



01-02-2026
Total pilgrims: 74,192
Tonsures: 22,313
Hundi Kanukulu: 4,57 CR
Waiting Compartments: 05

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam
(without SSD Tokens): 8-10 H



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IN BRIEFS



Air India grounds
Dreamliner over
fuel switch issue

New Delhi (TSIT) An Air India pilot on Monday flagged a possible defect with the fuel control switch of a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, and the matter has been reported to aviation watchdog DGCA. The aircraft operated the flight AI132 from London to Bengaluru, and it landed at Bengaluru on Monday morning, according to sources. In a statement, the airline said it is aware that one of its pilots has reported a possible defect on the fuel control switch of a Boeing 787-8 aircraft. After receiving this initial information, we have grounded the said aircraft and are involving the OEM to get the pilot's concerns checked on a priority basis. The matter has been communicated to the aviation regulator, DGCA. Air India had checked the fuel control switches on all Boeing 787 aircraft in its fleet after a directive from the DGCA, and had found no issues," the statement said.

**Silver slides for
3rd straight day to
Rs 2.6 lakh/kg;
gold drops to Rs
1.52 lakh/10g**



New Delhi (TSIT) Silver prices extended its steep fall for the third straight day, tumbling Rs 52,000 to Rs 2.60 lakh per kg in the national capital on Monday, while gold fell to Rs 1.52 lakh per 10 grams amid weak global trends and a firm US dollar. According to the All India Silver Association, the white metal nosedived Rs 52,000, or nearly 17 per cent, to Rs 2.60 lakh per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). On Saturday, the metal tanked 19 per cent, or Rs 72,500, to Rs 3.12 lakh per kilogram. In the last three sessions, silver prices have fallen by Rs 14,500, or nearly 36 per cent from Rs 40,450 per kg - its all-time high - recorded on January 29. Gold price of 99.9 per cent purity also bore the brunt of the sell-off, crashing by Rs 12,800, or 7.73 per cent, to Rs 1.52,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Monday. It had settled at Rs 1.65,500 per 10 grams in the previous session.

NATION | NEWS

**Rahul, Congress must
apologise for surrendering
territory to China: Kiren Rijiju**

SLAMS BRS & BJP



Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy attended the Ravi Narayana Reddy National Award presentation ceremony and paid rich tributes to legendary peasant leader Ravi Narayana Reddy, describing him as an enduring symbol of sacrifice, social justice and democratic values.

Recalling his contributions, the Chief Minister said Ravi Narayana Reddy played a crucial role in the armed peasant struggle against feudal forces and worked relentlessly for the abolition of bonded labour. Despite being born into a landlord family, he donated nearly 500 acres of land for the poor and inspired generations of grassroots activists. He noted that Ravi Narayana Reddy was elected to Parliament with a record majority and later voluntarily stepped away

from public office to uphold ethical politics. Revanth Reddy said conferring the national award on former Supreme Court judge Justice B. Sudarshan Reddy was most appropriate, praising his integrity and commitment to the Constitution.

Launching a political attack, the Chief Minister criticised BRS leaders for claiming historical legacies without comparable sacrifice, asserting that true leadership is defined by struggle and service. He also accused the BJP of attempting to weaken constitutional and voting rights, urging democratic forces to raise public awareness. The Chief Minister said the State government would ensure lasting and fitting recognition for Ravi Narayana Reddy's legacy in Telangana.

WORLD | NEWS

**Beijing Criticises
Dalai Lama Grammy
Win As 'Manipulation'**



SPORTS | NEWS

**ICC Contemplates 'Suspending'
Pakistan As T20 World Cup
'India Boycott' Row Deepens**



Uproar in Lok Sabha after Rahul seeks to quote from ex-Army chief Naravane's 'memoir'

Rajnath Singh & Amit Shah object on the grounds that book has not yet been published

New Delhi (TSIT) The Lok Sabha was thrown into a political confrontation on Monday after Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi attempted to raise questions on India's handling of China during the discussion on the President's Address, prompting strong objections from the government and repeated interventions by the Speaker.

What began as a response to BJP attacks on the Congress's patriotism quickly escalated into a broader clash over national security, Parliamentary rules, and the limits placed on the opposition's right to speak on sensitive foreign policy issues.

At the centre of the row was Gandhi's reference to reports linked to former Army chief General M M Naravane's memoir, which he said pointed to serious concerns about Chinese military presence and decision-making at the highest levels of government. Gandhi began by responding to BJP MP Tejasvi Surya's earlier remarks questioning the Congress's patriotism. He said the issue of nationalism could not be reduced to slogans and pointed to what he described as serious concerns over national security, referring to four Chinese tanks entering Indian territory in Doklam.

As he spoke, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh intervened, objecting to the reference and demanding that only authenticated material be allowed on the floor of the House. Gandhi replied

that his remarks were based on Naravane's memoir. Singh countered that the book had not yet been published and therefore could not be treated as an authentic source. Home Minister Amit Shah supported the objection, stating that unpublished books and magazine reports could not be cited in Parliament and that "anything" could be written in such publications.

Speaker Om Birla stepped in, ruling that House rules do not permit the reading or quoting of any book or article that does not directly relate to the proceedings of Parliament. Singh further argued that "unofficial conversations" or unverified material should not be mentioned in the House. The controversy centres on General Naravane's memoir, 'Four Stars of Destiny', which has drawn attention for its reported disclosures on sensitive issues, including the 2020 India-

China border standoff and the Agnipath recruitment scheme. The book is currently under review by the Ministry of Defence, with reports suggesting it reveals internal differences within the Armed Forces and policy-making circles, raising wider questions about disclosure norms for retired military

OO
Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday claimed that he was not being allowed to quote from former army chief MM Naravane's unpublished book in the Lok Sabha because it indicts Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for "letting down" the Army during the 2020 conflict with China.

China border standoff and the Agnipath recruitment scheme.

The book is currently under review by the Ministry of Defence, with reports suggesting it reveals internal differences within the Armed Forces and policy-making circles, raising wider questions about disclosure norms for retired military

officers. As the interruptions continued, Samajwadi Party MP and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav came out in support of Gandhi, saying the China issue was sensitive and that the Leader of Opposition should be allowed to speak.

Union Minister Kiran Rijiju opposed this, insisting that a ruling had already been given by the Chair and must be accepted and followed. Shah again intervened, reminding the House that the discussion was on President Droupadi Murmu's address, not on unpublished books or speculative reports.

Gandhi pushed back, arguing that the President's Address covered India's overall situation, including foreign relations with China and the US, exports, and national security. Holding up papers related to Naravane's account, he said the material spoke directly about the prevailing situation. The Speaker warned Gandhi not to quote or describe the article. Gandhi responded by asking Birla to clearly state what he was permitted to say. When told to speak on the issue without references, Gandhi asked why he could not speak on India-China relations if he was not quoting any book or magazine. He questioned whether Parliament was barred from discussing international relations altogether. Gandhi further said that the Prime Minister, Defence Minister and Home Minister had allowed questions to be raised about his party's character and nationalism.

SC issues notices to Centre, 12 states on PIL by Christian body against anti-conversion laws

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), represented by senior advocate Meenakshi Arora, also sought a stay on the operation of these state laws.



