack on the BJP, alleging that those seeking to separate Mumbai from Maharashtra are in power at the Centre and in the state, and warned that if they control the municipal corporations, "Marathi manoos" will be rendered powerless.

In the first part of a joint interview of Raj and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray, published in the latter's party mouthpiece Saamana on Thursday, the Maharashtra Nanirman Sena (MNS) chief said he and his cousin have come together not for their existence but for that of "Marathi manoos" in the state.

The Thackeray cousins were interviewed by Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha member and Saamana's Executive Editor Sanjay Raut and noted director Mahesh Manjrekar. Last month, the cousins announced the alliance of their parties for the January 15 Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections.

In the Saamana interview,

Raj Thackeray said those from outside the state are not just coming for livelihood, but they are forming their own constituencies. "It is an old wound...efforts are on to realize the dream of separating Mumbai from Maharashtra," he claimed. Today, the atmosphere is similar to what it was during the Samyukta Maharashtra movement when Gujarat wanted Mumbai to be its part, he said. "Those who want to separate Mumbai from Maharashtra are in power in the Centre as well as the state," Raj Thackeray said, targeting the BJP. "Marathi manoos will not be able to do anything if they (BJP) control the municipal corporations," he claimed.

Khammam collector outlines welfare roadmap for persons with disabilities



KHAMMAM - District Collector Anudeep Durishetty has announced a robust action plan dedicated to the upliftment and welfare of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the district.

Speaking at the International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrations held at the Collectorate on Thursday, January 8, 2026, the Collector detailed several initiatives aimed at transparency and inclusivity. The celebrations, which were delayed by a month due to the recent Gram Panchayat elections, served as a platform for the administration to reaffirm its commitment to disability rights. Key Welfare Initiatives Employment & Backlog Posts: Drawing on his successful record in Hyderabad, the Collector assured that backlog vacancies in Khammam would be filled through a transparent and stringent process.

will receive a 5% reservation in the Indiramma Housing Scheme. Municipal authorities have also been directed to prioritize the community for street vending opportunities. SADAREM & Healthcare: To ensure fairness, the Collector stated he would personally conduct random checks on the issuance of SADAREM disability certificates to maintain transparency. Education: Responding to grievances raised during Prajavani, a new special school for visually impaired children will be inaugurated in Khammam shortly. Cultural and Community

Support The administration is fast-tracking the land allotment for the Disabled Self-Respect Building (Atma Gaurava Bhavanam). During the event, Collector Durishetty also distributed marriage incentive awards and prizes to winners of district-level sports competitions. The event concluded with a cake-cutting ceremony attended by District Welfare Officer Vijetha, Deputy DM&HO Dr. Venu Madhav, and various disability rights advocates who praised the ongoing "Every Child Reads" initiative for its positive impact on inclusive education.

EDITORIAL

Why 10-Minute Delivery Model Is Under Pressure In India

India's booming quick-commerce industry is on notice. In a New Year's Eve flash strike, more than 200,000 riders refused to ferry food, grocery and other orders nationwide. While gig workers' demands for fair pay, safety, and dignity can be addressed to some extent by the platforms that use their services, the union leading the protest also wants a more fundamental change: an end to 10-minute deliveries. That would be a showstopper.

Like everywhere else, the Indian consumer's fascination for everything to arrive in under half an hour began during the pandemic lockdowns — with daily essentials. But while the likes of Fridge No More, Buyk, Jokr, and Getir died or faded away in the US once shopping habits normalized, the Indian industry just kept getting bigger by shortening delivery times and adding more items — from pillows to prescription drugs — to the list of things available for instant gratification. Apps like Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart, and Zepto have liberally poured money into so-called dark stores, strategically located warehouses dedicated to fulfilling online orders. Traditional retailers, led by tycoon Mukesh Ambani, and e-commerce heavyweights like Amazon.com Inc. and Walmart Inc.'s Flipkart, were late to the party. But now they're also investing feverishly. Real-estate broker Savills Plc expects a threefold growth in dark stores by 2030 — to 7,500 from 2,500 — as the craze for everything arriving in 10 minutes spills over into smaller Indian cities. The strike has sparked a debate about the cost of this addiction. Apps claim that they don't put drivers on the clock. But delays do show up as bad ratings, angry calls by supervisors and monetary penalties, forcing riders to engage in risky behavior on narrow, congested, potholed roads that are already notorious for a death every third minute. In the capital New Delhi, being out on the streets means constant exposure to hazardous air.

Even before the recent disruption, investors were getting rattled by calls for better social security for gig workers under India's new labor codes. Since mid-October, shares of Swiggy Ltd. and Eternal Ltd., which owns food-delivery service Zomato and quick-commerce app Blinkit, have fallen around 20%, even though the benchmark Nifty 50 Index has been broadly stable.

The flash strike has complicated matters. If regulatory diktats nudge consumers to be a little more patient — or force labor to be a little less desperate — the business model breaks down before it turns profitable. The new czars of quick commerce are trying to prevent such an outcome. In a flurry of posts on X, Eternal's Chief Executive Officer Deepinder Goyal blamed a "small number of miscreants" for obstructing non-striking agents. With order volumes hitting an all-time high of 7.5 million on December 31, the strike had failed to affect operations, he said. But even while dismissing the strike, Goyal has gone to great lengths to address the rising social concerns. The 10-minute mandate, he says, isn't leading to unsafe driving — Blinkit riders cover an average distance of 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) at a speed of 16 kilometers per hour. The company pays the premiums for drivers' insurance. Finally, the average worker earns 102 rupees (\$1.13) every hour they're logged in. (Tips are extra, but meager.) For someone working 10 hours, 26 days a month, that translates into 21,000 rupees monthly, net of fuel and vehicle maintenance. "Now tell me, is this unfair? Especially for an unskilled job, which is largely part time, and has zero barriers to entry?" he asked on X. Well, the problem with the model is revealed by Goyal's own data. Very few people are actually putting in the effort needed to earn the 21,000 rupees a month in his hypothetical example. In a year, the average Zomato delivery worker put in 38 days, seven hours per working day. Only 2.3% worked more than 250 days. If gig work is a decent halfway house between abject urban poverty and a formal sector that has few jobs to offer, surely more people will try to maximize their earnings from the platform?

Edit

CHENNAI
FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2026

4

info.southindiatimes@gmail.com

The \$700-Billion-Big China Problem Behind Trump's Venezuela Blitz



If you go by the headlines, you would think the removal of Venezuela's president, Nicolas Maduro, and his transfer to the United States were carried out to protect America's national security. We were told he was involved in narco-terrorism and drug trafficking that was poisoning and ruining American lives. This, we were assured, was law enforcement that required the use of force. Then, in typical Donald Trump fashion, the curtain slipped. He admitted — some might say — boasted, with refreshing bluntness that it was really about oil. Vast oil reserves that Venezuela is blessed with. What he did not say was that it may also be about rare minerals, present in abundance in Venezuela and desperately needed by the US. And what he did not explicitly say was that it was about dismantling China's presence in Latin America. He left that to his Secretary of State.

Scratch the surface, and you don't need to be Einstein to see the larger picture. Venezuela was never just Venezuela. It was one more battlefield in the long, grinding US-China standoff, with energy sitting right at the centre. The November temporary truce between the two parties has done little to allay doubts and suspicions against each other.

