



30-01-2026
Total pilgrims: 69,254
Tonsures: 20,954
Hundi Kanakulu: 4.35 CR
Waiting Compartments: 12

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshan (with out SSD Tokens): 8-hrs



EAM Jaishankar holds talks with Oman FM on trade

New Delhi, Jan 31 : External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on Saturday met Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi in New Delhi, where both sides discussed key issues including trade, critical minerals and regional developments, underscoring the depth of India-Oman Strategic Partnership.



WORLD | NEWS

PEDRO PASCAL AND MERYL STREEP LEAD TRIBUTES TO CATHERINE O'HARA

SPORTS | NEWS

BARCELONA 'SHAKEDOWN' OFFERS FIRST HINTS OF F1 2026



Man shot, Rs 6 lakh looted



Hyderabad: A man who went to deposit Rs 6 lakh cash at the SBI Main Branch ATM at Koti was shot in the leg before the assailants fled with his cash and scooter during the early hours of Saturday, January 31. Here is what the police investigation has uncovered so far. The victim, identified as Rinshad, is a businessman dealing in readymade kids' clothing from Kozhikode, Kerala. He had come to the city on January 7 and brought Rs 6 lakh in cash to purchase wholesale stock at Dewan Devdi, a release from the Hyderabad City Police read. However, as he was unable to make the purchases, his cousin Mishbah advised him to deposit the cash into his bank account. When he reached the SBI Main Branch ATM at Bank Street in Koti at around 7:00 am to deposit the money, two unidentified persons approached him from behind and threatened him by pressing a firearm against his abdomen. The accused fired two rounds, one of which struck Rinshad's right leg. They proceeded to snatch the bag of cash and the vehicle keys from him and fled the spot in his vehicle.

CM Revanth interacts with students & alumni at Harvard on final day of US visit

Hyderabad (TSIT): On the final day of his visit to the United States, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy engaged in an interactive session with students, alumni, and delegations at Harvard University. He met participants from various schools of Harvard, along with students and alumni from leading institutions including MIT and Columbia University.

During the interaction, a wide range of issues were discussed, such as leadership, success, economic growth models, sustainability, environmental challenges, and focused welfare initiatives for farmers, women, and youth. The Chief Minister shared his vision of "Telangana Rising 2047," outlining the state's development priorities, future challenges, and opportu-



CM Revanth Reddy shared the vision of "Telangana Rising 2047" at Harvard, urging global students and alumni to act as brand ambassadors for Telangana's inclusive growth and future leadership.

nities for inclusive growth and empowerment. When students requested him to teach leadership, CM Revanth Reddy responded with humour, saying

that Harvard's eminent professors were the best teachers, and that he preferred meaningful two-way conversations centred on learning and sharing rather than acting as an "impostor professor."

Expressing strong optimism about India's future, he said

Telangana and Hyderabad are poised to set the pace for national growth. He urged students and alumni to remain connected with India and act as brand ambassadors for Telangana Rising on the global stage. Several students, in turn, assured the Chief Minister of their commitment to contributing to the state's development in the years to come.

Budget 2026 to focus on defence, capex, infrastructure, fiscal discipline

New Delhi, Jan 31 (TSIT): As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gears up to table the Union Budget 2026-27 in Parliament on February 1, economists say the emphasis this year will be on defence, infrastructure, capex, power, and higher growth in affordable housing, apart from balancing social welfare with fiscal prudence.

Besides, policymakers will also balance growth priorities with fiscal discipline amid heightened global uncertainty. The Budget is likely to strike a deft balance of sustaining growth momentum and maintaining fiscal consolidation.

It also needs to address near-term challenges emanating from unprecedented geopolitical flux, said economists. The government has been steadfast on the path of fiscal consolidation, with the fiscal deficit easing from Covid induced high of 9.2 per cent to 4.4 per cent for FY26 (estimated).

According to experts, government will largely maintain its "fiscal rectitude and do not expect major deviation from this path".

FM Sitharaman will present the 15th Budget of the PM Modi government on February 1. This will also be the second full Budget since the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came to power for a third consecutive term in 2024. Sitharaman is also the first woman finance minister of the country to



Economists expect Union Budget 2026-27 to prioritise defence, infrastructure and capital expenditure while maintaining fiscal discipline amid global uncertainties.

present the Budget in Parliament for the ninth consecutive time.

While the FY26 Budget was more tilted towards stimulating middle-class consumption with tax reliefs, the FY27 Budget's approach to stimulating consumption will be selective, they added.

According to economists, the budget is likely to focus more on capital expenditure,

especially in sectors deemed to be strategically important owing to prevailing geopolitical compulsions, said Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd in its 'India Strategy' report. Meanwhile, investors are likely to be focused on the debt metrics, deficit outcome and scheduled borrowings for the next year Budget to align with strategic objectives.

The size of borrowings will be an important consideration for the bond markets, said a note by DBS Bank. Notably, the 'Economic Survey 2025-26' presented a comprehensive assessment of the economy, projecting FY27 growth at 6.8-7.2 per cent from 7.4 per cent this year, higher than street estimates. Moreover, India's stock exchanges will hold a regular live trading session on the Union Budget 2026-27 on February 1, despite being a Sunday.

TN CM Stalin opens new agricultural college in Karaikudi



Projects worth Rs 2,872 cr for Sivaganga district were launched by Chief Minister

CHENNAI (TSIT): Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday inaugurated the Agricultural College and Research Institute in the Chettinad area near Karaikudi in Sivaganga district, marking the beginning of a packed two-day visit during which projects worth Rs 2,872 crore are being inaugurated and dedicated to the public.

The Agricultural College and Research Institute has been constructed in Kanadukathan, near Karaikudi, at a cost of Rs 61.78 crore. The institution is expected to play a key role in strengthening agricultural education, research, and extension services in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu, particularly benefiting students from rural and agrarian backgrounds.

Along with the college, the Chief Minister also inaugurated the C Subrahmanian Multi-Purpose Hall located within the campus premises. The facility has been designed to host academic events, conferences, farmer training programmes, and community activities, thereby enhancing the institution's overall utility.

As part of his visit to Karaikudi, Stalin also inaugu-

rated the new Government Law College, aimed at expanding access to legal education in the region. In another major boost to the local economy and employment generation, he formally opened the TIDEL Neo Park, which is expected to attract information technology and startup investments to the Sivaganga district and surrounding areas.

In addition to inaugurating infrastructure projects, the Chief Minister distributed various welfare assistance benefits to eligible beneficiaries on behalf of the State government, reiterating the administration's commitment to inclusive development and social security.

Earlier in the day, upon his arrival in Sivaganga district, Stalin was accorded a warm and enthusiastic reception by DMK functionaries, senior government officials, and members of the public.

Economic Survey Validates Telangana's Growth Story: Minister Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad (TSIT) : Minister for IT and Industries Sri D. Sridhar Babu said the Government of India's Economic Survey 2025-26 stands as strong evidence of Telangana's all-round progress, economic stability, and transparent governance under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. Addressing a press meet at the Secretariat on Saturday.

Minister stated that the survey has effectively countered misinformation campaigns aimed at damaging Telangana's image. He said criticism is a healthy democratic tradition and the State government welcomes constructive feedback. However, he cautioned that opposition criticism must be



based on facts and not fabricated narratives driven by political motives. Certain vested interests, unable to digest Telangana's rapid development and welfare measures, were deliberately spreading false claims that the State economy had collapsed, he alleged. Citing survey data, Sridhar Babu pointed out that

Telangana has shown strong improvement in inflation control. While the national inflation average for 2024-25 stood at 4.63%, Telangana recorded a lower 3.67%.

For the current financial year (April-December), national inflation averaged 1.72% compared to just 0.20% in Telangana. He highlighted the steady decline in headline inflation in the State—from 8.61% in 2022-23 to 6.36% in 2023-24 and further down to 3.67% in 2024-25. Minister said Telangana is not dependent solely on Central grants and has demonstrated strong fiscal capacity through its own tax revenues. The survey confirms investor confidence and robust annual growth, he added.

Doctors welcome Supreme Court ban on stem cell therapy for autism

New Delhi, Jan 31 (TSIT) : Doctors on Saturday welcomed the Supreme Court's order against the use of stem cell therapy to treat autism—a neurodevelopmental condition affecting communication, social interaction, and behaviour.

DOCTORS ON SATURDAY WELCOMED THE SUPREME COURT'S ORDER AGAINST THE USE OF STEM CELL THERAPY TO TREAT AUTISM – A NEURODEVELOPMENTAL CONDITION AFFECTING COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL INTERACTION, AND BEHAVIOUR.

and charging patients anywhere between Rs 6 and 20 lakh. Many families have lost money with no improvement. So, it's a correct move by the Supreme Court, and should have come earlier," she added.

Notably, the Ethics and Medical Registration Board (EMRB), under the National Medical Commission (NMC), had, in December 2022, constituted the Committee on Stem Cell Use in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It had stated that none of the current international

guidelines recommend stem cell therapy as a treatment for ASD and added that the therapy is not recommended as a treatment for ASD in clinical practice. Moreover, the Court also noted that an unproven therapy cannot be "demanded by a patient as a matter of right". It stated "patients may remain under therapeutic misconception and anticipate such results from an unproven treatment as may be expected from routine treatment and care."

Following through with the medical treatment even when patients are under such a misconception is, in our view, a gross violation of medical ethics," the Court noted.



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Menstrual health is fundamental right: SC orders free sanitary pads, separate toilets in school

NEW DELHI: Declaring the right to dignified menstrual health as part of the right to life and education under the Constitution, the Supreme Court on Friday directed all states and Union Territories to provide free oxo-bio-degradable sanitary napkins to girl students and functional, gender-segregated toilets for all the students.

In a landmark judgment to ensure gender justice and educational equity, a bench comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan issued a slew of directions to all states and UTs to ensure that these facilities are provided in schools irrespective of whether they are government-run, aided or private. "A period should end a sentence, not a girl's education," Justice Pardiwala opened the 126 judgment with a poignant quote from American educator, social activist and producer Melissa Berton, and said, "The issues that have unfolded before us echo the very

same judicial disquiet. Even with the passage of time, the challenges that beset a girl child's education persist in much the same form."

The verdict warns of stringent consequences for non-compliance, including the derecognition of private schools and holding state governments directly accountable for failures in public institutions.

"The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health. Access to safe, effective and affordable menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. The right to healthy reproductive life embraces the right to access education and information about sexual health," the bench held. It then referred to Article 21A (right to education) and said it has been termed as a "multiplier right" as it enables the exercise of other human rights.



"The right to education forms part of the broader framework of the right to life and human dignity, which cannot be realised without access to education," it said. On the substantive approach to equality under Article 14, the verdict said it demands that treatment be accorded with due regard to the individual, institutional, systemic and contextual barriers that impede the translation of rights in reality.

"At the same time, the State, as a benefactor, is under an obligation to remedy such structural disadvantages," it said.

"Inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures undermines the dignity of a girl child, as dignity finds expression in conditions that enable individuals to live without humiliation, exclusion or avoidable suffering. Privacy is inextricably linked with dignity. As a corollary, the right

to privacy entails a duty on the State to not only refrain from violating privacy but an accompanying obligation on the State to take necessary measures to protect the privacy of an individual," it said. The bench said inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures strips away the right to participate on equal terms in school and the domino effect of the absence of education is the inability to participate in all walks of life later. It said the fundamental right to education under Article 21A and the Right to Education (RTE) Act comprises free, compulsory and quality education and it includes all kinds of charges or expenses that would prevent a child from pursuing and completing elementary education. Issuing a slew of directions, it directed that "all States and UTs shall ensure that every school, whether government-run or privately managed, in both urban and rural areas, provides oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins manufactured in compliance with the ASTM D-6954 standards free of cost."