NEW DELHI (TSIT): The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre and 12 states, including Rajasthan and Arunachal Pradesh, on a fresh PIL filed by the National Council of Churches in India challenging the validity of their respective anti-conversion laws.

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), represented by senior advocate Meenakshi Arora, also sought a stay on the operation of these state laws. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi took note of the submissions of the NCCI and sought responses from the Centre and 12 state

governments within four weeks. Ordering tagging of the fresh pleas with the pending ones, the CJI said a three-judge bench would hear them together. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre,

said that similar petitions are pending which challenge the state laws. "Our reply is ready and will be filed shortly," the law officer said.

Arora said that Odisha and Rajasthan have also come out with their separate laws, and they were not under challenge in earlier petitions. "There are amendments also in other Acts which are not challenged. Let me serve all the standing counsels," she said. "Issue notice. Let a copy of each be served on Advocate Generals (of states) also. Let a counter affidavit (of the Centre and 12 states) be filed within four weeks. Let respondents file a common counter affidavit.

Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana JAGRUTI President K. Kavitha said on Monday that if the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged phone-tapping case during the previous BRS regime, summons her, she would appear before the team and cooperate. Kavitha, daughter of former Chief Minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) President K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) reiterated that she suspects her and her husband's phones were tapped too.

"If the SIT issues notice, I will appear before it and cooperate in the investigation," she said while replying to a query at a press conference. The former MLC said that she expects KCR to clarify



what transpired during the examination by the SIT.

KCR was examined by the SIT for nearly five hours on Sunday at his residence in Hyderabad in connection with the case relating to the alleged tapping of phones of several individuals during the BRS' rule. On BRS Working

President K.T. Rama Rao reacting strongly to SIT summoning her father KCR, Kavitha remarked that no one is above the law. "When you are in public life, there will be many issues and one has to face the consequences," she said.

Stating that all should cooperate in the transparent investigation, Kavitha said it would be better to close the matter at the earliest. Kavitha, who quit BRS after being suspended from the party and also sent her resignation as a Member of the Legislative Council in September last year, said the BRS should introspect why a situation has come now where KCR was summoned.

Over 50 dead in Poland as severe winter cold grips the country



Warsaw (TSIT):

More than 50 people have died in Poland since the start of winter due to extremely low temperatures, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration Wieslaw Szczepanski told reporters on Monday.

"The wave of severe frost is

reaching its peak. We have sad news of new victims. Currently, we have information about 54 deaths and 36 cases of hypothermia," Szczepanski said, emphasizing that people living in abandoned buildings are particularly at risk.

"Once again, we urge everyone living in abandoned buildings to move to places with higher temperatures," he added, warning that the coming night will be the coldest in Poland since the beginning of

winter. Szczepanski also highlighted potential hazards on the roads. "For now, roads in Poland are passable, but we are concerned about the night from Tuesday to Wednesday, when drizzle may occur in southern voivodships. A drop in temperature could cause ice on road surfaces, making travel, especially to schools, difficult and dangerous," he said.

India among top drivers of global economic growth, FM Sitharaman highlights IMF data



New Delhi (TSIT): Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday highlighted India's growing role in the global economy, citing International Monetary Fund (IMF) data shared on social media by billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk.

According to the chart, India and China together account for 43 per cent of worldwide GDP growth, with China contributing 26 per cent and India 17 per cent, surpassing the United States in driving global expansion.

Speaking to university students in Parliament after presenting the Union Budget 2026-27, FM Sitharaman noted that many young people may have seen Musk's post, which expressed surprise at the shift in global economic power.

"The data clearly reflects India's rising strength and influence in the global economy," Sitharaman said, adding that even India's Opposition should acknowledge the country's growing economic clout.

While she recognised that China's contribution remains higher, the finance minister emphasised that India is steadily closing the gap and is on a long-term growth trajectory. "India should take pride in playing such a significant role in global GDP growth alongside its neighbour," she said.

FM Sitharaman further stressed that Indians should have confidence in the nation's economy, noting that India is now central to global economic expansion and that its growth story is being noticed and discussed worldwide. Elon Musk had originally shared the chart, created by World of Statistics, remarking that the global balance of power is changing, drawing widespread attention to the IMF data.

Mamata walks out of EC meeting



New Delhi (TSIT): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday left the meeting with the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar here on the SIR matter in a huff without listening to the response of the Election Commission (EC) top brass on the issues raised by her, EC officials said.

The CEC told the TMC leaders that the "rule of law will prevail" and anybody taking the law into their own hands will be dealt with strictly in accordance with the provisions of law and powers vested in EC, they said.

Their reaction came as Banerjee lashed out at the EC after emerging from the meeting, accusing the poll panel of acting as a "dalal" (middleman) of BJP. Wearing black shawls

as a mark of "protest", Banerjee along with some "SIR-affected" families and party leaders met CEC Kumar and fellow ECs here, her party said.

First TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee spoke, followed by Mamata Banerjee, the officials said, adding that the points raised by them were duly noted down by CEC Kumar and Election Commissioners SS Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. When the CEC started to respond, the TMC leaders interjected on multiple occasions.

SHORT TAKES

Two killed in clash during Ravidas Shobhayatra in Haridwar village

Roorkee, Feb 2: Tension prevailed in the Bhagwanpur area of Roorkee in Uttarakhand's Haridwar district after a violent clash between two rival groups during a religious procession claimed two lives and left three others seriously injured on Sunday. The incident took place in Binarsi village during a bhandara organised as part of the Ravidas Shobhayatra. Following the violence, police deployed heavy security from multiple police stations, including Jhabrera, Roorkee and Kaliyar, to prevent further escalation. According to police sources, the clash erupted around 5 pm due to a long-standing rivalry and a dispute linked to "social prestige". What began as a verbal altercation soon escalated into a violent confrontation, during which firearms were allegedly used. Anand (28), a resident of Binarsi village, died on the spot after being shot in the chest. Later in the night, the body of Mangeram, belonging to the rival faction, was recovered from a nearby field. Preliminary findings indicate that he was beaten to death. The killings triggered protests by the victims' families and local residents, who blocked the road by placing Anand's body on it and refused to allow post-mortem examinations until the accused were arrested. Senior police officials intervened and managed to pacify the crowd, following which the bodies were sent for autopsy late in the evening.

Clash erupts in Chhattisgarh village, six cops injured

Gariaband, Feb 2: Violence erupted between two communities in Dudhkaia village of Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district on Sunday evening after three men, recently released on bail, allegedly attacked locals, police said. Six police personnel were injured in stone-pelting while trying to control the clashes, the authorities added. The accused, including a man identified as Arif, had been arrested a year ago for vandalising a temple idol. After being released, they allegedly harassed witnesses and intimidated villagers. On Sunday morning, they reportedly attacked four to six youths with rods, triggering the communal tension. Angry villagers gheraoed the accused's homes, setting them on fire, while a few vehicles were also torched. Gariaband SP Vedrat Sirmour said additional forces were deployed, all three accused were re-arrested, and three cases registered. The situation is now under control.