Rubio's Revelation

A couple of days after the lightning strike in Caracas, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio dropped the pretence altogether. "This is the Western Hemisphere. This is where we live," he said, before making it clear that Washington would not tolerate rivals using it as a base of operations. You get the drift, don't you? It's about China. And to a much lesser degree, about Iran. And just in case anyone missed the point, Rubio spelt out the provocation. You cannot, he said, allow the world's largest energy reserves to sit in the hands of America's adversaries. Period. For two decades now, China has been doing what it does in many countries. Patiently and quietly, writing cheques, building roads, power plants and ports and locking in long-term energy supplies. Venezuela fitted the model perfectly. Beijing invested more than \$100

billion in infrastructure and energy projects and cultivated political goodwill. China became the destination for nearly 80% of Venezuelan oil exports. These are official Chinese figures for 2024. Only hours before he was abducted, Maduro was calling President Xi Jinping an "elder brother" and a global leader, while Chinese state media busily showcased the depth of bilateral ties. Those images were soon overshadowed by pictures of Maduro blindfolded, handcuffed and photographed aboard a US warship.

Should Maduro's Ouster Worry China?

But if anyone still believes this was merely about removing a "hostile" leader, they are being wilfully naive. This was about dismantling a strategic pillar of Chinese influence in Latin America. The damage to China's interests in Venezuela is immediate and measurable. The flow of Venezuelan oil exports to China is in jeopardy. Chinese firms, such as the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Sinopec, were among the largest investors and operators in the country. Beijing's exposure includes more than \$100 billion in finance and project commitments since 2000, and around \$10 billion in outstanding loans. They are assets now vulnerable to freezes, nationalisation, renegotiation or

quiet disappearance under a new political dispensation. We do not know whether the raid disrupted physical oil flows to China. What's important is that it injected political poison into every existing deal and every future calculation. Chinese banks and companies will now have to factor in US pressure as a permanent risk, while regional partners will think twice before deepening ties that could turn into geopolitical liabilities overnight. And mind you, Venezuela is only part of the story. China has painstakingly assembled a formidable economic footprint across Latin America. Trade between China and the region crossed \$518 billion in 2024, making Beijing the largest trading partner for much of South America. Conservative estimates also place China's investment stock in Latin America at well over \$100 billion, spread across energy, mining, logistics, ports and telecoms, with an additional \$150 billion or more extended through loans and development finance. These figures are drawn from long-term tracking by the China-Latin America Finance Database, run by the Inter-American University and academic monitors, such as the Red ALC-China and Dussel Peters Monitor, which have documented Beijing's deep and sustained capital exposure across the region. That scale is sufficient to generate economic leverage, and more than enough to trigger strategic anxiety in Washington.

Growing American Anxiety

That anxiety has been visible for some time. But the Panama Canal episode brought it into sharp focus. In 2025, US officials openly urged Panama to review or cancel Chinese-linked port agreements near the canal, citing security concerns. Beijing responded by questioning the scrutiny of Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison's assets and demanding explanations. Some terminals came under new management, others under political review. What had once been commercial contracts were suddenly recast as national security threats. The US seemed to tell China that in strategic locations, its investment is no longer treated as business. It is treated as provocation. Once Caracas was out of the way, President Trump and his senior officials began naming other countries in the region, sometimes casually, sometimes threateningly. Colombia was one of the first to feel the heat. President Trump publicly warned his left-wing president, Gustavo Petro, accusing him of allowing drug cartels to "flourish" and hinting darkly that Washington would not tolerate Colombia becoming a problem state.

Madhav Gadgil: The 'Durable Optimist' Who Believed Science, Too, Has Obligations

The last time I spoke to Madhav Gadgil was not in a forest or a committee room, where we usually met for interviews, but on the phone, amid the eruption of public protests in Kerala against the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) report he had chaired in 2011. He spoke softly, almost diffidently, about what he had learnt from the field. I, less restrained, ranted about the misinformation being spread by vested interests among villages in the high ranges of Idukki. It did not take long for us to realize we were circling the same truth from different directions, that India's environmental crises cannot be understood from the lens of ecology, not through history alone, but only by patiently weaving together an understanding of 'nature-peoples-equity' for the future. That synthesis was, in many ways, the story of Madhav Gadgil's life. What Brought Gadgil Back To India Born in Pune, educated in Bombay (now Mumbai) and then at Harvard, where he studied biology under EO Wilson, Gadgil could easily have built a distinguished academic career in the United States. Instead, in the early 1970s, he and his wife, atmospheric scientist Sulochana Gadgil, returned to India, determined to build knowledge where it mattered most. It was a choice rooted not in nationalism, but in conscience. At the Indian Institute of Science (IIS), Bengaluru, then under the leadership of Satish Dhawan, the Gadgils found



a home. Sulochana helped establish the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences and reshaped India's understanding of the monsoon. Madhav Gadgil founded the Centre for Ecological Sciences, which went on to train generations of ecologists. Much of India's environmental scholarship today carries his intellectual DNA, often unacknowledged. The Man Who Saw Forests — And People Madhav Gadgil began, as many ecologists do, with animals and equations. But the forests he studied were never empty spaces. They were inhabited landscapes, dense with human histories and everyday struggles. In and around national parks, he encountered repeated conflicts between forest departments, conservationists, Adivasis, peasants and pastoralists. What disturbed him was not only ecological damage but the systematic bias of state policy where forests are managed for timber and revenue, not for livelihoods, justice or long-term sustainability. This moral clarity owed much to his father, economist DR

Gadgil, an admirer of Ambedkar and a civil liberties advocate. From him, Madhav inherited a deep distrust of unchecked authority and a lifelong concern with inequality. Science, for Gadgil, was never neutral. It had obligations. Gadgil was not a performative public intellectual. But when he spoke on issues he had studied, from forest rights, bureaucratic arrogance, to the contractor-politician-official nexus, he could be devastatingly direct. His authority came not from volume, but from knowledge painstakingly earned, often from peasants, pastoralists and forest-dwellers themselves. He listened first, theorised later. The Explosive Western Ghats Report This ethic found its fullest public expression in the WGEEP report of 2011. Written in a tone that was both rigorous and democratic, the report mapped fragile forests and steep slopes, warned against mining and reckless infrastructure, and argued for decentralised, participatory decision-making through panchayats and local communities. It was prescient without being alarmist, radical only in its fidelity to evidence. The backlash was swift and vicious. Vested interests mobilised fear and misinformation, successor committees steadily diluted the report's recommendations. Yet, the report resonated with large sections of the public, who recognised its basic common sense. Had its recommendations been taken seriously, the devastating floods and landslides that have since ravaged Kerala, Karnataka and Goa, and most recently claimed hundreds of lives in Wayanad, might well have been mitigated. The Western Ghats panel was no aberration. From the Save Silent Valley movement in the late 1970s to interventions in Bastar in the 1980s, from efforts to reform the Botanical and Zoological Surveys of India to shaping debates on forest governance, Gadgil consistently bridged science and public policy. He helped place people, not just species, at the centre of conservation. People's Scientist Recognition for this kind of science came late, and often from outside India. Over the years, Gadgil received the Volvo Environment Prize, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, and India's Padma Bhushan. In 2024, the United Nations Environment Programme named him a Champion of the Earth, describing him as a "people's scientist" who fused ecological rigour with democratic rights.