Such sanitary napkins shall be made readily accessible to girl students, preferably within the toilet premises through sanitary napkin vending machines, or, where such installation is not immediately feasible, at a designated place or with a designated authority within the school, it added. As regards the "toilet and washing facilities", it asked them to ensure that every school is provided with the "functional, gender-segregated toilets with usable water connectivity".

It said all the existing and newly constructed toilets in schools shall be designed, constructed and maintained to ensure privacy and accessibility, including by catering to the needs of children with disabilities. It said all school toilets shall be equipped with functional handwashing facilities, with soap and water available at all times. "All states and UTs shall ensure that every school... establish Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) corners. Such MHM corners shall be equipped with, including but not limited to, spare innerwear, spare uniforms, disposable bags and other necessary materials to address menstruation-related exigencies," it ordered. It directed the authorities to ensure that every school is equipped with a safe, hygienic, and environmentally compliant mechanism for the disposal of sanitary napkins, in accordance with the latest Solid Waste Management Rules.

On the issue of "awareness and training about menstrual health and puberty", it asked the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTS) to incorporate gender-responsive curricula, more particularly on menstruation, puberty and other related health concerns.

President, PM pay tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat on death anniversary

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at the Rajghat memorial on his 78th death anniversary on Friday.

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan and several Union ministers, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, also visited the memorial to pay tributes to the Father of the Nation.

A two minutes silence was observed by the dignitaries in his memory.

At an all-faith prayer meeting held at the memorial, Gandhi's favourite devotional songs, including "Raghupta-



ti Raghav Raja Ram", were rendered. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popular as Mahatma Gandhi, was the leading figure of India's

struggle for Freedom from the British rule. He was assassinated by Nathuram Godse on January 30, 1948, in Delhi.

Gandhi a way of thinking which ideology of hate unsuccessfully tried to erase: Rahul

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said Mahatma Gandhi is not just a person, but a way of thinking that an empire, an ideology of hatred and arrogance of power, unsuccessfully tried to erase at different points in time.

Terming Mahatma Gandhi the "immortal soul of India", the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha paid tributes to the Father of the Nation, saying that along with Independence, he gave the nation a fundamental principle that the power of truth is greater than the power of authority.

"Mahatma Gandhi is not just a person, but a way of thinking that an empire, an ideology of hatred, and an arrogance of power have all unsuccessfully tried to erase at different points in time," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

"The Father of the Nation gave us, along with Independence, the fundamental principle that the power of truth is greater than the power of

authority and that non-violence and courage are greater than violence and fear," Rahul Gandhi said.

This way of thinking cannot be extinguished, because Gandhi is immortal in the soul of India, he said.

Sharing lines of a Bhajan that Mahatma Gandhi used to sing, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "The hatred that separated us from Bapu, its solution also lies in Bapu's path. The light of truth, the power of non-violence, and the compassion of love. Homage to the Father of the Nation on Martyr's Day."

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary.

Party general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, recalled two separate letters written by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar



Ramesh said on X, in an apparent reference to BJP MP Abhijit Gangopadhyay's controversial remarks in 2024.

Ramesh also shared a link to Nehru's address on All India Radio on the night of January 30, 1948, after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination.

In his letter to Mookerjee, Nehru had said the Hindu Mahasabha had held meetings in Pune, Ahmednagar and Delhi in defiance of the ban order.

"Speeches were delivered that Mahatma Gandhi was an impediment, and the sooner he died, the better it would be for the country.

The RSS has behaved in an even worse way, and we have collected a mass of information about its very objectionable activities," Nehru had said in his letter.

Ramesh also shared a screenshot of Patel's letter to Mookerjee in which the former criticised the activities of the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha.



Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman along with Minister of State for Finance Shri Pankaj Choudhary and the entire budget team are present after the finalization of the Union Budget 2026 in New Delhi on January 31, 2026.

Rahul disrespected NE by not wearing 'gamosa' at President's R-Day event: Shah

DIBRUGARH: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of disrespecting the North East by refusing to wear 'gamosa', presented by President Droupadi Murmu at the 'At Home' reception hosted by her on Republic Day.

All dignitaries, including those from abroad, had worn the scarf as a mark of respect, but Gandhi was the "only person to refuse" to do so, Shah claimed, while addressing a public rally at the Khanikar Parade Ground here.

"Rahul Gandhi can do whatever he wants, but as long as the BJP is in power, it will not allow

any disrespect of the North East's culture", he said.

Shah alleged that the Congress did nothing for Assam's development.

"I want to ask Rahul Gandhi what his party has given to Assam except guns, bullets, conflict and deaths of youth," the union

home minister said.

Shah also accused the Congress of using infiltration as a "weapon for its vote bank politics".

"There has been no infiltration in Assam since the BJP came to power. Those who had come to India illegally will be identified and sent back," he added.

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Heroin worth nearly Rs 2 crore seized, one arrested in Lucknow

LUCKNOW: The Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) has seized 280 grams of heroin, estimated to be worth about Rs 1.96 crore in the illegal market, and arrested one person, an official said on Friday. Deputy Narcotics Commissioner (Uttar Pradesh Unit) Praveen Bali told PTI the recovery was made during an operation conducted on Friday at the Itaunja toll plaza on the Lucknow-Sitapur Road in Bakhshi ka Talab tehsil. The operation was carried out on specific intelligence and also involved the P&I (preventive and intelligence) cell of Barabanki, the officer said. He said a CBN team intercepted a person travelling in a roadways bus after inputs suggested that the suspect was carrying heroin for delivery in Lucknow.

Is it RTI's turn to get murdered? Kharge asks

NEW DELHI: A day after the Economic Survey called for re-examining the RTI law, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday asked whether it was RTI's turn to get murdered after MGNREGA's "killing".

In a post on X, Kharge accused the Union government of systematically weakening the RTI Act and unleashing a climate of terror that punishes truth-seekers as he pointed out that over 100 RTI activists had been murdered since 2014.

"The Economic Survey has called for 're-examination' of the Right to Information Act. It also suggests a possible 'Ministerial veto' to withhold information and wants to explore the possibility of shielding public service records, transfers and staff reports of bureaucrats from public scrutiny. "The Modi Government has systematically weakened the RTI Act -- Over 26,000 pending cases as of 2025. In 2019, the Modi Government hacked away



the Congress-UPA has not been implemented by the BJP, till date.

"After killing MGNREGA, is it RTI's turn to get murdered?" Kharge asked.

The Economic Survey on Thursday made its case for re-examining the nearly two-decade-old RTI law to exempt confidential reports and draft comments from disclosures, saying such provisions constrain governance.

It also said that the RTI (Right to Information) Act 2005 was never intended as a tool for idle curiosity, nor as a mechanism to micro-manage the government from the outside.

The law seeks to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority, to contain corruption, and to enhance people's participation in the democratic process. Until last month (December 2025), the Central Information Commission had been functioning without a chief information commissioner. It was the

seventh time in 11 years that this key post was deliberately kept vacant, the Congress chief claimed.

"Since 2014, over 100 RTI activists have been murdered, unleashing a climate of terror that punishes truth-seekers and extinguishes dissent. The Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 passed by the Congress-UPA has not been implemented by the BJP, till date.

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Why DGCA allowed flight operations at Baramati airport: Raut

MUMBAI: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Friday targeted the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) over Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's death in an air crash, asking why it allowed flight operations at the Baramati airport if it was not fully equipped. Talking to reporters, Raut also referred to the last year's catastrophic Air India flight 171 crash in Ahmedabad, and said the DGCA announces a probe after every such incident but its outcome remains unknown.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Civil Aviation after the death of Pawar and four others in Wednesday's crash, Baramati has an "uncontrolled airfield" (one without a dedicated Air Traffic Control), and traffic information is provided by instructors/pilots from the local flying training organisations.



The chartered aircraft carrying Pawar was cleared for landing in Baramati after a go-around forced by poor visibility, but having finally received the clearance it did not give any 'read-back' or confirmation, and moments later burst into flames. "There was no radar at Baramati airport or ATC. There was no system and there was just an airstrip, and the DGCA is responsible for it (air crash). There isn't enough staff at Baramati airport," said Raut, a Rajya Sabha member.

"Who is responsible for such accidents? There is a need to probe such incidents. We have lost an important person in Maharashtra and the DGCA should take responsibility for it. How do you allow such airports or air strips to operate?" asked the Sena (UBT) leader.

Seat Edge, a film that sends a good message to the youth

Bengaluru: This is the story of a boy who wants to achieve something. This film sends a good message to today's youth. The hero of the film is Sidhu, a boy who dreams of becoming popular on social media. While everyone else is studying and working, this boy is the only one who dreams of becoming a vlogger on social media by making videos with his mobile phone and gadget. But all the videos Sidhu makes, instead of bringing him popularity, become food for trolls. In this situation, Sidhu, who sets out to show the world what he is in front of those who are playing him, embarks on an operation called ghost hunting. Sidhu, who sets out to a ghost city where no one has ever returned, will stand come out of there? Or not? This is the story of the film 'Seat Edge'. The lead actor Siddhu Moolimani appears as a vlogger boy, actress Rakshita Shetty as a yoga trainee. Raghav Ramakrishna appears as the hero's friend, and Girish Shivantha appears as a police inspector. Young director Chethan Shetty has crafted a horror story by mixing suspense with comedy in the movie 'Seat Edge'. The background music of the film complements the story and narration of the film. A couple of songs composed by Akash Parva are melodious. The cinematography is good and if the editing work was more sharp, the possibilities of complementing the film would have been greater.



Mangaluru: Bacteria detected in Gujjarakere water, declared unfit for drinking

Mangaluru, Jan 31: Gujjarakere, once revered as a sacred theertha lake believed to cure ailments, is now found to be contaminated with disease-causing bacteria. Laboratory test reports have once again confirmed that the lake water is completely polluted and unsafe for consumption. Although the lake has been developed under the Smart City project at a cost of several crores of rupees and appears visually appealing, its water body is severely contaminated. The primary reason cited is the inflow of sewage water into the lake. Despite repeated appeals by local residents to the Mangaluru City Corporation and Smart City authorities, no effective action has reportedly been taken. Water samples drawn from the lake and tested in a laboratory revealed alarming results. In every 100 ml of water, the total coliform count was found to be 1,600, while the faecal coliform count was also 1,600. The presence of such high levels of bacteria in 100 ml of water is considered extremely dangerous, and the report has clearly stated that the water is unfit for drinking. The lake water had been tested around seven months ago as well, and contamination was detected then too. At that time, the total coliform count was 1,600 and the faecal coliform count stood at 500. Compared to those findings, the bacterial levels have now doubled. Gujjarakere water has been tested multiple times in the past, and each time dangerous bacteria were detected. Tests conducted in 2014 and 2015 showed bacterial levels of around 1,100. When tested again in 2016, the bacterial count had increased further. Typically, water testing involves checking for total coliform bacteria (generally considered non-harmful) and faecal coliform bacteria, which indicate contamination from sewage or toilet waste. For water to be considered good and suitable for drinking, the total coliform count in 100 ml of water should be zero. A count of 1 to 3 is considered satisfactory, while 4 to 10 is not very good. If the count exceeds 10, the water is deemed unfit for drinking. Similarly, faecal coliform bacteria must also be at zero level for water to be potable. However, the current level in Gujjarakere stands at a dangerously high 1,600. Gujjarakere is one of the oldest lakes in Mangaluru and holds immense religious significance. It is believed to have been formed through the penance and spiritual power of Guru Goraknath, a disciple of Nath Panth sage Guru Machendranath. References to these sages are found in the historical accounts of the Mangaluru's presiding deity, Shri Mangaladevi Amma. For centuries, the sacred theertha from this lake was used with great reverence for ritual bathing of the deity at the historic Bolar Hale Kote Shri Mariyamma Temple. "It has now been conclusively proven that the water of Gujjarakere is not clean. Once a vital water source contributing to groundwater conservation and holding rich historical and religious significance, this sacred lake urgently requires protection and conservation. The negligence of officials from the concerned departments in matters related to the development and preservation of the lake is evident," said Nemu Kottari, general secretary of the Gujjarakere Theertha Conservation Forum.