Uttarakhand to launch online portal for LUCC scam victims

Dehradun, Feb 2: In a major relief for over 1.5 lakh investors affected by the Loni Urban Multi-State Credit & Thrift Co-operative Society (LUCC) scam, the Uttarakhand government has decided to launch a dedicated integrated online portal to enable victims to submit their complaints. The decision follows a formal request made by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on January 14. Acting on this, Secretary Dilip Jawalkar directed the State Cooperation Department to immediately initiate the development of the portal. The LUCC management is accused of cheating investors of nearly Rs 800 crore by luring them with attractive returns on fixed and recurring deposits. The society operated through 35 branches across Uttarakhand and deployed hundreds of agents to mobilise small savings, primarily from rural and semi-urban areas. The scam surfaced in June 2024 after all LUCC offices abruptly shut down. The first FIR was registered at the Kotdwara police station based on a complaint by Tripti Negi, following which multiple complaints poured in. So far, 18 FIRs have been registered across six districts, including Dehradun and Haridwar, and more than 12 officials and agents have been arrested. Initially, the probe was handled by the state CID. However, a Public Interest Litigation filed by Ashutosh Negi, later merged with another petition by Vishal Chhetri, prompted the Uttarakhand High Court to intervene.

'Gayaki, Gat, Ghazal' Musical Evening Enthrals Hyderabad Audience at Taramati Baradari

Hyderabad: Chowrangee, a Hyderabad-based cultural platform celebrating India's artistic heritage, curated a captivating musical soirée titled "Gayaki, Gat, Ghazal" at the historic Taramati Baradari, offering music lovers a rich and immersive classical-contemporary experience.

The evening featured a distinguished lineup of acclaimed musicians including sitar maestro Purnabaya Chatterjee and noted vocalist Gayatri Asokan, along with Ishaa Ghosh, Shikhar Naad Qureshi, Absha Ahmad, and Steve Thomas Kottoor. Together, they presented a seamless blend of classical, contemporary, and ghazal traditions. A major highlight of the programme was a spellbinding jugalbandi



Baat Karmi Mujhe Mushkil.

Organisers said the concert reflected Chowrangee's core philosophy of artistic dialogue and cross-cultural harmony, bringing together diverse musical styles and sensibilities on a single stage. Chowrangee President Dr Santanu Paul said the evening evolved into a free-flowing musical conversation where classical depth and global influences blended

naturally, leaving audiences with a memorable and transcendent cultural experience. Chowrangee, an initiative of the Bengal and Beyond Foundation, continues to curate high-quality programmes across music, theatre, dance, and visual arts, aimed at fostering inclusive cultural exchange in the city.



Highlight Points:

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will undertake a three-day official visit to the United States from February 2 to 4, participating in the Critical Minerals Ministerial to strengthen supply chain resilience, clean energy cooperation, and strategic ties.
- The visit underscores growing India-US engagement, with Jaishankar set to hold high-level meetings on bilateral and regional issues, following recent interactions with US officials on trade, Indo-Pacific security, critical minerals, and global developments.

"Pleased to meet US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor today in New Delhi. Our conversation covered the many dimensions of our partnership. Welcomed him and expressed confidence that he would contribute to the strengthening of India-US relations," Jaishankar posted on X.

On January 25, the External Affairs Minister also met a US Congressional delegation that included Mike Rogers, Adam Smith, and Jimmy Patronis, along with Ambassador Gor. Discussions during the meeting focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation, developments in the Indo-Pacific region, and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Reflecting on

the engagement, Jaishankar noted on X that interactions with the US Congress have long been a vital component of the bilateral relationship.

Earlier, on January 13, US secretary of state Marco Rubio held a telephone conversation with Jaishankar, during which the two reviewed major areas of cooperation such as civil nuclear energy, trade negotiations, and regional security in the Indo-Pacific. Ambassador Gor later described the conversation as positive, noting that the leaders discussed next steps in bilateral trade talks, cooperation on critical minerals, and the possibility of a meeting in the coming month.



New Delhi : Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday sought an apology from the Congress and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for his controversial "Chinese tanks in Doklam" remark and also for the sin of surrendering Indian territory to China in the past.

Addressing reporters after an adjournment in Lok Sabha over Rahul Gandhi's remarks, Rijiju said compromising our territory will never be allowed; in fact, the Congress must apologise for the sins it committed by surrendering Indian territory to China before 1959 and in 1962.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India would not surrender even an inch of its land," he said, calling Rahul Gandhi's claims a bid to create a false narrative and project India as a weak nation.

Criticising Gandhi's unsubstantiated claims, Rijiju said the Congress must apologise. "They can't reclaim the land that the Congress government surrendered to China 50-60 years ago. If they cannot undo the past, at least they can apologise," said Rijiju.

The Minister also disapproved of Gandhi's reluctance to follow the instructions of the Chair and wasting nearly 30 minutes of the House.

"We wanted to hear each other on Motion of Thanks to the President's Address and proceed to the next agenda, but just because Rahul Gandhi is born in a particular family, he considers himself above the House and its rules," he said. Rijiju also assailed Congress MPs clapping over the Lop's repeated refusal to follow instructions from Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and prevent the House from functioning as per rules.

"I want Rahul Gandhi to introspect, apply his mind and advise his party MPs to function democratically and follow the rules of the House," he said. The Minister said that if Indian territory has been surrendered to China, it has been done under the Congress rule in the past. He has been done under the Congress rule in the past. He

Gandhi's claims a bid to create a false narrative and project India as a weak nation.

Criticising Gandhi's border infrastructure has improved, and the armed forces are serving with full strength on the border. Rijiju parried a question over possible disciplinary action by the Speaker against Rahul Gandhi for his undemocratic behaviour, saying that this is a secondary matter which will be addressed later.

Rajkot man held for repeatedly raping daughter, second FIR likely

Rajkot (TSIT): Rajkot Rural Police on Saturday arrested a man for allegedly raping his daughter repeatedly over the past several years. The survivor is now an adult. Police officials said another FIR is likely to be registered against the accused on Sunday for a similar offence against his teenage niece.

According to police, the accused works as an electronics repair technician and was affected by polio at the age of seven months. He lived in a joint family with his wife, who is suffering from advanced-stage breast cancer, his daughter, and the wife and daughter of his younger brother, who

works in another town. Rajkot Rural Superintendent of Police Vijay Singh Gurjar said the case came to light after the accused filed a missing person complaint for his daughter at the jurisdictional police station on January 3. Initial efforts to trace the woman were unsuccessful.

The accused later approached senior police officials, following which the Local Crime Branch (LCB) was assigned the case. The woman was traced on January 28 at an apartment in Rajkot city. During questioning, she told police that she had left home voluntarily and did not wish to return.

Further investigation revealed that the woman had allegedly been subjected to continuous sexual assault by her father over several years. She also alleged that the accused had sexually assaulted her minor cousin.

Police said the woman had earlier informed her cousin's parents, but her claims were not believed. SP Gurjar said joint questioning was conducted to verify the allegations, following which the accused was booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita (BNS) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Fresh controversy at Sabarimala over film shooting

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 2: A fresh controversy has erupted at the Sabarimala temple, already under scrutiny in connection with the gold heist case, with a Devaswom Vigilance investigation finding that a film shoot was conducted in violation of restrictions at the holy shrine and its surroundings.

According to an inquiry report submitted by Superintendent of Police, Devaswom Vigilance, Sunil Kumar, shooting for a feature film took place over multiple days at Pampa and nearby areas.

The report further states that on the auspicious day



been booked in connection with the incident.

However, the vigilance report makes it clear that while shooting did occur in restricted zones, there is no mention of any police permission having been granted for the filming.