Indore, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru: Why Your 'Clean' City Doesn't Have Clean Water

Indore, Gandhinagar and Bengaluru often feature at the top of India's urban success stories. Indore has been repeatedly crowned the 'cleanest' city under the Swachh Survekshan rankings. The twin cities of Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad are projected as planned, green and well-governed urban centres, with Gandhinagar set to host the Commonwealth Games in 2030. At the Swachh Survekshan 2024-25 awards in July 2025, Ahmedabad was declared India's cleanest 'big city' (million-plus population category), while Gandhinagar topped the 'Super Swachh League' (3-10 lakh population). Bengaluru, despite its chronic challenges, continues to be branded India's technology hub and boasts one of the highest municipal revenues in the country. Yet beneath these impressive labels lies a disturbing and deadly reality: contaminated drinking water caused by the mixing of water supply and sewage pipelines. Gadgil consistently bridged science and public policy. He helped place people, not just species, at the centre of conservation. People's Scientist Recognition for this kind of science came late, and often from outside India. Over the years, Gadgil received the Volvo Environment Prize, the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, and India's Padma Bhushan. In 2024, the United Nations Environment Programme named him a Champion of the Earth, describing him as a "people's scientist" who fused ecological rigour with democratic rights.

eight deaths before the High Court. According to reports, 310 patients from Indore's Bhagirathpura area have been admitted to hospitals since December 24. In Gandhinagar, a sudden surge in typhoid cases has been reported across several localities. Health authorities confirmed 85 active cases, with a total of 144 cases registered as of January 7. Anticipating an influx of young patients, Gandhinagar Civil Hospital opened a 30-bed paediatric ward to treat children suffering from high fever, vomiting and gastrointestinal symptoms. Contaminated water has been identified as the primary cause. In Bengaluru, households in KSFC Layout, Lingarajapura, have been forced to arrange private water supplies for over a week due to contaminated tap water. Residents reported gastroenteritis, vomiting and diarrhoea for months, but the scale of contamination became evident only recently. At its core, access to safe drinking water is neither a luxury nor an aspirational goal; it is a constitutional and moral obligation of the state.

Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, includes the right to clean water as intrinsic to the right to life. When people fall seriously ill or die because sewage enters drinking water pipelines, it is not an accident — it is a failure of governance, planning, maintenance and accountability. The tragedy in Indore is particularly stark given the city's reputation. Its cleanliness rankings focus largely on solid waste management, visible sanitation and behavioural campaigns such as segregation and public toilets. Water infrastructure, by contrast, remains largely invisible — buried underground and ignored until it fails catastrophically. Gandhinagar's typhoid outbreak reveals a similar contradiction. Officials have admitted that the problem did not stem from ageing pipelines but from newly laid ones placed dangerously close to existing sewer lines. When high-pressure water began flowing, weak pipes developed leaks, allowing contamination. This represents gross dereliction of public duty and safety, and those responsible must be held accountable. Planned cities are often assumed to be safer, but planning without sustained maintenance is meaningless. Preventive and breakdown maintenance are well-established concepts in urban management. Yet preventive maintenance, in practice, remains confined to paper. Bengaluru's experience highlights another dimension: fragmented governance. Multiple agencies manage water supply, sewage, stormwater drains and roadworks. When one agency damages pipelines during excavation, another is tasked with repairs, while a third monitors water quality — often resulting in no one being held responsible. During monsoons, overflowing drains and flooded streets further exacerbate contamination risks. For a city that projects itself as a global technology hub, residents routinely boil water or rely on expensive private tankers — an irony bordering on the absurd. Why this is alarming: Around 70% of India's surface water is unfit for consumption.



Samsung Unveils World's First 130-Inch Micro RGB TV Featuring Next-Generation Color and Bold New Design

GURUGRAM, India - January 08, 2025: Samsung Electronics today unveiled the world's first 130-inch Micro RGB TV (R95H model) at CES 2026, marking the debut of its largest Micro RGB display and a bold new design direction for ultra-premium displays.

"Micro RGB represents the peak of our picture quality innovation, and the new 130-inch model takes that vision even further," said Hun Lee, Executive Vice President of the Visual Display (VD) Business at Samsung Electronics. "We're reviving the spirit of our original design philosophy introduced more than a decade ago to deliver an unmistakably premium display, engineered with technology for a new generation."

Bold Design That Redefines What a TV Can Be
The Micro RGB TV's commanding scale, next-generation color technology and striking design approach reflect Samsung's longstanding leadership in engineering excellence united with premium aesthetics. With a monumental frame and improved audio perform-



ance, the 130-inch display is intentionally designed to appear less like a television and more like a vast, immersive window that visually expands the room. The TV offers a modern, gallery-inspired aesthetic through the Timeless Frame, a modern evolution of Samsung's 2013 Timeless Gallery design, now with a refined frame that embodies the philosophy of "technology as

art." Inspired by the frame of a grand architectural window, the ultra-large screen appears to float within its borders, transforming the TV into an artistic centerpiece that shapes the room. Sound integrated into the display's frame is carefully balanced to the screen's size, so picture and audio feel naturally connected in a space. Ultimate Viewing Experience To Match Its

Scale The 130-inch Micro RGB model features Samsung's most advanced Micro RGB innovations to date. Powered by Micro RGB AI Engine Pro, Micro RGB Color Booster Pro and Micro RGB HDR Pro, it leverages AI to enhance dull tones and refine contrast, delivering vivid color and subtle detail across bright and dark scenes alike for realism and picture fidelity.

The display elevates picture performance with Micro RGB Precision Color 100, delivering 100% of the BT.2020 wide color gamut. Certified by the Verband der Elektrotechnik (VDE) for precise Micro RGB color reproduction, it produces finely controlled hues that appear true to life on screen. The 130-inch model also includes Samsung's proprietary Glare Free technology, which minimizes reflections, further preserving clear color and contrast across a variety of lighting conditions for the best viewing experience. The product supports HDR10+ ADVANCED1 and Eclipsa Audio to provide an enhanced picture and sound quality, as well as Samsung's enhanced Vision AI Companion,2 enabling conversational search, proactive recommendations and access to AI features and apps such as AI Football Mode Pro, AI Sound Controller Pro, Live Translate, Generative Wallpaper, Microsoft Copilot and Perplexity. The first-of-its-kind display will be showcased at Samsung's Exhibition Zone during CES 2026 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Stock markets trade lower on persistent foreign fund outflows

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Thursday amid persistent foreign fund outflows and concerns about potential US tariff hikes. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 255.86 points to 34,705.28 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty went down by 65.9 points to 26,074.85. From the 30-Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services, Asian Paints, Maruti, Tech Mahindra, Infosys and UltraTech Cement were among the biggest laggards. However, ICICI Bank, Adani Ports, Bharat Electronics and Hindustan Unilever were among the gainers. Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 1,527.71 crore on Wednesday, while domestic institutional investors bought stocks worth Rs 2,889.32 crore, according to exchange data. "From the fundamental perspective, there is good news for the economy and markets. Advanced estimates project the FY26 GDP growth at an impressive 7.4%. This reflects the underlying resilience of the economy despite punitive US tariffs and geopolitical tensions. The First Advance Estimates released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Wednesday put GDP growth in 2025-26 (April 2025 to March 2026 fiscal year) at better than 7.3 per cent forecast by the RBI



and the government's initial projection of 6.3-6.8 per cent. "With both the Nifty and Bank Nifty holding key support levels but encountering stiff overhead resistance, market sentiment remains cautious amid elevated geopolitical tensions, renewed tariff-related concerns, and continued foreign portfolio outflows," Ponnudurai, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index traded higher, while Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index quoted lower. US markets ended mostly lower on Wednesday. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.40 per cent to USD 60.20 per barrel.

Elon Musk's Grok AI appears to have made child sexual imagery, says charity



The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) charity says its analysts have discovered "criminal imagery" of girls aged between 11 and 13 which "appears to have been created" using Grok. The AI tool is owned by Elon Musk's firm xAI. It can be accessed either through its website and app, or through the social media platform X. The IWF said it found "sexualised and topless imagery of girls" on a "dark web forum" in which users claimed they used Grok to create the imagery. The BBC has approached X and xAI for comment. The IWF's Ngaire Alexander told the BBC tools like Grok now risked "bringing sexual AI imagery of children into the mainstream". She said the material would be classified as Category C under UK law - the lowest severity of criminal material. But she said the user who uploaded it had then used a different AI tool, not made by xAI, to create a Category A image - the most serious category. "We are extremely con-

cerned about the ease and speed with which people can apparently generate photo-realistic child sexual abuse material (CSAM)," she said. The charity, which aims to remove child sexual abuse material from the internet, operates a hotline where suspected CSAM can be reported, and employs analysts to assess the legality and severity of that material. Its analysts found the material by on the dark web - the images were not found on the

social media platform X. X and xAI were previously contacted by Ofcom, following reports Grok can be used to make "sexualised images of children" and undress women. The BBC has seen several examples on the social media platform X of people asking the chatbot to alter real images to make women appear in bikinis without their consent, as well as putting them in sexual situations. The IWF said it had received reports of such content.

these had not so far been assessed to have met the legal definition of CSAM. In a previous statement, X said: "We take action against illegal content on X, including CSAM, by removing it, permanently suspending accounts, and working with local governments and law enforcement as necessary. "Anyone using or prompting Grok to make illegal content will suffer the same consequences as if they upload illegal content."