Complete Yelahanka Flyover Project by the End of September 2026: Maheshwar Rao

Bengaluru : The Chief Commissioner, Maheshwar Rao, directed officials to ensure that the Yelahanka flyover project is completed by the end of September 2026.

Speaking during an inspection of various locations within the Bengaluru North City Corporation limits today, he said that the 2-km-long flyover on Doddaballapur Main Road has achieved about 70% progress. He instructed officials and contractors to complete the remaining works within the stipulated timeline of September 2026. The Yelahanka flyover project includes a total of 56 pillars, of which



construction of 51 pillars has been completed. The remaining 5 pillars are yet to be constructed. Out of

447 segments, 351 segments have already been erected, while 96 segments are still pending. As the road expe-

riences continuous vehicular movement, segment erection work is being carried out only during night hours. He directed officials to resolve the related issues, accelerate the pace of work, and take appropriate steps to complete the project at the earliest.

Hennur-Bagulur White Topping: White topping work has been taken up on a 5-km stretch of the Hennur-Bagulur Road. On one side of the road, white topping has been completed for 4 km. The remaining 1 km is to be completed within 15 days, after which vehicular traffic should be allowed immediately upon completion of the curing process.

Karnataka

BENGALURU
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

3

WE Foundation, Grant Thornton Launch Pan-India Cleanliness Drive Across 12 Cities on National Cleanliness Day



Bengaluru : To commemorate National Cleanliness Day, the WE Foundation (TWF), a leading non-profit dedicated to creating inclusive societies, has announced a strategic partnership with Grant Thornton to execute a comprehensive Pan-India Cleanliness Drive.

He said priority would be given to harnessing future technologies for the welfare of the people of the State, and that discussions with the governments of Liechtenstein and Singapore focused on jointly attracting investments to Karnataka.

A conscious decision

The Minister said a conscious decision was taken not to sign any Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)

with domestic companies at the summit. Instead, detailed discussions were held on future investments.

"There is no need to travel to Davos to sign agreements with Indian companies, as these can be finalised within the country itself. This thoughtful decision was appreciated,"

he said, adding that discussions were also held with 15 Indian-origin multinational companies

regarding investments, industrial activity and expansion of data centres.

He said Tata Sons has expressed interest in becoming a part of the State's ambitious

'KWIN City' project, and that Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran has

shown willingness to continue discussions in this regard.

Grant Thornton, we believe that sustainable growth is only possible when we take active responsibility for the ecosystems we inhabit," said Satya Jha, Partner, CBO, CSO, and CSR Lead National Management at Grant Thornton. "This Pan-India drive is a testament to our commitment to 'Vibrant India.' By engaging our people directly on the ground this National Cleanliness Day, we are moving beyond compliance to create a tangible, positive impact in the communities where we operate."

Intensive Cleaning: Physical removal of waste from public spaces and sensitive ecological zones like

Dadar Beach. Community Awareness: Engaging with the public to foster long-term behavioral changes regarding urban sanitation.

This initiative reflects The WE Foundation's proven model of multi-stakeholder collaboration, building on its track record of successful partnerships with state governments in Odisha, Assam, and Maharashtra, corporate giants, and renowned international bodies. By aligning this drive on National Cleanliness Day, The WE Foundation and Grant Thornton Bharat aim to underscore the pivotal role of corporate volunteering in advancing India's national sanitation and sustainability goals.

Davos visit accelerates investments, expansion and partnerships: Industries Minister M.B. Patil

AN IMPETUS TO PREPARE FOR THE CHALLENGES POSED BY EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES



Bengaluru: The World Economic Forum (WEF) summit held in Davos has laid a strong foundation for the rapid materialisation of new investments, industrial expansion and partnerships in areas such as advanced manufacturing, food processing, clean energy and data centres in the State, said Minister for Large and Medium Industries M.B. Patil on Saturday.

The Minister shared details of the meetings and discussions held at the World Economic Forum in Davos while addressing a press conference at Vidhana Soudha. "Productive meetings were held with over 25 international companies and more than 15 Indian companies across priority sectors such as aerospace and defence, advanced manufacturing, beverages and food processing, space technology, life sciences, data centres, digital infrastructure and clean energy. Heads of multinational companies have expressed readiness to prioritise and fast-track their commit-

ments related to setting up and expanding industries in Karnataka," the Minister stated.

He said it was a matter of pride that industry leaders have lauded the State Government's industry-friendly industrial policies, adopted with the objective of developing Karnataka as a leading State on the country's industrial map.

Discussions were also held on India's evolving role in the context of current global economic developments. Several companies expressed interest in investing and expanding in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities of the State. In line with the Government's priority of developing cities beyond Bengaluru into self-sustaining urban centres, companies such as Bharti Enterprises and Sify Technologies, which have plans to set up data centres in Tier-2 cities, have shown interest. Similarly, Tech Mahindra has evinced interest in expansion in Tier-2 cities, he said.

He added that global

investors and technology leaders were clearly conveyed Karnataka's position as a preferred destination for next-generation industries, including artificial intelligence (AI), data centres, semiconductors, space technology and Industry 4.0.

Priority to adopting new ideas

The Minister emphasised the Davos visit strongly underscored the need to adopt new approaches to effectively address the challenges posed by future technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics and quantum technology, and that the State Government would actively work in this direction.

Citing the example of a mobile manufacturing company in China, the Minister said tasks earlier performed by 500 workers are now being handled by just five or six people with the help of artificial intelligence. He noted that future technologies such as AI, robotics and quantum computing are no longer limited to software

Mass cleanliness drive, and black spot removal undertaken within the Central City Corporation limits: Rajendra Cholan



Bengaluru: Giving priority to urban sanitation within the Central City Corporation limits, large-scale mass cleanliness drives have been carried out at various locations across six Assembly constituencies, informed Commissioner Rajendra Cholan. He stated that, with the objective of ensuring city cleanliness, providing smooth pedestrian pathways, and creating a healthy environment for citizens, daily cleaning operations along with continuous black spot removal activities are being undertaken across the city corporation limits. Under the supervision of the Additional Commissioner (Development), Dalit Kumar,

such operations are being continuously conducted to maintain city cleanliness, smooth traffic movement, and public health. Cleaning work covered a total stretch of 8.45 km. With the assistance of 7 JCBs and 46 tractors, 53 loads of roadside waste and 24 black spots were cleared. A total of 195 pourakarmikas and sanitation staff participated in the operation. Executive Engineers, DGMs, AGMs, Assistant Executive Engineers, and staff from the Forest, Horticulture departments, Pourakarmikas and Sanitation workers, along with other concerned officials, took part in the mass cleanliness drive.

With regard to acquisition of land required for road widening as per the Revised Master Plan-2015, in KIADB-developed industrial areas within the Bengaluru East City Municipal Corporation limits—including ITPL Main Road, Graphite India Road, Whitefield Main Road, Sathya Sai Hospital Main Road, and the Kothanur-Avalahalli and Belturu-Medahalli roads—Commissioner D. S. Ramesh chaired a progress review meeting. Executive Relinquishment Deeds for Land Reserved for Road Widening The Commissioner instructed KIADB officials to take necessary steps to execute relinquishment deeds (RD) in favour of the City Corporation for land reserved for road widening of various widths in KIADB-developed industrial areas, in accordance with the Revised Master Plan-2015.

Ensure RD Before Granting New Building Plan Approvals

cases of new applications for building plan approvals in KIADB-developed industrial areas, officials were instructed to ensure that land required for road widening as per RMP-2015 is first relinquished by the owners through RD, and only thereafter should plan approvals be granted.

Open Driveways in Single-Unit Complexes for Public Movement In Single Unit Complexes (SUCs) allotted by KIADB, there are driveways that can provide connectivity between two main



roads. Officials were instructed to examine the feasibility of opening such driveways for public traffic, as this would help reduce traffic congestion.

Relinquish Civic Amenity Sites in SUCs to the City Corporation

The Commissioner instructed officials to take steps to execute relinquishment deeds in favour of the City Corporation for parks, open spaces, and other civic amenity sites located within Single Unit Complexes. Conduct Road Widening Survey for Kothanur-Avalahalli and Belturu-Medahalli Roads. With regard to the widening of the Kothanur-Avalahalli and Belturu-Medahalli roads, officials were instructed to undertake survey work in areas falling within the Bengaluru East City Municipal Corporation limits and to take steps to issue the

necessary notifications. For stretches falling outside the BECC limits, officials were directed to submit a proposal to the Government, through the concerned local authority / planning authority, for undertaking the road widening works.

Declare Roads as Public Roads

To facilitate public movement, officials were instructed to obtain reports from the concerned planning authorities and take steps to declare roads as public roads in approved layouts and industrial areas within the East City Corporation limits. The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioner (Development) Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar, Chief Engineers Lokesh and Krishnamurthy, Deputy Director Town Plan (KIADB), Executive Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, and other concerned officials.

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S. Loan Account Number / NO. Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	1) Date Of Demand Notice /2) Claim Amount As Per Demand Notice	Description Of Immoveable Property (together With Buildings And Structures Constructed, To Be Constructed Thereon Along With Fixtures And Fittings Attached To The Earth And Anything Attached To The Earth.)
1. HLR0000000000022759 Mr. Khagen Das C/o Mr. Kanak Das (Borrower) Mr. Nirupam Sonowal S/o Mr. Upendra Nath Sonowal (Co-Borrower) Mrs. Padum Sonowal W/o Mr. Upendra Nath Sonowal (Guarantor)	1. Date Of Demand Notice - December 17, 2025 2. Claim Amount As Per Demand Notice - ₹ 63,64,380/- In Words Rupees Sixty - Lakhs Sixty - Four Thousand Three Hundred And Eighty Only As On December 16, 2025 Plus Future Interest, Incidental Expenses, Cost, Charges, Etc. W.e.f. December 17, 2025	All That Piece And Parcel Of Land Owned By - In The Mr. Khagen Das C/o Mr. Kanak Das Having Residential Apartment Bearing Flat No.-H-003, Prakarsh Solitaire On Ground Floor In 'h' Block, Phase -02, E Katha Pid No.-3771758249, Khata No.-9491/112/130/5/G/4-003, Kammasandra Village, Karnataka) Admeasuring About 1250.00 Sq. Ft. Surrounded By- East-Boundary: T. Anil Agarwal/Ananthanagar Layout, North- Daanya Elixir Apartments And Vmaka Roselle Apartments, South-Sy. No. 11/3 (1st Phase) Of Prakarsh Solitaire.
PLACE: KARNATAKA DATE: 01-02-2026		SRI Authorized Officer, SRG Housing Finance Limited

EDITORIAL

SUNETRA PAWAR: FROM BEHIND THE SCENES TO PINNACLE OF POWER

In the political corridors of Maharashtra, the name 'Pawar' has long been synonymous with power. But right now, the spotlight is not on a seasoned politician from the Pawar family, but a face that has spent decades observing the machinery of governance from behind the scenes: Sunetra Pawar, affectionately known as 'vahini' (sister-in-law).

Amid the political vacuum created after Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Rajya Sabha MP Sunetra Pawar is emerging as a decisive force in state politics. Leaders of the Ajit Pawar faction appear ready to accept her leadership as she steps into the forefront. Academically, a graduate, Sunetra Pawar's parliamentary record so far has been average.

Legislative Track Record

Even though her formal experience on the active political stage may not seem very exciting or aggressive in the traditional sense, Sunetra Pawar's position at the 'High Table' of Maharashtra's decision-making has given her a unique vantage point. Her parliamentary record, while average in terms of floor time, shows a focus on precision.