This omission has raised serious questions about procedural lapses and possible violations of established norms governing activities in and around the pilgrimage centre. The vigilance report, supported by video evidence of the shoot, has been formally handed over to Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) President K. Jayakumar.

The director had earlier

Calcutta High Court orders police to ensure full security for opposition political events

In his petition, Adhikari alleged that BJP leaders' public programmes were frequently disrupted by violence and resistance, despite prior intimation being given to the police.

Kolkata, Feb 2: A division bench of the Calcutta High Court on Monday directed the West Bengal Police and Kolkata Police to provide complete and uncompromised security for public political programmes organised by elected representatives of opposition parties.

The order came in response to a petition filed by Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari, who had approached the High



Court in October last year seeking judicial intervention to ensure long-term protection for public events held by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators and parliamentarians, including Union ministers of state. The petition cited repeated instances of hostility and obstruction allegedly faced from ruling Trinamool Congress activists. After hearing the matter, the bench comprising

chief justice Sujoy Paul and justice Partha Sarathi Sen instructed both the state police and the city police to ensure absolute security for opposition leaders during their public political engagements. The court further directed that its order be strictly complied with until February 18, the next date of hearing in the case.

In his petition, Adhikari

alleged that BJP leaders' public programmes were frequently disrupted by violence and resistance, despite prior intimation being given to the police. He argued that such incidents pointed to a systemic failure of the police and the state administration in maintaining law and order.

According to Adhikari, such disruptions have become increasingly common since the conclusion of the 2021 Assembly elections in West Bengal. He also highlighted that his own convoy had been attacked multiple times since 2021, allegedly by Trinamool Congress supporters, leading the Union Home Ministry to enhance his security cover. The petition also referred to attacks on the convoys of BJP Lok Sabha MP Khagen Murmu and Sankar Ghosh, the chief whip of the BJP's legislative party in the West Bengal Assembly, last year. Both leaders sustained serious injuries in those incidents and had to be hospitalised.

Andhra Pradesh Gets Record Rs.10,134 Cr Railway Budget for 2026-27

New Delhi/Hyderabad : Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Honble Minister of Railways Briefs Media on Budget Highlights Total works of Rs. 92, 649 Crores for development of various Railway projects are in progress across Andhra Pradesh State. The union budget, which includes the allocations to the Railways, was presented on the floor of Parliament on 01st February, 2026. Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Honble Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & IT, Government of India held a virtual press conference today i.e., 2nd February, 2026 from New Delhi on Highlights of allocations pertaining to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh States. Shri Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, South Central Railway along with other senior Railway



officials participated in the press meet at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad. Divisional Railway Managers pertaining to Vijayawada, Guntur and Guntakal Divisions participated through video link from their respective divisional headquarters.

Highlights of Railway Budget pertaining to Andhra Pradesh State:

Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw stated that

Andhra Pradesh State has been sanctioned a record budget allocation of Rs. 10, 134 crores for the year 2026-27. He stated that the annual average budget outlay for combined Andhra Pradesh State during the years 2009-14 was only Rs. 886 crores. The Budget allocation to Andhra Pradesh State has witnessed 11 times increase as compared to the average allo-

cation done during the period of 2009-14 for the combined state.

The Honble Minister stated that various infrastructure projects worth Rs. 92, 649 crores crore are being executed in Andhra Pradesh state. The Honble Minister informed that the Railway network in Andhra Pradesh is now 100% electrified.

Honble Minister has announced seven High

Speed Rail Corridors across the country. Out of seven, two High speed Rail corridors i.e., Hyderabad Bengaluru & Hyderabad - Chennai Trains will majorly passes through the state of Andhra Pradesh and will immensely benefit the people of State. These 2 high speed rail corridors help in drastically reducing travel time. These corridors act as economic growth corridor facilitating education, health, business etc. With the introduction of these high speed trains the travel time between Hyderabad Bengaluru is expected to be 2 hours and Hyderabad Chennai is 02.55 minutes.

Continued focus on investment in major projects ensures that the rail budget will remain a key driver of infrastructure growth and improved connectivity in Andhra Pradesh in the years ahead.

9 Andhra fishermen return home after Bangladesh detention in reciprocal exchange

Visakhapatnam, Feb 2: Nine fishermen from Andhra Pradesh returned to Visakhapatnam on Monday after being released from a Bangladesh jail, four months after their detention by the Bangladesh Navy for inadvertently crossing maritime boundaries while fishing in the Bay of Bengal.

The Indian Coast Guard escorted the fishermen to the Visakhapatnam coast and handed them over to the marine police. Families shared tearful reunions, expressing gratitude to both the Central and state governments for ensuring the safe return of their loved ones. The fishermen had been handed over to the Indian Coast Guard by the Bangladesh Coast Guard at the International Maritime Boundary Line on January 29. Two India-owned fishing boats, carrying 15 crew members, sailed from Visakhapatnam to meet them mid-sea and brought them safely to Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour.

The nine fishermen were



part of a larger group of 23 Indians released by Bangladesh; the remaining 14 were from West Bengal. Two India-owned fishing boats were also repatriated to Indian authorities.

As part of a reciprocal arrangement, the Indian Coast Guard handed over 128 Bangladeshi fishermen and five Bangladeshi fishing boats to Bangladesh. The fishermen reported being stranded at sea for 15 days, during which local residents offered them food and medical assistance. Janakirami Vasupalli, president of the AP Mechanised Fishing Boats Union, expressed his gratitude to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar for facilitating the safe return of the Indian fishermen.



Endowment Commissioner Sri Ramachandra Mohan, along with District Collector Smt. G. Rajakumari, District SP Sri Sunil Shoran, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Sri Putthogunta Ramesh Naidu, Executive Officer Sri M. Srinivasa Rao, and other officials personally inspected the security arrangements for the Srisailam Shivaratri Brahmotsavams.

Familial Cancers Need Early Vigilance: Dr. Rajesh Kumar Reddy

Hyderabad : On the occasion of World Cancer Day, Dr. Rajesh Kumar Reddy Adapala, Consultant Uro-Oncologist at the Centre for Uro Oncology, AINU Banjara Hills, stressed the importance of awareness and early detection of familial urological cancers, noting that family history can be a crucial warning sign rather than a cause for fear. Dr. Rajesh explained that cancers of the kidney, urinary bladder, prostate and testis often have a genetic link and tend to grow silently in the early stages. Conditions such as BRCA mutations, Lynch syndrome and Von Hippel-Lindau (VHL) syndrome significantly increase cancer risk within families.

He highlighted key red flags including cancer in multiple close relatives, early-age onset, repeated cancers of the same organ, multiple cancers in one individual, and combinations of urological cancers with colorectal, breast or ovarian cancers. In such cases, genetic evaluation and regular screening are strongly advised. Sharing real-life case studies, Dr. Rajesh illustrated how delayed diagnosis led to complex treatments, while early detection could have simplified care and improved outcomes.