US WILL CONTROL VENEZUELA OIL SALES 'INDEFINITELY', OFFICIAL SAYS



The US will control sales of sanctioned Venezuelan oil "indefinitely" as it prepares to roll back restrictions on the country's crude in global markets, the White House said. Officials said sales were expected to start with 30 million to 50 million barrels of oil and the revenue would be controlled by the US government in order to maintain clout over the Venezuelan government. "We need to have leverage and control of those oil sales to drive the changes that simply must happen in Venezuela," Energy Secretary Chris Wright said. It is not clear what portion of the revenues from the sale - which analysts expect to raise about \$2.8bn (£2.1bn) - would be shared with Venezuela. While White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said the two sides had struck a deal, Venezuela's state-run oil company PDVSA said in a statement that negotiations over oil sales were ongoing within the framework that exists between the two countries. "This process is based on similar rules to those in force with

international companies," it said. The comments came after US President Donald Trump announced on social media on Tuesday that Venezuela would be "turning over" up to 50 million barrels of oil to the US, and it would be sold at its market price. The White House said the money would be deposited into US-controlled accounts, which Trump said he as president would control and use to benefit the people of Venezuela and the US. White House officials said on Wednesday that they had already taken steps to start marketing the oil and the administration was working with key banks and commodity firms to execute the sales. As part of the plan,

leverage to move on the stabilisation front". Analysts said the impact of resuming oil sales would depend on the details. But the plan drew swift criticism from Democrats, with Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut calling it "insane". "They are talking about stealing the Venezuelan oil at gunpoint for a period of time undefined as leverage to micro-manage the country," he told reporters. "The scope and insanity of that plan is absolutely stunning." Venezuela has some of the world's largest proven oil reserves, but years of disinvestment, mismanagement and US sanctions have left it with output of only about a million barrels per day - less than 1% of global production. That supply, which provided critical resources to the Venezuelan government, in recent years has been going primarily to China. But that too has been disrupted in recent months after the US ramped up strikes and a blockade of Venezuelan tankers as part of its pressure campaign against Maduro.

BIG FREEZE CAUSES TRAVEL CHAOS ACROSS WESTERN EUROPE



A spell of freezing weather bringing heavy snowfall and ice has caused transport disruption across western Europe. Hundreds of flights have been cancelled at several airports, while Eurostar services and haulage have also been affected. More than 700 flights were cancelled at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, a major regional transport hub, on Wednesday. Meanwhile, France's civil aviation authority has asked airlines to cut 40% of flights scheduled for the main international airport in Paris. At least six people have died in weather-related incidents across Europe this week - five in France and one in Bosnia. Dutch national airline KLM warned Schiphol Airport was close to running out of de-icing fluid after days of freezing conditions. Spokesperson Stephan Donker told news agency Reuters that it was an "exceptional situation"

at the Dutch airport, where more than 1,000 travellers spent the night. A few hundred beds have been set up there before and after security checks with food and drinks also provided, he said. Donker warned of knock-on effects from the disruption, with further delays and cancellations possible in coming days. In Paris, more than 100 flights were cancelled at Charles de Gaulle airport and 40 more at Orly. Dozens of flights have been delayed or cancelled in and out of Heathrow and Brussels. Some

VCare Launches State-of-the-Art Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad; Unveils India's First 'Single-Day Facial Architecture'



Hyderabad 08 January 2026: VCare, a leading name in aesthetic and trichology care, has announced the grand launch of its Centre of Excellence (COE) in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. This launch marks a significant milestone in the brand's expansion across South India, following its success in Chennai and preceding an upcoming launch in Bengaluru. The new facility was inaugurated by Chief Guest Ms. Nivetha Pethuraj, a versatile actor and model, amidst a gathering of leading doctors, healthcare professionals, industry experts, and media representatives.

Visionary Leadership Driving Global Excellence

Leading the philosophy behind this expansion is the Founder & Managing Director of the VCare Group, E. Carolin Praba, India's first woman trichologist, visionary entrepreneur, and wellness trailblazer, who has built and leads a network of 80+ clinics across India. She is joined by the CEO of the

VCare Group, Mukundan Satyanarayanan. With over 22 years of distinguished leadership across trichology, cosmetic sciences, nutraceuticals, and the wellness industry, Mr. Satyanarayanan is widely recognised for integrating research-driven innovation with traditional healing sciences. Speaking on the

launch, Mr. Mukundan Satyanarayanan, CEO of VCare Group, said: "Global aesthetic standards are evolving - and so are we. With the Centre of Excellence, our vision is to move beyond surface-level treatments and create a destination that addresses skin through a structured, multi-layered approach, aligned with global beauty excellence while remaining deeply personalised."

Redefining Aesthetic Care with "Single-Day Facial Architecture"

The Hyderabad Centre of Excellence is designed to bridge the gap between global clinical validation, FDA clearance, and demonstrated results."

alised skin care. The facility introduces a pioneering concept: India's first Single-Day Facial Architecture. Rooted in Korean-inspired aesthetic principles, this one-day, glass-skin-focused protocol integrates advanced laser technologies with a three-dimensional approach. The treatment is designed to deliver visible results from Day 1, with progressive improvements over the following weeks, catering to the modern demand for immediate yet sustainable beauty solutions.

World-Class Aesthetic Technologies

The VCare Centre of Excellence features some of the world's most advanced FDA-approved and CE-certified aesthetic platforms. Speaking on this technological approach, E. Carolin Praba, Founder & Managing Director of the VCare Group, said, "Each technology we introduce is carefully chosen through global clinical validation, FDA clearance, and demonstrated results."

Donald Trump withdraws US from key climate treaty and dozens of other groups

US



President Donald Trump has withdrawn the US from dozens of international organisations, including many that work to combat climate change. Nearly half of the 66 affected bodies

ies are UN-related, including the Framework Convention on Climate Change - a treaty that underpins all international efforts to combat global warming. Groups working on development, gender equality and conflict - areas the Trump administration had repeatedly dismissed as advancing "globalist" or "woke" agendas - are also included. The White House said the decision was taken because those entities "no longer serve American interests" and promote "ineffective or hostile agendas". The memorandum was signed on Wednesday after a review into causes that the

White House said were "a waste of taxpayer dollars". "These withdrawals will end American taxpayer funding and involvement in entities that advance globalist agendas

US
President Donald Trump has withdrawn the US from dozens of international organisations, including many that work to combat climate change.

over US priorities," it said in a statement. It added that many of the organisations promoted "radical climate policies, global governance and ideological programs that conflict with US sovereignty and economic strength". As well as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the US has also withdrawn from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - the world's leading authority on

climate science. Non-UN organisations affected include those focused on clean energy cooperation, democratic governance and international security, such as the International Solar Alliance, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum. Trump has already stripped many multilateral organisations he dislikes of funds and previously rejected the scientific consensus of man-made climate change as a "hoax". While the US constitution allows presidents to join treaties "provided two thirds of Senators present concur", it does not specify what happens if they were to withdraw, which means Trump's move could face legal challenges. These latest withdrawals come after the president

withdrew the US from the Paris Climate Agreement for a second time last year, and declined to send a delegation to the COP23 climate summit in Brazil. The US has also already withdrawn from the World Health Organization, the UN Human Rights Council and the UN's cultural agency, Unesco. European leaders have criticised this latest decision, warning it would weaken global cooperation. EU climate commissioner Wopke Hoekstra said the UNFCCC "underpins global climate action" and called the US retreat "regrettable and unfortunate", while the EU's clean transition vice-president Teresa Ribera said the administration showed little concern for the environment, health or human suffering. A member of a US-based non-profit advocacy group, the Union of Concerned Scientists, described the step as a "new low".