According to data available on the Rajya Sabha website and PRS Legislative, her journey presents a compelling picture:

She has asked 126 questions to date - significantly higher than the national average of 92. Her inquiries focus on grounded issues: agriculture, Western Ghats conservation, railway projects, and the upcoming Nashik Kumbh Mela 2027. Challenge: With an attendance of 69 per cent and only 4 participations in debates, it is clear that she is still carving out her identity as an orator within the House. Growing Stature: Her recent nomination to the Panel of vice-chairpersons of the Rajya Sabha in February 2025 serves as a testament to her growing political weight and the trust reposed in her by the leadership.

Roots In Power

Born in 1963 in Dharashiv (formerly Osmanabad), Sunetra Pawar's political DNA predates her marriage into the Pawar family. Her father, Bajirao Patil, was a veteran regional leader, and her brother, Padamsinh Bajirao Patil, was a formidable figure in district politics during the 1980s. She grew up in a household where public life and politics were part of everyday conversation. Sunetra Pawar holds a BCom degree from SB College, Aurangabad. Despite her commerce degree, she has led large industrial ventures like the Baramati High-Tech Textile Park, where she was responsible for decision-making on four fronts: production, investment, employment, and women's empowerment. As a business entrepreneur, she translated her academic background into institutional management. As a trustee of a large educational group like Vidya Pratishtan, she oversees the education, academic quality, and administrative structure for over 25,000 students.

Known for her clean image, she has often been seen involved in social service activities. According to information on her website, she founded the Environmental Forum of India (EFOI), under which she played a key role in transforming Kategwadi village into India's first 'eco village', a model for water conservation and solar energy.

Can She Fill The Void?

Sunetra Pawar's greatest strength is the support she enjoys from her party leaders and workers. She carries both the family legacy and a proven track record of social work.

Edit

BENGALURU
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

4

info.southindiatimes@gmail.com

How The Economic Survey Redefines India's Growth Constraints



India enters 2026 with macroeconomic indicators that compare favourably with most large economies. Real GDP growth has remained above 7 per cent for a second consecutive year. The Union government's fiscal deficit declined to 4.8 per cent of GDP in FY25, marginally outperforming budget estimates, and is projected to fall further to 4.4 per cent in FY26, less than half the pandemic peak of 9.2 per cent recorded in FY21. Public capital expenditure has remained elevated, bank balance sheets are strong, credit growth has accelerated, and foreign exchange reserves provide a substantial buffer against external shocks. Yet the defining feature of this year's Economic Survey is that it treats these outcomes not as an endpoint, but as a starting point for a more demanding diagnosis. The Survey's central claim is that India's binding constraint is state capacity, i.e., the ability of institutions to act coherently, learn under uncertainty, and deliver outcomes in a more hostile and fragmented global environment. This marks a substantive shift in emphasis from earlier Surveys. The Survey situates India's recent performance within a global environment characterised by persistent geopolitical uncertainty, fragmented trade regimes, and rising risk premia. Despite sound domestic fundamentals (moderate inflation, manageable external debt and credible fiscal consolidation) the Indian rupee depreciated more than many peers in 2025. The Survey attributes to the structure of India's external balance. India continues to run a sizeable merchandise trade deficit that is only partially offset by services exports and remittances. Consequently, external stability remains dependent on capital inflows that are increasingly shaped by global risk sentiment rather than domestic fundamentals alone. This vulnerability is reflected in sovereign borrowing costs. India's 10-year government bond yield has hovered around 6.7 per cent, higher than that of peers such as Indonesia (approximately 6.3 per cent), despite comparable sovereign credit ratings. Markets are increasingly pricing the consolidated public-sector balance sheet, including the fiscal behaviour of States, where populist expenditure pressures have intensified. The global context has also become struc-

turally less benign. Reciprocal tariffs of up to 25 per cent imposed by the United States in 2025 disrupted expectations that India would benefit unambiguously from trade reconfiguration. Financial markets responded by pricing in heightened uncertainty. Gold prices rose from roughly USD 2,600 per ounce at the start of 2025 to over USD 4,300 by year-end, crossing USD 5,100 by January 2026. These movements reflect a durable rise in geopolitical and financial tail risks rather than transient volatility. Against this backdrop, the Survey undertakes a conceptual reworking of the Swadeshi debate. Import substitution is neither rejected nor endorsed as a general doctrine. Instead, it is positioned as one element within a broader strategic sequence, i.e., import substitution ? strategic resilience ? strategic indispensability. Strategic resilience is defined as the capacity to withstand shocks without systemic disruption. Strategic indispensability goes further, referring to the embedding of domestic capabilities so deeply into global production systems that other economies acquire a stake in India's stability and continuity. This distinction allows the Survey to differentiate between insulation and influence. To operationalise this framework, the Survey introduces a tiered approach to indigenisation. It distinguishes between sectors where import dependence creates acute vulnerability, sectors where domestic capability is feasible but hindered by coordination failures or scale disadvantages, and sectors where substitution would impose economy-wide efficiency costs without materially improving resilience. Crucially, any protection or support is framed as conditional, time-bound, and linked to performance, with export exposure treated as a necessary disciplining mechanism. Permanent shelter without productivity upgrading is explicitly identified as a source of long-term fragility. One of the Survey's more analytically novel contributions is its treatment of input costs as a macroeconomic constraint rather than a sectoral issue. Tariff inversion, high logistics and energy costs, and regulatory compliance burdens are presented as horizontal distortions that raise transaction costs across the economy. The proposed National Input Cost Reduction Strategy reframes competitiveness as a public good. Once domestic capacity in widely used inputs has been established, the Survey argues, these inputs should not continue to be treated as revenue instruments or protected indefinitely. Elevated input costs may benefit a narrow set of producers, but they undermine downstream manufacturing, exports, and employment generation. This diagnosis is grounded in export performance. Since 2020, India's total exports have grown at a compound annual rate of roughly 9.4 per cent. However, merchandise exports have expanded at only about 6.4 per cent, with services exports accounting for most of the aggregate momentum. The Survey is explicit that services exports, however successful, cannot substitute for manufacturing exports in delivering employment absorption, supplier ecosystems, and durable external balance. Manufacturing occupies a central analytical role in the Survey, not merely as a growth driver but as an institutional stress test. Manufacturing exposes weaknesses in power supply, logistics, regulation, standards enforcement, and coordination that more footloose service activities can often bypass. For an efficient manufacturing ecosystem, state capacity becomes a prerequisite. Advanced manufacturing requires predictable regulation, reliable infrastructure, disciplined standards, and rapid problem resolution across multiple agencies. Failures in governance become immediately visible and economically costly. This framing informs the Survey's engagement with East Asian experience. Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam are not presented as models to be replicated, but as examples of a shared institutional logic, i.e., bounded experimentation, tolerance for good-faith failure, and credible withdrawal of support when performance thresholds are not met."

"Hamberder" To "Furniture Of Children", Trump And His 'Unpresidented' English



SHASHI THAROOR

The English language is a stubborn, ancient beast. It has rules, syntax, and a generally agreed-upon spellings. But the language keeps evolving, and rarely has it been bludgeoned into such fascinating new shapes as it is by the 47th President of the United States. It is no secret that where world leaders prefer to lean into diplomatic opacity, the most powerful leader in the world prefers unfiltered creativity. "I know words. I have the best words," he had declared at a rally in 2015, in the run-up to his first term. As the first year of his second term concludes, one can only add, "and how!" When Donald Trump approaches a podium or a smartphone, he does not merely use English; he negotiates with it. He stares down syllables until they surrender and rearrange vowels until they agree to his terms. To the pedantic linguist, these are errors. But to the connoisseur of chaos, they are "Trumpisms" - accidental masterpieces of a man who seems to view the dictionary rather as Italian drivers regards traffic lights, not as a binding standard-setter but as a suggestion that can be ignored whenever one can get away with it - and when you are the President of the United States, that means pretty much any time. Remember "Covfefe"? It begins, of course, with the Presidential thumbs and their propensity for careless tweeting. Historians of the future will likely dedicate entire semesters to the "Covfefe" incident. It remains the Mona Lisa of typos: mysterious, evocative, and utterly unintelligible. Was it a nuclear code? A cry for help? A nickname for a White House intern? Years later, "covfefe"

retains a mystical aura. It is a word that means nothing, yet somehow encompasses the entire surreal experience of the Trumpian tweet era. But "covfefe" was merely the opening act. We must consider the culinary innovation of the "hamberder". When the President tweeted about serving "hamberders" to the Clemson Tigers, he didn't just mistype a fast-food staple; he created a new category of cuisine. A hamburger is something you eat at a picnic; a 'hamberder' sounds heavier, darker - a beef patty that requires heavy breathing and a nondisclosure agreement to consume. Then there is the persistent case of the "stollen" election. In post after post, the President has railed against the vote being "stollen". To the uninitiated, this is a misspelling of "stolen". To those of us with a penchant for German baking, however, it is a delightful image. Stollen is a dense, powdered sugar-coated fruit bread eaten at Christmas. Every time the President rages about the "stollen", one cannot help but picture ballot boxes stuffed not with fraudulent votes, but with dried fruit, marzipan, and holiday greetings in the language of Mr Trump's paternal ancestors, the German Trumpfs. Origins And Oranges If his thumbs are agents of chaos, his tongue is a revolutionary. The President often speaks with the confidence of a Ferrari engine inside a golf cart; the momentum is high, but the steering is loose. This leads to phonetic collisions like "oranges". During a discussion on an FBI investigation, the President repeatedly insisted on looking at the "oranges" of the probe. He meant "origins" of course, but by saying "oranges" three times, he turned a legal inquiry into a quest for Vitamin C. Similarly, he once spoke with great passion about the "furniture of our children". He meant to say "future", but in the heat of the moment, he accidentally suggested that America's youth are merely decorative ottomans in the living room of democracy. And let us not forget the "anonymity" op-ed writer-a pronunciation that sounded less like a person withholding their name and more like a shy species of dinosaur. The Trumpian worldview

China's Fallen Generals: Inside Xi's Military Purge, And What It Means For The Border



On January 24, China announced that its two top military officers, Generals Zhang Youxia and Liu Zhenli, were placed under investigation for violating party discipline and law. They are accused of "seriously trampling the Chairman Responsibility System," i.e., directly defying President Xi Jinping's supreme authority and damaging the Party and the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s combat capability. The speed and severity of the investigation reflect Xi's drive to remove the last bits of independent authority in China - a purge aimed at pre-empting potential 'mountain-tops' in the PLA, ahead of next year's leadership renewal at the 21st Party Congress. The key question is, what does this purge mean for China's defence policy? And, how will it impact India's security, especially along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)?

A Difficult Choice

Zhang, the fallen general, is a princeling, Xi's childhood friend and a close collaborator during the latter's rule since 2012. Long regarded as seasoned military professionals, Zhang and Liu belong to the PLA's old guard, humbled by their combat experience in Vietnam. Predictably, they have not been able to fully share and align with Xi's sense of urgency over the PLA's accelerated buildup for a Taiwan contingency. In Xi's book, as Politburo member Li Hongzhong mentions, "Loyalty that is not absolute is absolute disloyalty". Therefore, this purge was inevitable.

Nevertheless, this action has created concealed anxiety within the Communist Party. Beijing has moved swiftly, employing multiple methods, even media drip-feeding allegations of grave, unpatriotic conduct, to contain potential unrest among the military's rank and file and beyond.