Union Budget 2026 Provides Strong Boost to MSMEs: CA V. Bhagyateja

Tirupati : Chartered Accountant V. Bhagyateja highlighted the Union Budget 2026 as a major booster for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), during an awareness session organised by the Public

Relations Society of India (PRSI), Tirupati Chapter, at Green Home Developers, New Balaji Colony. Bhagyateja noted the government's initiatives, including a Rs.10,000 crore Growth Fund for MSMEs, the "Corporate Mitras" initiative to support compliance and operations, and enhanced liquidity through the Trade Receivables Electronic Discounting System (TREDS). He also outlined key tax provisions, includ-



ing TDS exemptions on rental income up to Rs.12 lakh, scrutiny on cash deposits over Rs.10 lakh, and tax relief for tourism and professionals. Prof. G. Anjan Babu highlighted the Budget's focus on digital sovereignty, domestic tech production, disaster management, and emerging skill development,

while Prof. K. Jayachandra Reddy noted Andhra Pradesh-specific allocations. The event was presided over by Dr. G.S. Prasad and attended by PRSI officials and community leaders. If you want, I can also make an even snappier 120-word version ideal for newspapers and digital feeds.

TTD JEO(H&E)inspects proposed accommodation facilities for Srivari Vaidya Seva

Tirupati: TTD Joint Executive Officer (Health & Education) Dr. A. Sharath stated that steps are being taken to provide necessary facilities for Doctors rendering Srivari Vaidya Seva - a service initiative under Srivari Seva Professional services, to be launched shortly by TTD.

He inspected the proposed accommodation facilities at SV Ayurvedic Hospital, SVIMS and SV Vedic University along with the officials concerned on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion he said as per the directions of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of AP Sri N Chandrababu Naidu, the lodging facilities will be soon introduced at TTD run hospitals in Tirupati

basic amenities provided to enable medical professionals from various specialties to stay for a week while rendering services in a comfortable way. The JEO for Health and Education added that Srivari Vaidya Seva will soon be introduced at TTD run hospitals in Tirupati and Tirumala, including Ashwini Hospital, Ayurvedic Hospital, SVIMS, BIRRD Hospital and the Children's Hospital. Medical experts from various fields are showing interest to participate in this divine humane service, he maintained.

Advanced Robotic Surgeries for Liver and Pancreatic Cancers

- 3-day training programme at KIMS Kondapur
- Doctors from across the country participate
- More training sessions planned for future surgeons

Hyderabad (TSIT): Surgeons from across India attended a three-day fellowship programme on "Advanced Surgical Techniques for Liver and Pancreatic Cancers" at KIMS Kondapur, focused on minimally invasive, pain-free surgical methods. The programme, organised under the banner of AMASIMMAS HPB Fellowship, concluded on Monday with great success, marking a

significant milestone in surgical education. During the training, eminent HPB (Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary) surgeons from leading institutions in India and the UK collaborated with KIMS Kondapur's expert surgical team, sharing their experience and knowledge. Participants

from all corners of the country engaged in live demonstrations and interactive sessions, gaining hands-on exposure to cutting-edge HPB surgical techniques. Speaking on the occasion, Course Director Dr. Phanikrishna Ravula highlighted that complex liver and pancreatic cancer sur-

Gurram Peer Urs Concludes Peacefully Amid Heavy Devotee Turnout

Rangareddy: The annual Gurram Peer Urs at Gurrampally village, Chowdengudem mandal, concluded peacefully with a massive turnout of devotees from neighbouring areas. The festivities, which began on January 30, 2026, saw devotees participate in the Kanduru ritual and offer prayers, fulfilling their vows

with devotion and religious fervour. Shadnagar ACP Lakshminarayana supervised the arrangements to ensure smooth conduct of the event. Adequate security measures were put in place.

Sports Enhance Physical and Mental Health: MLC Nagarkunta Naveen Reddy

RANGAREDDY : MLC Nagarkunta Naveen Reddy said that sports play an important role in improving physical fitness and mental well-being and urged players to aim for higher levels through discipline and dedication. He inaugurated the Kesamet Mandal-Level Cricket Tournament Season-1 on Monday as the chief guest and extended his best wishes to the participating players. Speaking on the occasion, he emphasized the importance of sportsmanship and stated that true development is possible only through a positive sporting spirit.

Several public representatives, BRS leaders, sarpanches, former sarpanches, and sportspersons attended the programme.

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EDITORIAL

IS 'INVISBLE KERALA' PAYING THE PRICE FOR BEING 'UNALIGNED'?

The Union Budget 2026-27 has landed with a thud in Kerala - not because of what it contains, but because of what it omits. For a state that contributes richly to India's skilled workforce, tourism brand, and foreign exchange reserves, the silence is deafening. No AIIMS. No high-speed rail. No last-mile connectivity to Vizhinjam port. No special packages, despite this being an election year. The Finance Minister's speech might as well have skipped us entirely. As the Member of Parliament for Kerala's capital, I watched our State Budget unfold with hope - hope that the Centre would match our aspirations with support. Instead, we've been handed a reality check. The State Budget was built on a fantasy of central funds that the Union Budget has now explicitly failed to deliver. The result? A fiscal mirage evaporating in the heat of political indifference.

No Vote, No Voice?

The tragedy is not just economic - it's political. The Centre sees no electoral gain in Kerala, so it offers no economic gain. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government has made a cold calculation: why invest in a state that doesn't vote for us? Meanwhile, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala screams "victim" but fails to present bankable projects or negotiate effectively with New Delhi. It proposes paper trains and acronyms - RRTS instead of SilverLine - but lacks the fiscal discipline or strategic clarity to make them real. Caught in this federal standoff is the common Malayali. We pay the price for a Centre indifferent to our pain and a State in denial of its own profligacy. We welcome headlines about coconut and cashew promotion schemes, but without concrete procurement prices or export support, they remain shell promises.

Many Ironies

We hear of national corridors and maritime ambitions, but Vizhinjam - India's gateway to global trade, our only port that can host the world's largest container ships - is treated as a local afterthought, with no Central support for the road and rail connectivity that is hampering its potential as a world-class transhipment port. Similarly, while 20 new National Waterways are to be operationalised, it remains unclear how many - if any - will benefit Kerala. Ship repair ecosystems are promised in Patna and Varanasi, but not in a state with 44 rivers and a rich inland waterway network! Our coastal communities face the deadly peril of sea erosion that has already leached so much of our territory into the sea, but there is no money for the sea-walls and groynes so essential for coastal protection. The Centre says it's the state's problem, and the State says it has no money, so we continue losing seafront to the marauding ocean. (If we lost an inch of territory to a foreign army, we would spare no expense to mobilise our forces and express outrage, but 64 square kilometres of Bharat Mata's soil have been lost from my constituency alone to the sea, and the government couldn't care less.) The lives and livelihoods of our fisherfolk, mostly living below the poverty line, are apparently of no concern to our budget-makers either. Even in sectors where Kerala leads, the neglect is striking. Our state accounts for nearly 72% of India's rubber production, yet close to 100,000 hectares of plantations remain untapped due to ageing trees, out-migration of owners, and a shortage of tappers. The Budget offers no targeted support to address these constraints.