Vance criticises Denmark and Europe's handling of 'critical' Greenland



US Vice-President JD Vance says Greenland is "critical" for the defence of the US and the world against possible Russian or Chinese missile attacks - and that Europe and Denmark have "not done a good job" in securing the area. Vance told Fox News that they had not only under-invested in Greenland's defences, but also failed to engage with President Donald Trump's argument over the issue. US officials are "actively" discussing a potential offer to buy Greenland - a semi-autonomous Danish territory - the White House said on Wednesday, a day after suggesting military action to annex it to the US was also an option. Denmark, a fellow Nato member, has warned this would spell the end of the alliance. Both Greenland and Denmark have repeatedly stressed the island is not for sale. Despite being the most sparsely populated territory, Greenland's location between North America and the Arctic makes it well placed for

early warning systems in the event of missile attacks, and for monitoring vessels in the region. Pituffik Space Base, formerly known as Thule Air Base, has been operated by the US since World War Two. In recent years, there has also been increased interest in Greenland's natural resources - including rare earth minerals, uranium and iron - which are becoming easier to access as its ice melts due to climate change. Scientists think it could also have significant oil and gas reserves. "People do not realise that the entire missile defence infrastructure is partially dependent on Greenland," Vance said in his interview on Wednesday. "If God forbid the Russians and the Chinese - not saying they're going to - but if, God forbid, somebody launched a nuclear missile into our continent, they launched a nuclear missile at Europe, Greenland is a critical part of that missile defence.

'We are not for sale': Greenlanders express fear and indignation as Trump eyes territory



"The people of Greenland do not want to become American," Mia Chemnitz tells the BBC. "We are not for sale." The 32-year-old business owner in the Greenlandic capital Nuuk reflects the sentiments of many who spoke to the BBC about how they felt about recent rhetoric from the Trump administration. The White House has said it was "actively" discussing an offer to buy the territory that has for centuries belonged to

Denmark. US President Donald Trump and his officials had earlier intimated a willingness to take it by force if necessary. This has been met with nervousness and opprobrium among Greenlanders - both on the world's largest island and elsewhere. This nervousness has only grown since the US took Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro from his residence in Caracas to New York on drug-trafficking and narco-terrorism charges in an unprecedented military move. "That's when it stopped feeling abstract," says Tupaarnaq Kopeck, 40, who moved to Canada - another place Trump has threatened to annex - for family and work.

US IMMIGRATION AGENT FATALLY SHOOTS WOMAN IN MINNEAPOLIS



A US immigration agent has shot dead a 37-year-old woman in the city of Minneapolis, sparking protests overnight. Federal officials said the woman, Renee Nicole Good, had tried to run over immigration agents with her car but the city mayor said the agent who shot her had acted recklessly. Videos of the incident show ICE agents approaching a car which is in the middle of the street. As it attempts to drive off, one of them points his gun at the driver and at least two shots are heard. The FBI is investigating. Hundreds of ICE agents have been deployed to Minneapolis, in the state of Minnesota, as part of the White House's crackdown

on illegal immigration. Using an expletive, the city's Democratic Mayor Jacob Frey urged the agents to leave the city, following the fatal shooting. Minneapolis shooting live updates Videos posted to social media by onlookers appear to show the moment of the shooting, which occurred around 10:25 local

time on Wednesday morning. From various vantage points, a maroon SUV can be seen losing control and crashing into a car parked nearby along the street. In a post on Truth Social, Trump said an ICE officer was "viciously" run over. "It is hard to believe he is alive, but is now recovering in the hospital," he wrote.

Saudi-led coalition says UAE helped smuggle separatist leader out of Yemen



The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has alleged the United Arab Emirates helped smuggle a separatist leader out of the country after he was expelled from Yemen's presidential council and accused of treason. A coalition spokesman said Aidarus al-Zubaidi, head of the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC), fled Aden on Tuesday night in a boat to Somaliland. He was then flown by a cargo aircraft to Abu Dhabi via Mogadishu under the supervision of UAE officers, he added. There was no immediate comment from the UAE or STC. The STC insisted Zubaidi was still working from Aden on Wednesday,

after the coalition said he had failed to fly to Riyadh for talks and had fled to an unknown location. The coalition also accused Zubaidi of moving STC forces from bases in Aden to his home province of al-Dahle and said it had carried out air strikes on them in response. The

STC said the strikes, which reportedly killed four people, were "unjustified" and "inconsistent" with calls for dialogue with Yemen's internationally recognised government, which is overseen by the presidential council and backed by Saudi Arabia. On Thursday, coalition

spokesman Maj Gen Turki al-Malki said it had "reliable intelligence" showing Zubaidi and his associates fled from Aden's port in the early hours of Wednesday on board a St Kitts and Nevis-flagged passenger ship. The vessel sailed across the Gulf of Aden to Berbera in the breakaway region of Somaliland, where a Ilyushin Il-76 cargo aircraft was waiting, he added.

Malki said Zubaidi and his associates "boarded the aircraft under the supervision of UAE officers" and flew first to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, before heading towards the Arabian Sea "without a declared destination".

US halts assistance to Somalia over claims food aid was illegally seized



The US has suspended all assistance to the government of Somalia, alleging that officials destroyed a UN World Food Programme (WFP) warehouse and seized "donor-funded food aid". "The Trump administration has a zero-tolerance policy for waste, theft, and diversion of life-saving assistance," said a US state department statement on X. The message, posted on the account of the under secretary for foreign assistance, said reports had been received about officials illegally seizing 76 tonnes of food intended for "vulnerable Somalis". Any resumption of assistance would depend on the Somali government "taking accountability for its unacceptable actions and taking appropriate remedial steps", it said. Although the US has withdrawn from several UN organisations under President Donald Trump, it remains by far the largest contributor to the WFP, paying \$2bn

FOOTAGE SHOWS VIOLENT CLASHES AS IRAN PROTESTS SPREAD TO MORE AREAS

There were violent clashes between anti-government protesters and security forces in several locations in Iran on Wednesday, as a wave of unrest sparked by the country's economic crisis continued for an 11th day. Iran's semi-official Fars news agency, which is close to the Revolutionary Guards, said two policemen were shot and killed by armed individuals in the south-western town of Lordegan. Videos posted on social media showed a tense stand-off between protesters and security forces, with the sound of gunfire in the background. In footage from several other areas, security forces appear to fire guns and tear gas towards crowds of protesters, some of whom are throw-

ing stones. The protests have so far spread to 111 cities and towns across all 31 provinces, according to the US-based Human Rights Activist News Agency (HRANA). It has reported that at least 34 protesters and four security personnel have been killed during the unrest, and that 2,200 protesters have been arrested. BBC Persian has confirmed the deaths and identities of 21 people, while Iranian authorities have reported the deaths of five security personnel. The protests began on 28 December, when shopkeepers took to the streets of the capital, Tehran, to express their anger at another sharp fall in the value of the Iranian currency, the rial, against the US dollar on the open market.