Impact on Defence Policy

The upheaval in China's elite politics, especially within the PLA, will likely persist for several years. Repopulating a hollowed-out Central Military Commission (CMC) with fresh faces untainted by the older generation will take time. Even if the CMC receives a new crop of leaders in the next year's Party Congress, the vetting will be protracted and rigorous. However, the PLA's combat capability, primarily under the domain of the theatre commands and subordinate echelons below the CMC, should remain largely impervious. While scores of senior military officers have fallen in recent years, the PLA still employs thousands of general-rank

officers, from major general upward. Therefore, Xi has the latitude to cycle through multiple rounds of promotions and purges until he finds his exact cohort of competent and loyal officers.

Taiwan and India

These developments offer Taiwan some breathing space. Despite Xi's sense of urgency, he remains a rational actor and appears not fully confident of the PLA's ability to deliver on the Taiwan front. In addition, obtaining frank assessments of the PLA's real capabilities to counter US and allied forces in the eastern theatre will become increasingly difficult for him.

Younger officers are likely to avoid delivering bad news, while earning Xi's trust would be harder, especially after the downfall of a close friend. Xi remains particularly confident in grey-zone operations, as they can be calibrated at will, and this will continue.

However, the launch of an outright attack is a gamble, putting all his grey-zone achievements at risk of an uncertain outcome. Xi is likely to reevaluate the costs and benefits of such an adventure carefully. The same is true on the Indian front. In recent months, India and China have pursued a cautious rapprochement; economic ties have improved, and both states have taken steps to ease interaction between governments, institutions and people. This has, however, not reduced the structural competition and about 50,000 troops remain deployed on the LAC. China's close collaboration with Pakistan during Operation Sindo and its expanding activities in the Indian Ocean don't inspire much confidence either. The purge is, therefore, more likely to maintain relative calm and a managed status quo on the LAC, even as the PLA continues to enhance its leverage over time.

Time as a Weapon

India consistently misreads three core strategic variables vis-à-vis China: treaties, time, and ambiguity. India considers treaties as binding commitments; China counts them as instruments to shape the adversary's behaviour while protecting the PLA's freedom of action. So, New Delhi's self-restraint enables Beijing's misadventures. Similarly, while India views time as a stabilising factor in the long run, China uses time to prepare, consolidate, and progressively alter facts on the ground. Moreover, China doesn't resolve an ambiguity but exploits it as a leverage. India must internalise this logic to make its LAC policy proactive and outcome-shaping, rather than reactive.

As Iran-US tensions soar, Strait of Hormuz caught in the middle

Dubai: The Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, again has become a focus of tensions as Iran prepares to launch a military drill that could see fire into a lane crucial for global shipping. Iran has warned ships that it will conduct a live fire drill on Sunday and Monday in the strait, which sees a fifth of all oil traded pass through the tight corridor between the Islamic Republic and Oman. The United States military's Central Command issued its own warning early Saturday, telling Tehran that any "unsafe and unprofessional behaviour near US forces, regional partners or commercial vessels increases risks of collision, escalation and destabilisation." Here's what to know about the drill, the US warning, what caused the tensions and what might happen next in the Strait of Hormuz. A key waterway for global shipping The Strait of Hormuz resembles a bend looking down from space. Its narrowest point is just 33 kilometres (21 miles) wide. It flows from the Persian Gulf into the Gulf of Oman. From there, ships can then travel to the rest of the world. While Iran and Oman have their territorial waters in the strait, it's viewed as an international waterway where all ships can ply. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), home to the skyscraper-studded city of Dubai, also sits near the waterway. The Strait of Hormuz has been important for trade. The Strait of Hormuz through history has been important



for trade, with ceramics, ivory, silk and textiles moving from China through the region. In the modern era of supertankers, the narrow strait proved deep and wide enough to allow for oil to pass through it. While there are pipelines in Saudi Arabia and the UAE that can avoid the passage, the US Energy Information Administration says "most volumes that transit the strait have no alternative means of exiting the region." The vast majority of the oil and gas moving through the strait goes to markets in Asia. Threats to the route have spiked global energy prices in the past, including during the 12-day war Israel launched against Iran in June. Iran plans a

drill that could enter the trade route. A notice to mariners sent Thursday by radio warned that Iran planned to conduct "naval shooting" in the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday and Monday. The coordinates provided by the message put the drill potentially going into what is known as the Traffic Separation Scheme — a 3.2-kilometre (2-mile) wide, two-lane system in which ships coming into the Persian Gulf go north and ships exiting onto the Gulf of Oman go south. That northern lane is within the coordinates of the drill. While Iran has provided no other public details about the drills, it will likely involve the country's paramilitary

Revolutionary Guard. The Guard operates a fleet of small fast-attack vessels in the strait that routinely have tense encounters with the US Navy. US issues warning over the Iranian drill. Early Saturday, the US military's Central Command issued a strongly worded warning to Iran and the Revolutionary Guard over the drill. While acknowledging Iran's "right to operate professionally in international airspace and waters," it warned against interfering with or threatening American warships or passing commercial vessels. The command, which oversees the US Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet, said it "will not tolerate unsafe (Guard) actions" that could include its aircraft or vessels getting too close to American warships or pointing weapons toward them. The command added that "the US military has the most highly trained and lethal force in the world." Tensions high. US President Donald Trump has threatened to launch a military strike against Iran after its bloody crackdown on nationwide protests. He has laid down two red lines — the killing of peaceful protesters and Iran launching a wave of mass executions of those held. In recent days, he's also included the fate of Iran's nuclear programme. The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier and supporting guided missile destroyers are now in the Arabian Sea, where they could launch an attack if Trump calls for it.

WIDESPREAD STEROID USE EMERGING AS A KEY TRIGGER FOR SECONDARY GLAUCOMA, SAY DOCTORS

Hyderabad: January 2026:

Doctors across India are raising concern over the widespread and often unsupervised use of steroids, warning that it is emerging as a major trigger for secondary glaucoma, a sight-threatening condition that can lead to irreversible blindness. Steroids commonly used for allergies, skin conditions, respiratory illnesses, and even as over-the-counter eye drops can significantly raise eye pressure when used for prolonged periods, often without patients realizing the long-term damage being caused to the optic nerve. India is already home to an estimated 12-13 million people living with glaucoma, accounting for nearly one-sixth of the global burden. Globally, glaucoma affects around 75-80 million individuals, a number expected to rise beyond 110 million by 2040. Despite being the leading cause of irreversible blindness worldwide, glaucoma remains vastly under-diagnosed in India. A particularly alarming concern is that 85-90% of glaucoma cases in the country remain undiagnosed. The disease progresses silently, and by the time symptoms become evident, irreversible optic nerve damage has often already occurred. Late diagnosis results in avoidable vision loss, reduced quality of life, and significant socioeconomic

impact. "We are seeing a noticeable rise in steroid-induced glaucoma, particularly in patients who use steroid medications or eye drops without medical supervision," said Dr. Kousalya, Glaucoma Surgeon, Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital, Hyderabad. "What makes this dangerous is that patients feel symptom-free initially, while eye pressure continues to rise silently, causing permanent damage," she adds. Over the past two to three years, doctors have reported a notable rise in diagnosed glaucoma cases, driven by an ageing population, a higher prevalence of diabetes and myopia, advancements in diagnostic technologies, and improved public awareness. However, experts caution that a growing proportion of cases are linked to secondary glaucoma caused by prolonged or unsupervised steroid use—an avoidable risk factor if identified and addressed early through timely screening and medical guidance. Glaucoma is most commonly diagnosed in individuals above 40 years of age, with incidence peaking between 50 and 70 years. That said, clinicians are increasingly detecting juvenile and early-onset glaucoma, particularly among individuals with a family history of the disease or secondary triggers.

IDFC FIRST Bank Q3 FY26 PAT at Rs. 503 crores, PAT up 48% YoY

Mumbai, January 31, 2026: Financial results The Board of Directors of IDFC FIRST Bank, in its meeting held today, approved the unaudited financial results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2025. Commenting on the results, Mr. V Vaidyanathan, MD and CEO said "We are seeing a strong business momentum across all our main lines of businesses, including lending, deposits, wealth management, transaction banking etc. Our asset quality has improved with GNPA at 1.69% and Net NPA at 0.53% as of 31st December 2025. On cost of funds, we expect it to further drop from here because of recent revision in savings rates, which will enable us to expand our lending franchise." About the Bank Vision: To build a world-class Bank in India, founded with principles of Ethical, Digital, and Social Good Banking. Scale: IDFC FIRST Bank is one of

India's fast-growing private banks, building its UI, UX, and tech stack like a fintech. As of December 31, 2025, the Bank serves 35 million customers, with a customer business of Rs. 5,62,090 crore (\$63.0b) comprising customer deposits of 22,82,662 crores (\$31.7b) and loans & advances of 22,79,428 crores (\$31.3b). Customer deposits grew 24.3% YoY and loans 20.9% YoY. We reach over 60,000 cities, towns, and villages, operate through 1,066 branches. Scope: We are a universal Bank offering complete range of services, including Retail, MSME, Rural, Startups, Corporate Banking, Cash Management, Credit Cards, Wealth Management, Deposits, Government Banking, Working Capital, Trade Finance, and Treasury solutions. Ethical Banking: We are committed to doing right even when customers are not watching. We have simplified descriptions, calculations, and legal jargon to

avoid confusing customers. Digital Banking: The Bank's modern technology stack delivers high-quality services across all channels like mobile, branch, internet banking, call centers and relationship managers. Built on cloud-native, API-led, microservices architecture, supported with data, analytics, AI, and fine aesthetics, we strive to deliver fintech-grade experiences on banking platform. Social Good: We work for society. We have impacted over 40 million lives including 3.6 million women entrepreneurs. We have financed over 7.5 million lifestyle improvement loans (for laptops, washing machines, refrigerators etc. that enhance the quality of life of middle class), 2.5 lakh electric 2W and 3W vehicles, 2.7 lakh water, sanitation, and hygiene loans, 2 million livelihood (cattle) loans, and 300,000+ SMEs. On deposits, we provide access of premium investment research, meaningful growth opportunities, and a culture of meritocracy.

Stock markets snap 3-day rally on intense selling ahead of Budget

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Friday, January 30, snapping a three-day rally, due to heavy selling pressure in metal, IT and commodity stocks as investors booked profits at higher levels ahead of the Budget 2026-27. However, buying on select blue-chip counters restricted the sharp fall in domestic equities amid prolonged weakness in the rupee, traders said. As a bearish trend gripped the street, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 296.59 points, or 0.36 per cent, to settle at 82,269.78. During the day, it tumbled 625.34 points or 0.75 per cent to 81,941.03. A total of 2,424 stocks advanced while 1,783 declined and 160 remained unchanged on the BSE. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 98.25 points or 0.39 per cent to end at 25,320.65 in a volatile session. "Indian equity markets remained volatile ahead of the Union Budget, with benchmark indices dragged lower by weak-

ness in IT and metal stocks. The IT sector lagged due to global growth concerns and higher US bond yields, while gold and silver declined amid a stronger dollar. "Persistent FII selling and continued rupee depreciation kept market sentiment cautious," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. With geopolitical risks and global tariff pressures rising, the Union Budget is keenly awaited for cues on growth support and fiscal discipline, he added. Among the Sensex firms, Tata Steel suffered the most, tanking by 4.57 per cent. ICICI Bank, Power Grid, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, Infosys and Kotak Mahindra Bank were also among the laggards. Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, ITC and Bharat Electronics were among the gainers. "Indian equity markets traded with a weak and cautious bias, retreating from recent highs amid aggressive selling in metal and IT stocks. Mixed cues from overseas markets, along with persistent weakness in the rupee, capped intra-day recovery attempts. "Overall, sentiment remained cautious, with market participants balancing pre-Budget positioning against external headwinds," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Punjab National Bank Inaugurates Manikonda Branch under Hyderabad Circle