Edit

VIJAYAWADA
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026

4

Budget 2026: No More 'Instant Gratification'



The ninth consecutive and record-setting Union Budget of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was the first without the backdrop of usual macroeconomic concerns - either about anaemic growth or high inflation - that have dogged most FMs. In fact, given that economic growth is projected at a very impressive 7.4% in 2025-26 and retail inflation plumbing an unprecedented low of 1.33% in December, the Indian economy is experiencing the so-called 'Goldilocks' moment - neither too hot, nor too cold, perfect. The Finance Minister exploited this rare opportunity to share a national blueprint to strengthen the foundations of the Indian economy, which commits the government to pursue domestic reforms and accelerate the ongoing decentralisation - a strategy that cements India as the landing stage for the next phase of growth. No surprises then that the downside of shunning instant gratification - an expectation sharpened by the social-media era's demand for headline-ready Budget sops - and placing the wager on long-term growth drew a negative reaction from the markets. The truth is that enhancing the Indian economy to realise the audacious ambition of becoming a developed economy in the next 21 years entails unglamorous work: fixing the plumbing of the economy and cities, restoring the credibility of regulators, deepening financial and consumer markets, improving the quality of education, ensuring the predictability of taxes, seamless logistics, instilling the discipline of governance, and last but not the least, dealing with the political opposition. The outcome of this rather boring heavy-lifting, if pursued, will be a stronger Indian economy - the best defence against frequent geopolitical disruptions, something that is rapidly becoming the norm rather than the exception. Rebalancing the Fisc Reclaiming fiscal control - manifesting in reduced government debt - is what allowed Sitharaman the space to focus on renewing the economic foundations of the country. In fact, this admirable fiscal management is now part of her legacy as Finance Minister. In 2020-21, in the

aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to the Indian economy contracting by 24.4% in the first quarter of the year, the fiscal deficit had climbed to a staggering 9.2% of gross domestic product. Thanks to a combination of prudent spending - focusing on capital expenditure, which has an inherent multiplier effect on growth, and targeted social welfare spending by triangulating the beneficiary based on their Jandhan-Aadhaar-Mobile, because of which the exchequer saved a cumulative sum of Rs 3 lakh crore - Sitharaman was able to commit the country to a glide path. Not only did she halve the fiscal deficit to 4.4% in a span of five years, but she has also committed to lowering it further to 4.3% next year. Prudent fiscal management has a very positive fallout for the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in managing inflation - its primary objective. Fiscal slippage means more government borrowing, which, if not managed, crowds out the private sector and raises the cost of borrowing in the economy. And the outcome is there for all of us to see. The only question is whether retail inflation, too, like economic growth, has discovered a new trend rate. The Wager Every government

gets one defining economic wager. In the case of previous regimes, it was already decided by inclement macroeconomic circumstances. The difference with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is that they have, through some hard work, earned the right to make their own choice: Viksit Bharat by 2047. Therefore, this year's Budget is best not read merely as an annual fiscal statement. Instead, it is an important waypoint in the next stage of growth of the Indian economy. Essentially, it seeks to answer the most vexing question that has dogged policy makers forever: how does a nation of such immense aspiration and potential finally master the art of conversion? Especially, since India, in the past, has always flattered to disappoint. Not on one occasion, but several. India has never suffered from a shortage of ambition or talent. What it has struggled with, across decades, is the statecraft that can turn promise into productivity, growth into jobs, redistribution into dignity, and policy intent into institutional delivery. The Finance Minister said as much in her speech - that the NDA intends to check all these boxes and transform aspiration into achievement and potential into performance, while ensuring that the dividends of growth benefited everyone. Framing the Finance Minister's speech in this way signals a subtle shift in the role of the state. This government is no longer positioning itself merely as a dispenser of welfare or a passive facilitator of markets. It is reclaiming the harder role of performance enabler - building platforms, absorbing risks where and when markets cannot, and nudging the economy up the value chain. Exactly what was prescribed in the Economic Survey, released last week; it argued that the state needs to evolve into the role of an entrepreneur. The clearest expression of this new intent is the big boost to industrial policy. This Budget proposes scaling up manufacturing across strategic sectors, anchored by multi-year interventions. For instance, Biopharma SHAKTI, backed by ₹10,000 crore, proposes to make India a global hub for biologics and biosimilars, moving beyond low-cost generics into high-value health manufacturing. Semiconductors follow a similar logic, with ISM 2.0 expanding the ambition from assembly into equipment, materials and full-stack Indian IP.

Taxation Without Representation? The Southern States' Federal Anxiety

R. Suryamurthy

The Sixteenth Finance Commission has not redrawn India's fiscal map, but it has confirmed, with unusual clarity, the structural bargain that underpins it: states that controlled population growth, expanded formal economic activity and generated a disproportionate share of national revenues will continue to finance the Union, while redistribution remains anchored to demographic scale rather than economic contribution - just as political representation itself is poised to tilt further in the same direction. Read alongside what the southern states collectively submitted to the Commission, the award is less a neutral technocratic exercise than a quiet affirmation of where power, money and voice are now expected to reside. Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh approached the 16th Finance Commission with memoranda that were strikingly convergent in diagnosis, even if framed in different idioms. All argued that India's fiscal federal architecture has failed to adjust to demographic transition; that population control has become a long-term fiscal penalty rather than a dividend; that indirect tax contribution, tax effort and compliance are systematically undervalued; and that the expanding use of cesses and surcharges has hollowed out the promise of the 41 per cent devolution headline. None asked for the dismantling of redistribution. All asked for recognition that redistribution cannot become a permanent extraction mechanism from a shrinking set of contributor states. The Commission listened. It made limited adjustments. It did not alter the underlying logic. The macro arithmetic explains why the southern grievance refuses to dissipate. The five southern states together account for around 30 per cent of India's GDP while housing just over 18 per cent of its population. Their share in direct taxes, GST collections, exports, formal employment and services output is consistently higher than their demographic

weight. By contrast, the large northern and central states - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand - account for over 40 per cent of the population but less than 30 per cent of GDP, and remain heavily dependent on fiscal transfers to finance even routine expenditure. This divergence is not new; what is new is that it is now demographically locked in. Fertility rates in the South fell below replacement decades ago, while population growth in much of the Hindi heartland remained elevated well into the 2010s. Southern memoranda repeatedly warned the Commission that continuing to privilege population metrics under these conditions would institutionalise a permanent fiscal asymmetry - rewarding demographic lag while penalising demographic discipline. Yet population remains central. Under the 16th Finance Commission's horizontal devolution formula, population (2011) and demographic performance together carry 27.5 per cent weight, while income distance retains a dominant 45 per cent. Against this, the long-demanded recognition of contribution arrives in the form of a 10 per cent weight for "contribution to GDP" - a concession that looks significant on paper but functions more as an adjustment at the margin than a rebalancing of priorities. The distributional outcomes reflect this imbalance. Karnataka emerges as the largest gainer, with its share rising from 3.65 per cent to 4.13 per cent, translating into an additional ₹7,387 crore over five years. Kerala's share increases from 1.93 per cent to 2.38 per cent, yielding about ₹6,975 crore. Tamil Nadu's gains are modest; Telangana and Andhra Pradesh see limited improvement. Politically, these increases are showcased as evidence that contributor states have been "heard". Economically, they barely scratch the surface. Even after the revision, Karnataka - responsible for close to 9 per cent of national GDP and a far higher share of direct taxes - receives just over 4 per cent of the divisible pool. Tamil Nadu and Kerala continue to