The rial has sunk to a record low over the past year and inflation has soared to 40% as sanctions over Iran's nuclear programme squeeze an economy also weakened by government mismanagement and corruption. University students soon joined the protests and they began spreading to other cities, with

crowds frequently heard chanting slogans against the country's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and sometimes in support of Reza Pahlavi, the exiled son of Iran's late former shah. On Wednesday, videos verified by BBC Persian showed crowds protesting in Qazvin, north-west of Tehran, and

chanting slogans including "Death to the dictator" - a reference to Khamenei - as well as "Long live the shah". Footage from the Gulf port of Bandar Abbas, showed protesters chanting "Police force, support, support" before security forces disperse them. In the Shia holy city of Mashhad, in the country's north-east, protesters were seen clashing with security forces and forcing them to retreat. Another video showed people chanting in support of the Pahlavi dynasty, which was overthrown by the 1979 Islamic revolution. In the late afternoon, a large demonstration also took place in the south-western city of Abadan, near the border with Iraq, according to footage verified by BBC

Influential China church reports arrests as crackdown on Christians intensifies



An influential Protestant church in China says prominent leaders were arrested in what appears to be a growing crackdown on the underground church movement. Nine people were detained on Tuesday after police raided their homes and the church office in Chengdu, the Early Rain Covenant Church said. Five of them had been released by Wednesday. More than 1,000 miles away in Wenzhou, authorities began demolishing the Yangyang Church building, as seen in video obtained by the non-profit ChinaAid, which monitors religious persecu-

tion. This latest wave of arrests, after others last year, shows the Communist Party's resolve to snuff out churches that do not align with its ideology, Christian groups say. The BBC has contacted China's embassy in the UK for comment. Authorities have not made any statements about the arrests, or the demolition in Wenzhou. China promotes atheism and controls religion. The government said in 2018 there are 44 million Christians in the country, but it's unclear if that number includes those who attend the many underground churches.



DUBOIS EYES BAUMGARDNER IN 'BIGGEST WOMEN'S FIGHT'

Briton Caroline Dubois believes a future showdown with Alycia Baumgardner would be "the biggest fight in women's boxing." The 24-year-old WBC lightweight world champion shared heated words with Baumgardner in December when both fighters appeared on the undercard of Jake Paul v Anthony Joshua. Dubois - who turned professional in 2022 - has repeatedly called out the experienced American unified super-featherweight world champion. "Let's be real - she wants to become a superstar, but you need a superstar fight," Dubois told BBC Sport. "You need two to tango. We both need each other. When it happens, I believe it will be the biggest fight in women's boxing." Dubois, a highly rated southpaw long touted as the future of women's boxing, expects the match-up to take place in 2027. "That's one more year of building and making things happen," she says. "I hope she sees the benefit of that. I wouldn't want her to run



away from that fight." Before that, however, Dubois wants a unification fight with Doncaster's WBO lightweight champion Terri Harper later this year. In her first fight in America and under the Most Valuable Promotions (MVP) banner, Dubois outclassed Camilla Panatta in Miami last month. The Londoner feels the exposure has already strengthened her pro-

file across the Atlantic Ocean. "I have noticed that a lot more Americans know who I am now," she says. "I've got a lot more messages from people from that side of the world and a lot more positivity. I'm becoming a name that people will recognise now, and I appreciate that." Meanwhile, 31-year-old Baumgardner claimed a hard-earned points victory over Leila Beaudoin as chief support. Tensions had already spilled over earlier in the week when Baumgardner called Dubois "a puppy" who should wait her turn. "I was trying to read her energy and I'll be honest - she seemed a bit intimidated by me. I would say very intimidated," Dubois adds. "She didn't want the confrontation. She wanted it to

Snubbed From T20 World Cup, Tristan Stubbs Predicted To Do Impress All In SA20 By JP Duminy

When South Africa announced their T20 World Cup squad, the most notable omission was Tristan Stubbs. In 42 T20I matches, Stubbs has scored 822 runs. He is also the captain of the SA20 team Sunrisers Eastern Cape, who are currently leaders on the points table. South African great JP Duminy backed him to do amazing things in the ongoing tournament. Stubbs, 25, has been rated as one of the most exciting young batters in the cricketing world and has slowly become a mainstay in all formats for South Africa, as well as being a proven finisher for Delhi Capitals (DC) in the Indian Premier League (IPL). But his recent lean run in T20Is meant Jason Smith was picked ahead of him for the T20 World Cup, to be held in India and Sri Lanka from



February 7 to March 8. Despite the surprising omission, Stubbs has excelled as a captain for the first time in the SA20 league, though his run tally stands at just 28 runs in five games. "Again, I think it's a great opportunity to shift focus. There's no doubt there'd be disappointment for him. He's been part of pretty much all formats for a period of time,

and to miss out would be really disappointing for him. But I think the opportunity from a leadership standpoint is that it shifts focus onto other people and other teams," Duminy said in a session facilitated by SA20. "It's great to see him in that leadership role. I think he's got great leadership qualities, and the leadership quality that stands out for me and I

Sarfraz Khan Achieves Huge Record, Slams Top India Star For 30 Runs In One Over In Vijay Hazare Trophy



Ignored Indian cricket team star Sarfraz Khan scripted history by slaming the fastest half-century in the history of the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Sarfraz, who was not included in the India squad for the ODI series against New Zealand, reached the milestone in just 15 deliveries. The Mumbai batter broke the record previously held by Baroda's Atit Sheth, who slammed a half-century in 16 balls against Chhattisgarh in 2020-21. Sarfraz looked in devastating form as he went after the bowlers from the very first ball, even smashing Abhishek Sharma for 30 runs in a single over. The Mumbai batter's innings against Punjab finally came to an end at 62 off 20

What Is Testicular Torsion That Forced Tilak Varma, India's Asia Cup Final Hero, To Undergo Immediate Surgery - Explained

Tilak Varma, whose gritty 69 in the Asia Cup 2025 final took India to victory against Pakistan, has undergone surgery for a groin issue that triggered acute pain. He is set to miss the upcoming T20 International series against New Zealand and is in serious doubt for the first couple of matches in next month's T20 World Cup. The 23-year-old was rushed to a hospital after complaining of acute pain in Rajkot, where he is with the Hyderabad team for the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy One-Day Championship. The five-match T20 series against New Zealand begins on January 21 in Nagpur. "Tilak Varma reported acute testicular pain in Rajkot, where he is part of the Hyderabad team for the Vijay Hazare tournament. He was taken to Golki Hospital

and, after a scan, was diagnosed with testicular torsion (sudden, intense pain) and was advised immediate surgery," a BCCI official told PTI. "We got an opinion from our specialists who agreed with the diagnosis. Tilak underwent successful surgery and is doing well now. We will update you as soon as we have more information on his recovery and expected

timeframe for his return to play, following discussions with the medical panel," he added. What Is Testicular Torsion? According to my.clevelandclinic.org, "Testicular torsion is a painful condition where the testicle twists and loses its blood supply. It requires emergency care. If the blood supply doesn't return quickly (within six hours), a



Joshua pays tribute to friends Ghami and Latz



Anthony Joshua has paid tribute to close friends Sina Ghami and Latif "Latz" Ayodele, who were killed in a car crash in Nigeria, saying he is "finding it tough" to process their deaths. Ghami and Ayodele died when the vehicle they were in, alongside heavyweight boxer Joshua and another passenger, collided with a stationary truck on a major road near Lagos. Joshua sustained minor injuries in the crash before flying home to United Kingdom and attending the funeral at a mosque in London on Sunday. "Thank

you for all the love and care you have shown my brothers," Joshua posted on Instagram on Thursday, external. "I didn't even realise how special they are. I'll just be walking with them and cracking jokes with them, not even knowing God kept me in the presence of great men. "100% it's tough for me, but I know it's even tougher for their parents. I have a strong mind, and I believe God knows their hearts. May God have mercy on my brothers." Ghami was Joshua's full-time sport and exercise rehabilitation coach and worked with him for more than 10 years. Hours before the crash, Joshua posted a video on Instagram of him playing table tennis with his long-time friend Ayodele, a personal trainer. On Sunday, Joshua posted two pictures on Instagram, one showing him sitting alongside his mother and family members of the victims including the mothers of Ghami and Ayodele, and one with him holding a photograph of Ghami. Driver Adeniyi Mobolaji Kayode, 46, was charged at Sagamu Magistrates' Court on Friday.