Hyderabad Circle on January 31, 2026: The branch was inaugurated by the Zonal Head (General Manager), Hyderabad, Mrs. Vandana Pandey, in the esteemed presence of Mr. Arvind Kalra, Circle Head, Hyderabad. The inauguration ceremony was attended by local residents, valued customers, and bank officials. Addressing the gathering, Mrs. Vandana Pandey and Mr. Arvind Kalra emphasized PNB's strategic focus on expanding its branch network, enhancing customer outreach, and delivering efficient, technology-enabled banking solutions aligned with the Bank's vision of inclusive growth. The Manikonda Branch marks the 76th branch under the Hyderabad Circle, reinforcing PNB's commitment to strengthening its presence in key growth corridors and catering to the evolving financial needs of customers in the region. Punjab National



Bank remains dedicated to providing comprehensive banking and financial services while contributing to sustainable economic development.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds Opens its Newly Relocated Showroom in Anantapur, Strengthening Presence in Andhra Pradesh

Anantapur, January 31, 2026: Malabar Gold & Diamonds marked an important milestone in its Andhra Pradesh journey with the opening of its newly relocated showroom in Anantapur. Located at Subash Road, near Saptagiri Circle, the new showroom reflects the brand's continued focus on strengthening its presence in key regional markets through larger retail formats, wider collections, and an enhanced customer experience. Anantapur continues to be a significant jewellery market in the Rayalaseema region, supported by deep-rooted cultural traditions, steady wedding demand, and a customer base that values trust, transparency, and long-term relationships. The new showroom has been designed as a more spacious and organised retail environment, allowing customers to explore collections comfortably in a refined and welcoming setting. Spread across a total area of 12,518 square feet, the showroom includes a dedicated jewellery display area



along with an additional back-office section. The store is designed to accommodate customers across both the ground and first floors, with ample seating to ensure a relaxed and personalised shopping experience. The showroom was inaugurated by Daggupati Venkateshwar Prasad, Anantapur MLA, and Balla Pallavi, Chairperson of the Anantapur Market Yard, in the presence of senior leadership from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, invited guests, and

members of the local community. Senior management present at the inauguration included Mr. Siraj P. K., Head - Retail Operations, Rest of India; Mr. Nikhil Chandran, Zonal Head - Central Andhra and Rayalaseema; Mr. Muhammed Shareef K., Zonal Head - Telangana; Mr. Shanib K., Zonal Head - Telangana; and Mr. Hafiz Muhammad, Assistant Showroom Head, along with other members of the management team. Commenting on the occasion, M. P. Ahammad, Chairman, Malabar Group, said, "Andhra Pradesh has been an important market for us, built on long-standing relationships and trust across communities. The opening of our new Anantapur showroom reflects our commitment to offering customers in the state a larger space, wider choice, and a more comfortable retail experience, while continuing to uphold the values of transparency, quality, and fairness that Malabar stands for." The Anantapur showroom showcases an extensive range of gold, diamond, platinum, and gemstone jewellery, including Malabar Gold & Diamonds' signature collections. The assortment has been curated to address diverse requirements, from bridal and festive jewellery to everyday wear and contemporary designs, combining traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics aligned to evolving customer preferences. As an inaugural offer, customers can avail up to 30% off* on value addition of all gold, uncut, and gemstone jewellery, and up to 30% off* on diamond value. The offer is valid till February 08, 2026. T&Cs apply. Alongside this, Malabar Gold & Diamonds continues to extend its core brand assurances, including transparent pricing, fair value addition charges, lifetime maintenance, detailed product disclosure, and stringent quality assurance through BIS-hallmarked gold and certified diamonds.

ISRAELI AIR STRIKES KILL AT LEAST 28 Palestinians in Gaza, rescue officials say

At least 28 people have been killed in a wave of Israeli air strikes across the Gaza Strip on Saturday, according to local authorities. The civil defence agency, which is operated by Hamas, says children and women were among those killed. It added that in one attack, helicopter gunships hit a tent sheltering displaced people in the southern city of Khan Younis. Palestinians have described these strikes as the heaviest since the second phase of the ceasefire, brokered by President Trump in October, came into effect earlier this month. The Israeli military confirmed that a number of strikes were carried out in response to what it said was a Hamas violation of the agreement on Friday. Both Israel and Hamas have accused each other of violating the truce since it came into effect last year. In a statement, the Israel



Defense Forces (IDF) said "eight terrorists were identified exiting the underground terror infrastructure in eastern Rafah", an area in Gaza where Israeli forces are deployed under the October agreement. The IDF said it had, together with the Israel Security Agency (ISA), struck targets in various locations

including "four commanders and additional terrorists" as well as a weapons storage facility, a weapons manufacturing site and "two launch sites belonging to Hamas in the central Gaza Strip". Hamas has condemned the strikes and urged the US to take immediate action, adding that "these ongoing violations"

confirm that the Israeli government "continues its brutal war of genocide against the strip". It said that seven of the victims were from one displaced family in Khan Younis, with a civil defence spokesman adding that the strikes hit residential apartments, tents, shelters and a police station. Officials at Gaza City's Shifa hospital said an air strike on the city hit a residential apartment, killing three children and two women. "We found my three little nieces in the street. They say 'ceasefire' and all. What did those children do? What did we do?" said Samer al-Atbash, an uncle of the three dead children, according to Reuters news agency. Video footage and images from across Gaza showed several bodies being lifted out of rubble and a number of buildings destroyed. The war between Israel and Hamas began after the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on 7 October 2023, when about 1,200 people were killed and 251 were taken hostage. Israel responded by launching a military campaign in Gaza, during which more than 71,660 people have been killed, according to the Hamas-run health ministry. It says at least 509 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire began on 10 October 2025. Four Israeli soldiers have also been killed. Though Israel has previously disputed figures from the Hamas-run health ministry, a senior security source was reported by local media as saying that the military accepts that more than 70,000 Palestinians have been killed during the war in Gaza. The health ministry's figures have been deemed reliable by the UN and other human rights groups and widely cited by international media. Israel does not allow news organisations, including the BBC, into Gaza to report independently. The strikes come as the Rafah crossing, Gaza's border with Egypt, is due to reopen on Sunday after the IDF recovered the body of Israel's last hostage earlier this week.

Israel split over plans to bring back death penalty for deadly attacks



mentary national security committee, Zvika Fogel tells me. "To bring in the death penalty is the most moral, the most Jewish and the most decent thing." But human rights groups see the bill as "one of the most extreme legislative proposals" in the history of Israel. They argue it is unethical, and because it is designed to apply only to Palestinians, they say it will bring about "racialized capital punishment." There have been heated hearings in Israel's parliament involving rabbis, doctors, lawyers and security officials. Families whose loved ones were killed in the brutal assault on southern Israel more than two years ago, and in the fighting in the devastating war in Gaza that followed, have turned out to speak against and in favour of the legislation.

US government partially shuts down despite last minute funding deal



The US federal government has partially shut down despite a last-ditch funding deal approved by the Senate. The funding lapse began at midnight US eastern time (05:00 GMT) on Saturday, hours after senators agreed to fund most agencies until September. The bill includes just two weeks' funding for the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees immigration enforcement, instead of shutting it down entirely. The bill has yet to be approved by the House of Representatives, which is out of session. US President Donald Trump struck the deal with Democrats after they refused to give more funding for immigration enforcement following the fatal shooting of two US citizens in Minneapolis by federal agents. It is the second such government shutdown in the past year and comes just 11 weeks after the end of the previous funding impasse that lasted 43 days, the longest in US history. That shut-

down in 2015, which spanned 1 October to 14 November, had widespread impacts on essential government services including air travel and left hundreds of thousands of federal workers without pay for weeks. This shutdown, however, is unlikely to be that long or widespread as the House of Representatives is set to be back in session on Monday. The White House, though, has directed several agencies, including the departments of transportation, education and defence to execute shutdown plans. "Employees should report to work for their next regularly scheduled tour of duty to undertake orderly shutdown activities," a White House memo to agencies said. "It is our hope that this lapse will be short." Trump has urged Republicans, who hold the majority of seats in the US House, to vote for the deal. Lawmakers plan to use the fortnight in which the DHS will continue to be funded to negotiate a deal.

This army chief threatened to castrate opposition leader and claimed descent from Jesus



A fiery tweeter who is in charge of Uganda's military, Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba, is decried by his critics as being in the middle of an unholy trinity, or alliance, of three men who rule the East African nation with an iron fist. Kainerugaba, the son of the country's long-time leader Yoweri Museveni, has posted on social platform X about the killing of opposition supporters during this month's

fiercely contested presidential election. In posts which were subsequently deleted, he also threatened to have the testicles of defeated opposition candidate Bobi Wine removed. With the 81-year-old president winning a seventh term, analysts say this is likely to be his last term and he is grooming his 51-year-old son to succeed him. The so-called "unholy alliance" - a play on the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity - is made up of Museveni, Kainerugaba, and the president's powerful brother and special adviser, Salim Saleh. Kenya-based analyst for the Institute for Security Studies think-tank, Nicodemus Minde, tells the BBC that he heard the description during a recent research trip to Uganda.

WHAT WE LEARNED - AND DIDN'T - FROM THE MELANIA DOCUMENTARY



From televised cabinet meetings to late night Truth Social posts, US President Donald Trump has rarely stepped out of the spotlight since he resumed office in January. But more often than not, he's done it without his wife. So where is Melania? A new documentary co-produced by the first lady herself aims to answer that question. Melania: 20 Days to History promises viewers an intimate glimpse into Melania Trump's life in the days leading up to her husband's January 2025 inauguration. The film opened in cinemas across the US on Friday amid controversy. It has received

significant attention from administration critics and watchdogs, who have criticised the project's funding and dismissed the timing of its release as insensitive as mass protests swell over two fatal shootings by federal agents in Minneapolis. Politics aside, those seeking answers about how

Trump spends her time might find the film unsatisfying - much of it shows her in transit, at public events or drifting between meetings to review fabric samples and dinnerware. Still, small interactions with her closest friends offer some glimpses at how the famously enigmatic first lady is approaching her husband's second term. "Everyone wants to know, so here it is," she says in an opening voiceover. Here's what we've learned from watching the film - and what we didn't. Early on, Trump is clear about her intent: "I want to show the American people my journey from private citizen to first lady." The film touches briefly on the controversy around its creation, in a meta moment that shows Trump's staff fielding an inquiry from a journalist about its commission. It is a co-production from Trump herself and director Brett Ratner, along with other partners.

PEDRO PASCAL AND MERYL STREEP LEAD TRIBUTES TO CATHERINE O'HARA



Meryl Streep, Pedro Pascal and Ben Stiller are among celebrities to have paid tribute to Emmy-winning actress Catherine O'Hara, who died on Friday aged 71. The Canadian-born star was best known for her roles in the films Beetlejuice and Home Alone, as well as comedy TV series including Schitt's Creek and The Studio. Streep said O'Hara brought "love and light to our world, through whip-smart compassion for the collection of eccentrics she portrayed", while The Last of Us co-star Pascal said he was "eternally grateful" to have worked with her. Ben Stiller said it was "hard to explain the impact she had on comedy", adding that for him there was "no one better". O'Hara died on Friday at

her home in Los Angeles following a brief illness, her agent told the BBC. After starting her career in Canada's comedy scene, she turned out a series of unforgettable film performances netting her critical acclaim. Streep, who appeared alongside O'Hara in the 1980s comedy Heartburn, described her death as "such a loss for her family and friends, and the audience she graced as friends". Michael Keaton, who co-starred in 1988's Beetlejuice and its 2024 sequel Beetlejuice, remarked: "We go back before the first Beetlejuice. She's been my pretend wife, my pretend nemesis and my real life, true friend. This one hurts. Man am I gonna miss her." Tim Burton, who directed both films, shared a picture of the cast of the latter film on Facebook. "Catherine, I love you," he said. "This picture shows

Pokémon cancels event at controversial Japan shrine following backlash



A PokéMon card game event at a shrine honouring Japan's war dead has been cancelled following a backlash in China. The PokéMon Company apologised for advertising the event, organised by a certified third party, through its official website, and said it "should not have been held in the first place". The event was due to be held on Saturday at the Yasukuni Shrine, near the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, which commemorates those who died in several wars including convicted war criminals. The blunder comes at a moment of worsening relations between China and Japan over the stance of the latter's new prime minister on Taiwan. The Yasukuni Shrine honours Japanese soldiers who died in a number of wars, including both Sino-Japanese wars and the Pacific theatre of World War Two. But the enshrinement of the names of more than 1,000 convicted war criminals among the roughly 2.5 million people it honours has long made it a controversial site for nations that were subject to harsh treatment under Japanese occupation. "Brands that disregard history and hurt the feelings of the Chinese people will ultimately be abandoned," the People's Daily, the Chinese Communist Party's official news site, commented when the event came to light earlier this week. "The relevant enterprises must accordingly take social responsibility and not make light of the heavy weight of history in the name of entertainment." Meanwhile, the state-run Global Times praised "China's young netizens" for criticising the event, adding: "Any enter-tainment or leisure activities held at such a site constitute an open affront to historical truth, and staging events aimed at children there is even more egregious." The PokéMon Company said in a statement on Friday that the event had been "mistakenly posted" on its official card game website "due to a lack of due diligence". "After the incident was discovered, the event was promptly cancelled," it said. "We sincerely apologise for the various reactions and opinions that have been generated as a result of this publication." The firm said it would "thoroughly review and strengthen" its approval process to prevent a similar incident from occurring again.