The Real Reason Mamata Has Taken The SIR Fight To Delhi



West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee landed in Delhi on Sunday in full battle-gear, bringing her fight against the Centre over the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) of electoral rolls in the state, to the frontline. She was expected to meet Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar today, demanding that SIR be halted before the assembly polls in Bengal, as the process has created widespread harassment of electors. This comes after she has written seven letters to the ECI on specific issues of SIR that go against "the democratic and constitutional norms" of the People's Representation Act or the rights of the electorate. But even before she lands in the capital, a whole army of family members of 126 BLOs (Block Level Officers) employed by the Election Commission for the grassroots surveys, who died by suicide or collapsed due to stress, unable to take the mounting pressures of their jobs, have arrived here. The Chief Minister will lead the contingent, with her able lieutenant, Diamond Harbour MP and party's national general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, holding street protests in the heart of the Capital, taking up the cause of the "victims" of the SIR exercise. The timing also lends itself to full public attention as the country's entire political class is here attending the Budget Session of Parliament. Mamata believes in taking every political battle to the streets, showcasing the power of the people and

highlighting her mass leader appeal. Street fighting has been her greatest strength, and she revels in its flourish. That is exactly how she plans to take the fight forward against the poll body's SIR move - turning it to the Trinamool Congress's advantage by gaining popular support as she prepares to contest for a fourth term as Chief Minister. If the image of a Chief Minister campaigning on a wheelchair with one foot in a plaster, throwing a football - Bengal's favourite game - at the crowds, saying "khela hobey" (the game is on), was the most successful Trinamool campaign during the 2021 assembly polls, the latest challenge at the hustings has already seen the viral footage of the Chief Minister barging in and retrieving a "green file" purportedly containing her party's poll plans, all in the midst of an unannounced ED raid at the I-PAC office in Kolkata. An angry "Didi", as she is popularly referred to, addressed the media as she explained her impromptu reaction and descended on the streets the next day in a protest march, galvanising her party leaders and cadres to the hilt, barely two months before the elections are declared. While the central agency and the Chief Minister fight it out in the courts on whether either of their actions (the raid and the counter-raid) can be constitutionally justified, the latter, according to sources, could be present in the Supreme Court when the matter comes up on Tuesday, February 3. That again is how Mamata likes to play the game - commanding her contingent from the frontline. Mamata, a 24X7 politician, has already led protest rallies in every district - especially in north Bengal, where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has its main strength in the state - to highlight the plight of the people under the SIR exercise, taking up the cause of booth level officers and attacking the BJP for trying to "disenfranchise voters", while opposition leaders in the state are dependent only

on central agencies to take on the ruling Trinamool in Bengal. The relentless counter-moves to the threats from the SIR process have kept her entire party cadres on the ground for the last three months, whereas opposition party leaders in the state are hardly visible on the ground. Having come up from students' politics and years of experience as a leader in opposition against the Left Front regime, fighting for her cause comes naturally to Mamata. She had to battle her seniors in the Congress, take the risk of breaking away and getting wiped out, and then create her own party. Instead of losing, she gained strength from her street fights to finally oust the Left Front and become Chief Minister for three consecutive terms. Through all of it, "going for the offensive" has remained her game, says Trinamool's Rajya Sabha MP Dola Sen, who joined the party during the Singur-Nandigram movements. The slogan "khela hobey" in Bangla is uttered by the challenger, in the spirit of "offence is the best defence". That is what Mamata, the street fighter, is doing with the Narendra Modi government at the Centre. With Modi being the face of the BJP-led opposition in Bengal, Mamata has also ensured that her battle for Bengal is played out in Delhi. She has pitched herself as the opposition leader against none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who heads the central government in Delhi. Hence, the battleground must spill over to the national capital now.

ISRAEL REOPENS GAZA'S KEY RAFAH BORDER CROSSING WITH EGYPT

Palestinians have started to enter the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt after it reopened for the movement of people. The crossing has largely been closed since May 2024, when the Gazan side was captured by Israeli forces. The reopening was supposed to happen during the first phase of US President Donald Trump's ceasefire plan between Israel and Hamas, which began in October. But Israel blocked it until the return of the body of the last Israeli hostage in Gaza, which happened last week. It will come as a relief to many Palestinians who see it as a lifeline to the world, although there is frustration that only small numbers of people and no goods will be allowed through. Around 20,000 sick and wounded Palestinians are waiting to leave Gaza for treatment, according to local hospitals and the



World Health Organization (WHO). Israeli reports say only 50 patients - accompanied by one or two relatives - will be allowed to exit each day, and that 50 people who left Gaza during the war will be allowed to return. The crossing will be run by supervisors from the European Union and local Palestinian staff, while Israel will carry out remote

security checks. On Monday morning, an Israeli security official said the Rafah crossing had "now opened to the movement of residents, for both entry and exit" following the arrival of teams from the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM). Al Qahera News TV, which is close to Egyptian intelligence,

meanwhile said the crossing had "received the first batch of Palestinians returning from Egypt to the Gaza Strip". It added that the move came "as part of Egyptian efforts to facilitate movement through the crossing". A Palestinian mother, Sabrine al-Da'ma, told the BBC she was hoping to travel abroad with her 16-year-old daughter, Rawa,

who suffers from kidney disease. She plans to donate Rawa one of her kidneys. "She used to be treated through monitoring, ultrasound imaging and tests to check the condition of her kidneys. Since the war started, because of food shortages, hunger, and the food she was forced to eat, she began dialysis," Da'ma said. "We hope they will speed up our referral so that we can travel quickly, because she is getting exhausted. I am also 45 years old, and they may tell me that as I get older, I won't be able to donate anymore. That's why we're rushing." On Sunday, Israeli authorities said a trial opening of the crossing was carried out and completed. One Palestinian official familiar with the arrangements for the trial told the BBC that around 30 Palestinian staff members had arrived at the Egyptian side of the crossing, ahead of the initial operational phase. The WHO will oversee the transfer of patients from territory under Hamas control, transporting them by bus to the crossing over the so-called "Yellow Line" and into territory controlled by the Israeli military, the BBC understands. Trump's 20-point Gaza peace plan says the reopening of the Rafah crossing in both directions will be subject to the same mechanism implemented under a previous ceasefire deal in January last year. Before being seized by Israel in 2024, the crossing was the main exit point for Palestinians allowed to leave during the war and a key entry point for humanitarian aid. Now, aid that enters from Egypt is routed via Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing point. In December, the Israeli government said the Rafah crossing would open to allow Palestinians to leave Gaza.

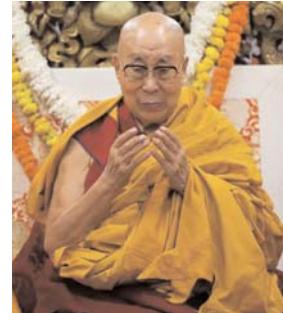
Candidate tough on crime wins Costa Rica presidential election



The candidate for the governing conservative Sovereign People's Party, Laura Fernández, has won the presidential election in Costa Rica. With more than 88% of the votes counted, Fernández had over 48% of the votes, far ahead of the second-placed centrist candidate, Álvaro Ramos, who conceded defeat. Fernández ran on a promise to deepen the tough-on-crime approach of the outgoing President Rodrigo Chaves, who had handpicked her as his successor. Voters had said they were concerned about a surge in drug-related violence in the Central American country. The size of her vote share - which exceeded the 40% needed to win outright in the first round - means that there is no need for a run-off. Fernández will be sworn in on 8 May. In her victory speech, the 39-year-old said she would plough ahead with the policies introduced by Chaves, whose chief of staff she was. Under Costa Rica's

constitution, presidents are not allowed to serve two consecutive terms and Chaves was therefore barred from standing for re-election. Fernández has hinted she may appoint him to a post in her cabinet. Costa Rica, one of Central America's safest countries and a stable democracy, has seen a rise in crime over the past years as transnational criminal gangs have expanded in the region. On the campaign trail, Fernández said she would emulate some of the policies of the El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele. Bukele has sky-high approval ratings with Salvadoreans saying they are grateful for his iron-fist approach to crime, which has seen the murder rate plummet. Fernández has said she will declare a state of emergency in areas where gangs hold sway and finish the construction of a high-security jail similar to the Cecot prison in El Salvador.