SA20: Shai Hope's Record 118, Lungi Ngidi's Historic Hattrick Inspires Pretoria Capitals To Win Over DSG



Shai Hope blasted the highest individual score of the SA20 before Lungi Ngidi claimed the league's first-ever hat-trick to power Pretoria Capitals to a 15-run victory over Durban's Super Giants at Kingsmead. Hope struck an unbeaten 118 off 69 balls, whacking nine sixes and nine boundaries to steer the Capitals to 201/4. It was a night of records, with the Kingsmead faithful treated to a thriller as all three results were still on offer heading into the final over, with Super Giants requiring 18 runs to win and an in-form Jos Buttler was at the crease. Buttler, who was within touching distance of his maiden SA20 century, could not drag DSG over

the finishing line as Boston Chase delivered a sequence of accurate yorkers to close out the Capitals' second victory of the competition. Buttler was left stranded on 97 not out, with both Kwenya Maphaka and Noor Ahmad run out in Chase's last over. It was certainly an all-action night for Chase, after the West Indian had earlier become the first batter to be 'retired out' in the Capitals' innings. But this sultry evening in Durban belonged to Hope. The West Indies Twenty20 captain flexed his biceps, forming an opening 106-run partnership with Connor Esterhuizen (37 off 28 balls, 4x4, 1x6) that laid the platform, before another whirl-

wind 85-run stand off 44 balls with Chase (24 off 15 balls, 1x4, 2x6) for the second wicket. Hope was the primary aggressor in the partnership, striking 58 off 29 balls, which led to the Capitals calling in Chase to get the in-form Sherfane Rutherford to the crease. Unfortunately, it backfired when Maphaka had the power-hitter caught by Aiden Markram for a second-ball duck. Hope maintained the momentum with Dewald Brevis (12, 2x6) to push the Capitals past 200. The four Player of the Match candidates were Jos Buttler, Shai Hope, Sunil Narine, and Lizaad Williams, with the centurion winning 52.2% of the fan vote.

West Ham sign Juventus defender Cascarino on loan



West Ham have signed defender Estelle Cascarino on loan from Juventus until the end of the season. The France international has made 49 appearances for Juventus, but reports in Italy, external suggest she handed in a transfer request this month. She has 18 months remaining on her contract at Juve, but becomes the first signing under new Hammers manager Rita Guarino. "I'm really pleased to be joining. I know West Ham is a big club in England and I'm excited to be part of this project," said Cascarino. Cascarino, 28, spent six months on loan at Manchester United in 2023, making two appearances. She has also played for Paris St-Germain, Bordeaux, Paris FC and Lyon. "I'm a technical player who is aggressive in my defending," she said. "I'm here to bring my leadership and experience to help the team on and off the pitch. I'm proud of what I have achieved so far in my career and I'm looking forward to this next chapter at West Ham, in the best league in the world."



Neymar Flaunts Rs 525 Crore Luxury Fleet - A Batmobile Replica, Private Jet, Airbus Helicopter



'Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu' a Sankranthi Festival Treat; Chiranjeevi–Venkatesh Combo Wins Hearts at Pre-Release Event



The combination with Venkatesh is amazing. It is a festival-like film. Everyone will enjoy it a lot: Megastar Chiranjeevi at the pre-release event

Chiranjeevi and I both had a blast. We will definitely enjoy it a lot: Victory Venkatesh Megastar Chiranjeevi and hit machine Anil Ravipudi are going to entertain the audience with the wholesome family entertainment 'Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu'. Adding to the excitement, Victory

Venkatesh is playing a key role. Produced by Sahu Garapati and Sushmita Konidela under the banners of Shine Screens and Gold Box Entertainments, the film stars Nayanthara as the female lead, while Smt. Archana is presenting the film. The film's promotions are going on wonderfully. The trailer and songs have

greatly increased the expectations on the film. 'Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu' will be released worldwide on January 12 as a Sankranthi gift. On this occasion, the makers organized a grand pre-release event. Megastar Chiranjeevi said at the pre-release event.. Heartfelt greetings to all mega fans. Happy New Year to everyone, Happy Sankranti in advance. I want this

Sankranti to be not just Shankara Varaprasad's.. but the entire Telugu film industry. Prabhas Rajasab, my younger brother Ravi Teja's film, Sharwanand Nari Nari, who grew up in our house with fun since childhood, Murari, Naveen's film, who considers me a teacher and is my disciple.. I hope that all the films become super hits this Sankranti and that the Telugu film industry will

be prosperous. I have a deep belief that the audience will give them such successes. The Telugu film industry should not forget Sankranti 2026. Every film is a perfect Sankranti film, a film that you like. It is your responsibility to make all the films play this Sankranti, go to the theaters and watch all the films. Enjoy it in the theaters and bless them. Raghavendra Rao said many years ago that if I do a film with Anil, it will be a hit. He started the film by clapping his hands. He told me many times that I should achieve the same success as Gharana Mogudu. When Anil came to me after Sankranti, he said.. There are family touch, sentiment, heart touching scenes. When I told him that we would make this film different.. No need for any difference.. Donga Mogudu, Gharana Mogudu, Rowdy Alludu Annayya, Chantabhai... I would like to have all these films like that,' he said. People saw all those films back then. They are all grown up.

'PANDAGA KI ALLUDU VASTUN-NADU' - ANAGANAGA OKA RAJU - Theatrical Trailer Out Now!



The trailer of Anaganaga Oka Raju opens on a majestic note with King Akkineni Nagarjuna Garu lending his powerful voice. The young sensation gets the voice of King, his narration instantly elevates the trailer and perfectly sets the tone for this festive entertainer. Star performer Naveen Polishetty once again proves why he is one of the most loved entertainers today. His exceptional comic timing, effortless humor, and energetic screen presence dominate the trailer. Every punchline lands with precision, making it clear that this is just a glimpse of the full-throttle entertainment the film promises.

and wholesome. Mickey J Meyer's background score enhances the trailer with a solid blockbuster vibe, while the already released songs have emerged as chartbusters. Anaganaga Oka Raju is produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under the banners of Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, with Srikara Studios presenting the film. With the catchy line "PANDAGA KI ALLUDU VASTUN-NADU", the film promises to be a perfect Sankranti family entertainer, inviting everyone to celebrate together on the big screens this January 14th, 2026 Worldwide.

'ONE/4 (ONE BY FOUR)' SET FOR WORLDWIDE RELEASE ON JANUARY 30



Tejas Gunjal Films and Rohit Gunjal Films proudly present the action crime drama 'ONE/4 (One by Four)', starring Venkatesh Peddapalem, Aparna Mallick, and Heena Soni in the lead roles. The film is directed by Bahubali Palani K, who previously worked as an Associate Director on the blockbuster Baahubali. Produced jointly by

Ranjana Rajesh Gunjal and Rohit Ramdas Gunjal, ONE/4 is gearing up for a grand worldwide theatrical release on January 30 across 200 theatres. Speaking on the occasion, the film unit shared "ONE/4 (One by Four) is a gripping action crime entertainer with a fresh concept. In real life, we often underestimate the

consequences of a simple tongue slip, but its impact can be life-changing. This film explores what happens when one small mistake triggers a chain of unexpected crimes. The movie features intense action episodes, powerful performances by the cast, energetic choreography by Sagar Master, and engaging music by Subhash Anand.