Takeaways from the millions of newly released Epstein files



Millions of new files relating to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein have been released by the US Department of Justice, the largest number of documents shared by the government since a law mandated their release last year. Three million pages, 180,000 images and 2,000 videos were posted publicly on Friday. The release came six weeks after the department missed a deadline signed into law by US President Donald Trump that mandated all Epstein-related documents be shared with the public. "Today's release marks the end of a very comprehensive document identification and review process to ensure transparency to the American people and compliance," Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said. The files

include details about Jeffrey Epstein's time in prison - including a psychological report - and his death while incarcerated, along with investigative records on Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's associate who was convicted of helping him traffic underaged girls. They also include emails between Epstein and high-profile figures. Many of the emails and documents go back more than a decade, showcasing Epstein's relationships amid his legal troubles. He was convicted in 2008 in Florida for soliciting sex from a 14-year-old girl after coming to a controversial plea agreement with prosecutors. He died in August 2019 while in jail on charges in a sprawling sex trafficking case. Epstein invited The Duke to meet a 26-year-old Russian woman. The emails are signed "A", with a signature that appears to read "HRH Duke of York KG". They were exchanged in August 2010, two years after Epstein pleaded guilty to soliciting a minor. The emails do not indicate any wrongdoing. The BBC has contacted Andrew, formerly known as the Duke of York, for a response. Mountbatten-Windsor has faced years of scrutiny over his past

friendship with Epstein. He has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. Some emails in the latest release appear to be between Epstein and Sarah Ferguson, Andrew's ex-wife. One email dated 4 April 2009, was signed "Love, Sarah, The red Head!!" It says that she was going to be in Palm Beach and wanted to have tea. The email goes on to discuss ideas for Ferguson's company, Mother's Army. The former Duchess of York refers to Epstein as "My dear spectacular and special friend Jeffrey". She calls him a "legend" and says "I am so proud of you". The financier was still under house arrest for his 2008 conviction when the email exchange was sent. Epstein sent money to Mandelson's husband. Other emails show Epstein sent £10,000 (\$13,692) to Lord



India vs Pakistan, U-19 World Cup:

5 Players Who Hold The Key In Battle For Last Semi-Final Spot

India face Pakistan in a crucial U-19 World Cup Super Six match in Bulawayo on Sunday. With three semi-final spots already booked, the result of the India vs Pakistan clash will decide the fourth semi-finalist. While Vaibhav Suryavanshi will be in focus, several other Indian players will also hold the key in the game. India lost to Pakistan by 191 runs in the Under-19 Asia Cup final in Dubai last December after winning the group match of the same tournament against the arch-rivals by 90 runs. Here are the key players in the India vs Pakistan clash:



Wicketkeeper Abhigyan Kundu (183 runs from four matches, highest score 80) and Vaibhav Suryavanshi (166 runs from four matches) have been consistent with the bat, scoring two fifties each. However, both will

look to convert those starts into three-figure scores. Vihaan Malhotra (151 runs from four matches) is another batter India will be banking on. The left-hander smashed an unbeaten 109 against Zimbabwe in the last match and will be eager to continue his good form. On

the bowling front, right-arm medium pacer Henil Patel (10 wickets in four matches) and left-arm fast bowler Udhav Mohan, who picked up three wickets in the previous match against Zimbabwe, have been standout performers for India. Skipper Ayush Mhatre also

impressed with his off-breaks, taking three wickets against Zimbabwe, while right-arm medium pacer RS Ambish has been among the wickets with the new ball. What About Pakistan Pakistan, on the other hand, lost their opening group game against England but

bounced back with wins against Scotland and Zimbabwe. They notched a comprehensive eight-wicket win over New Zealand in their Super Six match on January 27 and head into the India clash with confidence. Opener Sameer Minhas, who orchestrated India's defeat in the U-19 Asia Cup final with a magnificent 172, has been in impressive form in the tournament. He scored 74 not out against Zimbabwe in the group stage and 76 in the win against New Zealand in the Super Six. Minhas will again be the biggest threat for India, who will look to dismiss him early and curb his scoring. In the bowling department, right-arm pacer Ali Raza has been Pakistan's key performer with 12 wickets from four matches. Indian batters will need solid plans to counter him.

WWE Royal Rumble 2026: Top 5 Potential Winners Of Men's Royal Rumble Match

WWE Royal Rumble is just around the corner and this year is extra special as this is the first time that the event will take place in Saudi Arabia. It is generally considered to be the start of the road to WrestleMania and the winner of the men's Royal Rumble match will be guaranteed of a title match. The winner of the Royal Rumble match will have his choice between Undisputed WWE Champion Drew McIntyre and World Heavyweight Champion CM Punk in the main event of WrestleMania 42. Here's a look at the top 5 potential winners of the men's Royal Rumble match - Roman Reigns Roman Reigns is all set to make his return at the WWE Royal Rumble and



despite being a top star in the company, he has not won the Royal Rumble since 2015. He has come very close to achieving the feat over the years and with a potential match against CM Punk at WrestleMania on the line, he is one of the favourites to win the match. Cody Rhodes The former

Undisputed WWE Champion was the first wrestler to announce himself for the Royal Rumble match and it is difficult to not consider him while looking at potential winners. Rhodes won the match in 2023 as well as 2024 and a win on Sunday will mean that he will be tied with

Stone Cold Steve Austin with three Royal Rumble wins. Add to that his rivalry with McIntyre and we can be looking at a heated fight. Bron Breakker The odds-on favourite to win the Royal Rumble is likely to enter the match at No. 1 and Bron Breakker is widely considered to be the one to dominate proceedings on Sunday. A win will put on collision course against CM Punk and the addition of Seth Rollins can make for a blockbuster storyline. Oba Femi The former NXT Champion will make his official main roster debut at the Royal Rumble and despite multiple promos on WWE Raw, he did not appear on any weekly television for the show.

FOREST AGREE ORTEGA DEAL AND TARGET INTER'S FRATTESI



Nottingham Forest have agreed a deal for Manchester City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega worth up to £500,000. Sean Dyche's side are also trying to sign Inter Milan midfielder Davide Frattesi, initially on loan with the option for a permanent transfer. The 26-year-old has won 33 caps for Italy and has played 19 games for Inter this season. German Ortega, 33, is currently third choice at the Etihad behind Gianluigi Donnarumma and James Trafford. He is out of contract this summer and is yet to feature for Pep Guardiola's side this season. Forest's need for a keeper stems from a knee injury suffered by John Victor that is set to rule

Reaction & analysis as Rybakina overcomes Sabalenka to win Australian Open



World No. 5 Elena Rybakina launched an incredible comeback in the final set to break World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka twice and clinch the Australian Open 2026 women's singles title. Rybakina won the first set 6-4, breaking Sabalenka in the very first game of the match. Sabalenka roared back to win the second set 6-4, and soared into a dominant 3-0 lead in the deciding third set. However, Rybakina broke Sabalenka twice in a row to turn the scales and win the third set 6-4. This becomes Rybakina's first Australian Open crown, and the second Grand Slam of her career. For Sabalenka, it is a second successive Australian Open final defeat. For Elena Rybakina, it's the second Grand Slam of her

career. She won the Wimbledon title in 2022, and now adds the Australian Open 2026 to her trophy cabinet, more than three years later. It's a second consecutive defeat in the Australian Open 2026 final for Aryna Sabalenka. She won in 2023 and 2024, but now she's lost two 3-set thrillers to Madison

Keys (2025) and Rybakina (2026). The World No. 1 oozed class today too, but Rybakina's stunning comeback caught everyone by surprise. An incredible comeback in the final set from the World No. 5, and she has beaten World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka. She is up to a career-high third in the world rankings as a result of her Australian Open victory.

SNOOP DOGG AIMING TO MAKE SWANSEA A 'GLOBAL NAME'



Rapper Snoop Dogg says he wants to play his part in making Swansea City become a "global name". The 54-year-old became a co-owner and investor at Swansea after taking a minority stake in the Championship club last July. The American star says he "always wanted to invest in a soccer team" - and that he wants to help Swansea generate income to aid their bid to return to the Premier League. "I want to be real hands on, I want to take the club in a direction maybe it hasn't been before," he told Wales Online, external "We want to take Swansea to the Premier League, and to do that we are going to need money -

that's the reality of the game these days. "I want to introduce sponsorship deals and publicity that will make them a global name." The West Coast rapper has sold more than 30 million albums worldwide but is yet to attend a Swansea game, though his son Cordell Broadus was in the direc-

Sachin Tendulkar Gives Ultimate Pep Talk To Team India Ahead Of U19 World Cup Clash vs Pakistan



India are set to take on Pakistan in the U19 Cricket World Cup 2026 on Sunday, and Team India are seemingly leaving no stone unturned before the match. Ahead of the game, the Ayush Mhatre-led side received a pep talk from one of the game's greatest - none other than legendary India batter Sachin Tendulkar, who is the highest run-scorer in international cricket history. In images shared by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on social

media, Mhatre, Vaibhav Suryavanshi and co. could be seen interacting not only with VVS Laxman. "The India Under 19 team playing in the ongoing Under 19 World Cup had a virtual interaction with the legend of World Cricket, Mr. Sachin Tendulkar," posted BCCI on social media. The India Under 19 team playing in the ongoing Under 19 World Cup had a virtual interaction with the legend of World Cricket, Mr. Sachin Tendulkar. In what was an invaluable experience, the next generation got insights and perspectives on the important ingredients for success... "In what was an invaluable experience, the next generation got insights and perspectives on the important ingredients for success and longevity in an ever evolving sport, not just limited to technical skills and remaining fit but also the importance of staying focused, disciplined, humble and rooted in success," the BCCI further said.

BARCELONA 'SHAKEDOWN' OFFERS FIRST HINTS OF F1 2026



Mercedes were pre-season favourites for 2026 long before any of the new cars ran on track, and nothing that happened in the Formula 1 'shakedown' in Spain this week has changed that. The new Mercedes made a strong impression on rivals. The team did the most miles, and set the fastest times while the car was on the track, albeit Lewis Hamilton posted the quickest time of the week late on the final day in the Ferrari. The seven-time champion's lap of one minute 16.348 seconds pipped George Russell's best for Mercedes, set the previous day, by 0.097 seconds. World champion Lando Norris was second fastest on the final day, and third over-

all, in the McLaren, 0.246secs off Hamilton. Judging performance from pre-season testing is always fiendishly difficult because of the number of variables involved, all the more so after a week such as this. The test was held behind closed doors, with no independent media allowed access. No official timing

engines, tyres and fuel - after the biggest regulation change in the sport's history. Testing outright pace was very much not on the agenda for anyone. So the headline lap times meant almost nothing, not that that erases the general impression that Mercedes are in the best place at this early stage. The test was all about learning about the new cars and, particularly, the new power-units. It was held in private because teams were scared by memories of the last time new engines were introduced, in 2014, when many suffered major reliability problems. But those fears did not come to fruition, partly because the standards in F1 are so high these days.

I NEVER STOPPED BELIEVING - CALVERT-LEWIN



When Dominic Calvert-Lewin left Everton last summer after nine years with the club, he could be forgiven for being a little fearful of what his future held. The striker struggled with injuries in the latter stages of his Toffees career and managed just three goals in his final season, meaning whoever did sign him was likely taking a bit of a risk. But that gamble has paid off for Leeds, with Calvert-Lewin having revived his career with an excellent scoring run under Daniel Farke, scoring seven goals in his past six games. That form has also led to talk of his return to the England squad and possibly even a place at the 2026 World Cup - something that seemed very unlikely just six months ago. Calvert-Lewin sat down with BBC Sport's Betty Glover to talk about his return to goalscoring, the reality of being a free agent and his England chances. After almost a decade at Everton, the change of scenery has clearly done Calvert-Lewin the world of good. With nine Premier League goals he has outscored big-money arrivals like Hugo Ekitike, Viktor Gyokeres and Benjamin Sesko. "I just felt like I needed a fresh start," he said. "I think that I'd gone from a 19-year-old boy to a 28-year-old man and deep down a fresh start is what I felt like I needed. "So obviously when communication started with Leeds, I felt that this was the place for me to come in and thrive and get back to my best level." Key for Calvert-Lewin has been the faith Farke has shown in him. The German coach said recently that he had always been a big fan of Calvert-Lewin and would always sign him if the opportunity presented itself. "I had a phone call with him one or two days before I signed and he spoke for maybe 30 minutes." Calvert-Lewin said of his first conversation with Farke. "I was just listening and his personality came through. I could tell that he was a caring person and he cared about his players, and he was just emphasising how he wanted to get me back to my best level. "That relationship's just grown and grown. "You know he has a human side, which I think that then gets the players to be more attentive to the messaging and ultimately makes us play better."

"This Sankranthi will be remembered for seven generations on both sides"

Star Entertainer Naveen Polishetty at Anaganaga Oka Raju Success Celebrations "Anaganaga Oka Raju is proof that hard work always pays off" Renowned Producer and TFDC Chairman Dil Raju "Naveen Polishetty is a hero admired by Megastar Chiranjeevi" Acclaimed Director Bobby Kolli Released as a Sankranthi festival treat on January 14, Anaganaga Oka Raju has won the hearts of Telugu audiences across the globe. Starring star entertainer Naveen Polishetty in the lead, the film has crossed 2100+ crore gross worldwide, emerging as a sensational blockbuster. Presented by Srikara Studios and produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under the banners of Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, the film is directed by debutant Mari, with Meenakshi Chaudhary as the female lead. Arriving with massive expectations, Anaganaga Oka Raju not only delivered non-stop laughter but also



touched hearts with its emotional moments, standing tall as the Sankranthi winner. To mark this grand success, a celebratory success event was held on Friday evening at Ramanadu Studios, Hyderabad. Renowned producer and TFDC Chairman Dil Raju and popular director Bobby Kolli attended as chief guests. Memorabilia were presented to everyone who contributed to the film's success, including cast, technicians, and dis-

tributors. Dil Raju said: "Congratulations to the entire team of Anaganaga Oka Raju. Special appreciation to producer Naga Vamsi. Vamsi truly loves cinema, and when you love cinema this deeply, success naturally follows. Many of us should learn from him. Congratulations to director Mari, Chinmayi, Mickey J. Meyer, and the entire team. Meenakshi delivered back-to-back Sankranthi successes with Sankranthi Vastunam last year and

now Anaganaga Oka Raju. Naveen carried this film entirely on his shoulders. I watched the film a day before release and was confident it would be a hit. From start to finish, Naveen works day and night without compromise. From Life Is Beautiful to now, I've seen his journey closely. Everyone saying that this film's success is mainly because of Naveen makes me very happy. This film is a perfect example of how hard work always gets

rewarded." Director Bobby Kolli said: "They say heroes are born when timing works in their favour. But Naveen is a hero who mastered timing itself. A year ago, after a serious accident, even while recovering, he spoke to me about finding great writers and making a blockbuster. That's his passion for cinema. Watching the film, I felt he never dropped his energy even for a single frame. That energy comes from his hard work and hunger. He will reach even greater heights. Recently, Megastar Chiranjeevi told me how much he liked Anaganaga Oka Raju and praised Naveen's incredible energy, saying he's his favourite among the new generation. Even while enjoying his own success, Chiranjeevi garu celebrated Naveen's success. That itself is a huge achievement."

Naveen Polishetty said: "There's a dialogue in our film that says Raju's wedding will be remembered for seven generations on both sides. In the same way, this Sankranthi will be remembered by all of us forever."

Teaser of "Amaravathiki Aahwanam" Released by Veteran Actor & Producer Murali Mohan Garu



Worldwide Theatrical Release on February 13th. The teaser of the upcoming film Amaravathiki Aahwanam was officially launched in Hyderabad by distinguished actor and producer Murali Mohan Garu, receiving an enthusiastic response from the film fraternity. The movie is set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on February 13th. Produced by K Shankar Rao and R Venkateswara Rao under the banner of Light House Cine Magic, the film is pre-

sented by G. Rambabu Yadav with production supervision by veteran producer Muppa Venkata Chowdary. Directed by GVK, the film features Siva Kantamneni, Dhanya Balakrishna, Esther, Supritha, and Harish in lead roles, supported by senior actors Ashok Kumar, Bhadram, Gemini Suresh, and Nagendra Prasad in pivotal roles. On the occasion, Ashok Kumar Said: "For the first time, I portrayed the role of a madman. Family dramas, entertainers, and horror films always connect with audiences, and I believe our film will too. Producer Prasanna Kumar Said: "The teaser is impressive. This film will certainly entertain audiences."

"Couple Friendly" is being released in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana by passionate producer and distributor Dheeraj Mogilineni; Grand Release on Valentine's Day release, February 14



"Couple Friendly" stars Santosh Sobhan in the lead role, with Manasa Varanasi playing the female lead. Presented by the renowned production house UV Creations, the film is being grandly produced by UV Concepts in Telugu and Tamil. Ajay Kumar Kumar P. serves as the co-producer, while Ashwin Chandrasekhar is the director. Made as a musical romantic love story, "Couple Friendly" is scheduled to hit theatres in Telugu and Tamil on February 14, coinciding with Valentine's Day. The

film is being released across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana by passionate producer and distributor Dheeraj Mogilineni. Having previously distributed several super hit films, Dheeraj Mogilineni is bringing "Couple Friendly" to Telugu audiences on a grand scale as well. The teaser and the lyrical songs "Naalo Nenu" and "Gaabara Gaabara" released so far have received a huge response. Youth audiences are eagerly waiting to watch "Couple Friendly" on the big screen.



RATTATATAAV, THE PEPPY SECOND SINGLE FROM THE UPCOMING ENTERTAINER FUNKY, IS OUT NOW AND ALREADY MAKING WAVES WITH ITS INFECTIOUS ENERGY

complete musical treat. Adding to the buzz, the film's teaser has already struck a chord with audiences, promising non-stop comedy and laughter. Director KV Anudeep returns to his trade-

mark comic universe, aiming to deliver an even bigger, louder, and crazier cinematic experience with his quirky storytelling and infectious humour. Music director Bheems Ceciroleo once again proves his flair for foot-tapping compositions, infusing the narrative with vibrant rhythms and catchy tunes. The film is produced by Naga Vamsi S and Sai Soujanya under the banners of Sithara Entertainments, Fortune Four Cinemas, and Srikara Studios is presenting the film. With quirky characters, a refreshing lead pair, peppy music and a director celebrated for comic chaos, FUNKY is all set to deliver unlimited entertainment on the big screen. The film is scheduled for a theatrical release on February 13, 2026, making it a perfect entertainer for the Valentine's Day weekend.

'SKY' PRE-RELEASE PRESS MEET HELD IN HYDERABAD; GRAND THEATRICAL RELEASE ON FEBRUARY 6

The pre-release press meet of the film "Sky" was held grandly with renowned director and producer Madhura Sreedhar Reddy as the chief guest; gearing up for a grand theatrical release on February 6th. Produced under the Valour Entertainment Studios banner by Nagireddy Guntaka, Srilakshmi Guntaka, Murali Krishnam Raju, and Prudhvi Pericharla, "Sky" stars Murali Krishnam Raju, Shruti Shetty, and Anand in the lead roles. The film is directed by Prudhvi Pericharla. With this movie, a new music director, Shiva Prasad, is being introduced to the industry. "Sky" is all set for a grand theatrical release on February 6. The pre-release press meet of the film was



held today in Hyderabad, with Madhura Sreedhar Reddy attending as the chief guest. Music Director Shiva Prasad said, "I grew as a music director starting from a very small level, purely driven by my pas-

sion for the film industry. I sincerely thank our director Prudhvi Pericharla garu for giving me the opportunity to work on this film. It is only because of his support that I was able to give good music for this movie. I am very happy seeing the response the songs are receiving." Producer Madhura Sreedhar Reddy said, "Before coming to this event, I watched the content and songs of the film "Sky." From what I saw, it is clear

that this movie has an intense love story. The songs are very good, and Rasool Ellore garu's visuals are beautiful. Just by looking at the caption of the film, we can understand the essence of the movie. I sincerely wish "Sky" great success." Producer Nagireddy Guntaka said, "I thank Madhura Sreedhar garu for attending our movie's press meet today. All of us worked very hard to produce "Sky." Every member of the team worked with great passion. Audiences will get to see a fresh love story filled with heart-touching emotions in our film. We are releasing the movie on February 6." Director Prudhvi Pericharla said, "Before starting the shoot itself, we had all the songs ready. With the suggestions and

guidance given by our DOP Rasool garu, we were able to comfortably complete the film within the planned time. His guidance helped us a lot. I thank every team member who supported me throughout this journey. We strongly believe that everyone will like our film." Hero Murali Krishnam Raju said, "I am very happy to be introduced as a hero through this film. Honestly, the real heroes of this movie are our director Prudhvi and producers Nagireddy and Srilakshmi. The team worked extremely hard for this film. Despite facing many difficulties, they completed the movie and brought it to release. Our music director Shiva worked as an auto driver and cab driver and entered the industry purely with his passion."

Uorfi Javed 'expelled' from Islam, she is now Geeta Bhardwaj, claims influencer



Mumbai: Social media influencer Faizan Ansari has once again stirred controversy after claiming that actress and fashion influencer Uorfi Javed has been "expelled" from Islam and will now be called as Geeta Bhardwaj. The influencer made the strong claim through a video shared on his social media, where Ansari alleged that a decision had been taken by 'Muslims' to disassociate Javed from the community following her constant insult to your community. In the video, Ansari said, "Hello guys, how are you all? I am Faizan Ansari. There is a girl who is ruining the name of Muslims not only in India but across the world. She herself says that she does not believe in the Quran, she does not believe in Islam, and she does not believe in the Muslim religion. Her name was Muslim till now, Uorfi Javed is not a Muslim anymore. Her name is Geeta Bhardwaj. All of us Muslims have taken this decision. I have given a written letter to the Maulana and I am attaching it with this video."