Prime Video to Premiere Telugu Crime Thriller Cheekatilo Starring Sobhita Dhulipala on January 23

A Prime Original movie, Cheekatilo is directed by Sharan Kopishetty, produced by D. Suresh Babu under the banner of Suresh Production Pvt Ltd, and written by Chandra Pemmaraju and Sharan Kopishetty.

Prime Video, India's most loved entertainment destination, today announced January 23 as the worldwide premiere date of the Prime Original Telugu movie, Cheekatilo. Set in the heart of Hyderabad, Cheekatilo is an edge-of-the-seat crime suspense that follows Sandhya, a true crime podcaster portrayed by Sobhita Dhulipala, whose relentless quest for truth exposes some of the most brutal and darkest secrets of the city. Directed by Sharan Kopishetty and produced by D. Suresh Babu under the banner of Suresh Productions Pvt. Ltd., the gripping narrative is written by Chandra Pemmaraju, and Sharan Kopishetty. The movie stars Sobhita Dhulipala and Viswadev Rachakonda in lead roles, alongside Chaitanya Visalakshmi, Esha Chawla, Jhansi, Aamani and Vadlamani Srinivas in pivotal roles. The Telugu Original movie will premiere exclusively on Prime Video across India and in over 240 countries and territories worldwide, with subtitles in Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, and Kannada, on January 23. Set against the backdrop of bustling city of Hyderabad,

Cheekatilo is a gripping Telugu Original crime suspense that follows Sandhya, a true crime podcaster, in her relentless pursuit of justice after her intern's mysterious death unravels a chilling trail of brutal crimes. "At Prime Video, we remain committed to expanding our South Originals slate with stories that are bold, rooted, and creatively distinct. While suspense and thriller are widely explored genres, our focus is on delivering unique narratives with emotional depth, something audiences strongly resonated with in our Telugu Original series Dhootha. Our upcoming Telugu Prime Original Cheekatilo reflects that vision," said Nikhil Madhok, director & head of Originals, Prime Video India. "What sets Cheekatilo apart is its blend of cultural authenticity, with modern storytelling mediums like podcasts that play a key role in the narrative. We believe the movie's universal themes of resilience and sisterhood will extend its appeal far beyond the Telugu-speaking diaspora and connect with audiences across India and globally. With this Original movie, we are also delighted to deepen our longstanding partnership with Suresh Productions. Cheekatilo is a narrative-rich thriller that we believe will strongly resonate with viewers across India and around the world when it premieres on Prime Video on January 23."

"Phule" movie instills a spirit of service in everyone - Producer and renowned journalist Ponnam Ravichandra



"Phule" is a film based on the life story of Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Phule, two great social reformers of India. The film stars Prateek Gandhi and Patralekha Pal in the lead roles. Directed by Ananth Mahadevan, the film was released in Hindi last year and was a huge success. Renowned journalist Ponnam Ravichandra is bringing the film "Phule" to the Telugu audience. Recently, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, several ministers and public representatives attended the screening of the film. Producer and journalist Ponnam Ravichandra held a press meet to express his gratitude for the grand success of the program. Other film crew who worked on the film "Phule" participated in the program. The program Producer and renowned journalist Ponnam Ravichandra said - The reason why our girls are getting educated and going to great heights today is because of the efforts made by Savitribai Phule many years ago. The Phule couple fought to eradicate many evils in the society and dedicated their

lives for the good of the society. Their efforts to save women from superstitions and evils are amazing. They performed widow remarriages. We are bringing the film "Phule" to Telugu to inform our people about the life history of such great people through the medium of cinema. In the past, like Padi Jayaraj, I have received international awards and accolades through many documentaries. Even if this is a Hindi translation, you will not get that feeling anywhere. It will be like a Telugu film. We have taken those precautions regarding the dialogues and

songs. MM Srilekha has provided the music. Poorna Chandra and Dr. Thangella Sridevi Reddy have written the songs. Chetan Kathi has provided the dialogues. We are going to successfully present the movie "Phule" to the Telugu audience under the supervision of Tirupati and Janani Productions. Currently, the censor procedures are going on. We will release the movie "Phule" by the end of this month. We also want the government to support our movie. He said. Other film crew members participated in the event and said that they felt honored to work on the film "Phule".

Vijay Varma's reply to his net worth reports

Mumbai: Vijay Varma is currently one of the most happening and sought-after actors in Indian cinema, widely admired for his fearless choice of roles and commanding screen presence. After years of working in independent films and supporting roles, he rose to mainstream prominence with his breakout performance in Gully Boy, where his portrayal of the volatile Moen earned both critical acclaim and widespread audience recognition. Since then, Vijay has delivered a string of standout performances across films and OTT platforms, including Darlings, She, Lust Stories 2, and Jaane Jaan, consistently showcasing his versatility and depth as an actor.

His ability to effortlessly transition between intense, dark characters and layered, nuanced roles has made him a favourite among filmmakers and viewers, firmly cementing his place as one of the most exciting actors of the current generation.

Vijay Varma's net worth

Along with his professional success, Vijay Varma's net worth and remuneration have also been a frequent topic of discussion in the media. According to sever-



al online reports, the actor's net worth as of 2025 is estimated to be around Rs 20 crore. However, Vijay recently reacted to these claims in his own trademark style with a pure Hyderabad twist. The actor, along with his Gustaakh Ishq co-star Fatima Sana Shaikh, appeared on the latest episode of Mashable India's The Bombay Journey, where he addressed the reports humorously while leaving the host in splits.

'Raakaasaa' Revealed as the Title of Niharika Konidela's #PEP2, Confirming April 3, 2026 Release with Title Announcement Poster

The makers of 'Raakaasaa', a fantasy-comedy produced under Pink Elephant Pictures and Z Studios, have officially unveiled the film's title announcement poster, confirming a worldwide theatrical release on April 3, 2026. Presented as A Niharika Konidela Production, the announcement formally introduces the identity of #PEP2 and signals its steady movement toward release. The title announcement poster establishes the film's tonal world with striking clarity. Centred around the imagery of a solar eclipse emerging through dense, storm-laden clouds, the visual language leans decisively into myth and fantasy. The title 'Raakaasaa' appears sculpted in an organic, root-like form, glowing subtly from within, evoking folklore and elemental force. Notably, the poster avoids overt comedy cues, suggesting that humour in the film emerges organically from character and narrative rather than surface-level visual treatment. 'Raakaasaa' features an ensemble cast that includes Sangeeth Shobhan, Nayan Sarika, Vennela Kishore, Brahmaji, Tanikella Bharani, Ashish Vidyardhi, Getup Srinu, and

Sukwinder Singh, Annapurnamma, Aanoop Singh, Ramana Bhargav, Vasu Inturi, Rohini (Jabardast), Rohan (90's), among others. The poster reflects a balance between familiar performers and character-driven roles, aligning with the film's fantasy-comedy framework. Written and directed by Manasa Sharma, the film carries a unified creative vision, with Story, Screenplay, Dialogues, and Direction handled by her. Mahesh Uppala contributes as Additional Screenplay writer. The technical crew includes Anudeep Dev as music composer, Raju Edurolu as cinematographer, Anwar Ali as editor, and Vijay as action choreographer. Production design is led by Ramanjaneyulu, with Pilla Vishnu Vardhan serving as art director and Sandhya Sabbavarapu overseeing costume design. The project progressed through a major action-heavy schedule, choreographed by Vijay, who has earned strong industry recognition for his recent work on They Call Him OG. Following the completion of this action block, the team filmed comedy-driven sequences and other crucial narrative portions that strengthen the film's humour and character dynamics.