BEIJING CRITICISES DALAI LAMA GRAMMY WIN AS 'MANIPULATION'



China has reacted angrily to an unlikely winner at the Grammys - the Dalai Lama - saying it opposes art awards being used for "anti-China political manipulation". The Buddhist spiritual leader was recognised in the audiobook category for *Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama*. The Dalai Lama said he accepted the award with "gratitude and humility". The 90-year-old

has lived in exile from his Tibetan homeland since 1959 and is condemned as a rebel and separatist by Beijing. China's foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a news conference: "We firmly oppose relevant parties using art awards as a tool for anti-China political manipulation, and this position is consistent and clear." The spiritual leader, who lives in Dharamshala in India, left China in fear of his life after Chinese troops crushed an uprising. He has campaigned for more autonomy for Tibet, but Beijing considers it an integral part of China. In a message on social media the Dalai Lama, who is also a Nobel peace laureate, said: "I receive this recognition with gratitude and humility."

EIGHTY KIDNAPPED NIGERIANS RETURN HOME AFTER ESCAPE



Dozens of worshippers kidnapped by gunmen in Nigeria's northern Kaduna state have returned home weeks after their abduction, police have confirmed. They were among 177 people seized last month from three churches in the remote village of Kurmin Wali. The 80 people escaped on the day they were taken but hid in neighbouring villages for a fortnight "due to fear of being captured again", state police spokesman Mansur Hassan told the BBC. The authorities say efforts are ongoing to secure the release of the remaining 86 people still being held. The attack was part of a wave of kidnappings

for ransom affecting many parts of Nigeria, but no group has said it was behind the abductions. The raid was initially denied by police, who only confirmed the kidnappings on 21 January after local residents had reported to the BBC that 177 worshippers were abducted, with 11

'Enemy' insults and questioning Putin: Steve Rosenberg on tightrope of reporting from Russia



On his Russian TV show, a famous presenter takes aim and unleashes a tirade against the UK. I'm just glad it's not his finger on the nuclear button. "We still haven't destroyed London or Birmingham," barks Vladimir Solovyov. "We haven't wiped all this British scum from the face of the earth." He sounds disappointed. "We haven't kicked out the goddamned BBC with that Steve Rotten-berg. He walks around looking like a defecating squirrel...he's a conscious enemy of our country!" Welcome to my world: the world of a BBC correspondent in Russia. It's a world we offer a glimpse into in *Our Man in Moscow*. The film for BBC Panorama charts a year in the life of the BBC Moscow

bureau, as the Kremlin continues to wage war on Ukraine, tightens the screws at home and builds a relationship with President Trump. The squirrel barb doesn't bother me. Squirrels are cute. And they have a thick skin - something a foreign correspondent needs here. But "enemy of Russia"? That hurts. I have spent

Trump threatens to sue Trevor Noah over Epstein joke at Grammys



US President Donald Trump has threatened to sue comedian Trevor Noah after he joked about Trump and Jeffrey Epstein at the Grammy Awards. Hosting the event, Noah said: "Song of the Year - that is a Grammy that every artist wants almost as much as Trump wants Greenland, which makes sense because Epstein's island is gone, he needs a new one to hang out with Bill Clinton." Trump is known to have been an associate of Epstein for years, but says he had no knowledge of his crimes and that they fell out in about 2004. There are no suggestions he ever visited Epstein's private island and he has not been accused of any crime by Epstein's victims. The US justice department has said allegations about him are unfounded and false. In 2020, a spokesperson for Clinton said the former president had "never been" to Epstein's island, Little St James. Clinton has not been accused of any wrongdoing. Trump responded to Noah's joke by saying he would be "sending my lawyers to sue". Posting on Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Noah said, INCORRECT

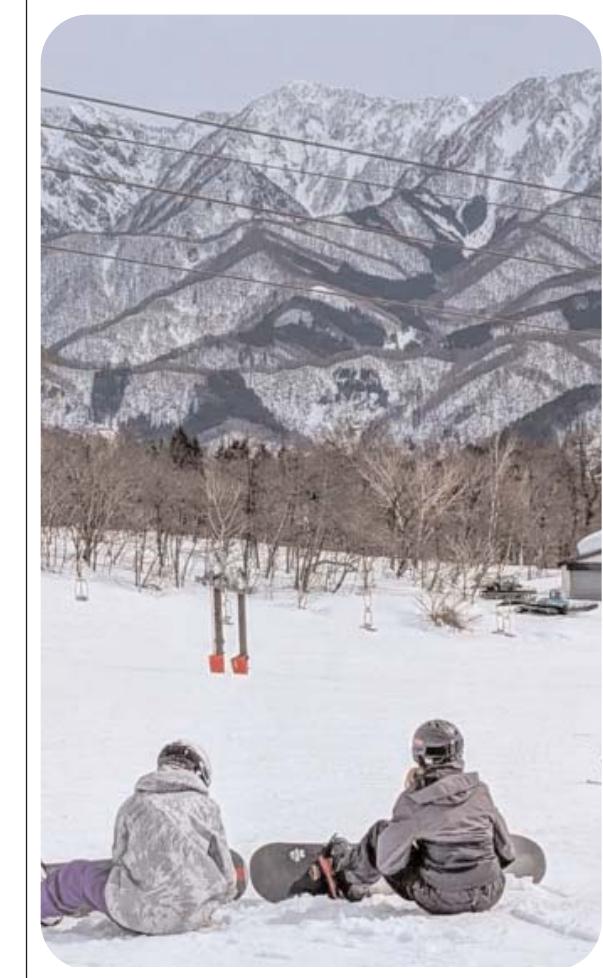
NORWAY'S PM AGREES CROWN PRINCESS HAD 'POOR JUDGEMENT' OVER EPSTEIN LINKS



Jagland had exercised "poor judgement", after it emerged that he had planned a family holiday on Epstein's private island, though he then cancelled it. Jagland was expected to make a statement on the issue on Monday. The latest cache of Epstein files suggests that the correspon-

dence between Princess Mette-Marit and Epstein began in autumn 2011. The warm nature of the messages has appalled commentators in Norway. An email from the HRH Crown Princess account on 23 October 2011 implies she had by then become aware of his initial jail term in 2008. "Googled u after last email," she wrote. "Agree didn't look too good." By this time, Epstein was a registered sex offender. It also emerged that the crown princess spent four days at Epstein's house in Palm Beach, Miami in January 2013, when he was not present. In one email, Epstein was asked whether a mother should suggest naked women carrying a surfboard for her son's wallpaper. Norway's royal family are preparing to put her on a list for a lung transplant. Her 29-year-old son, who is not part of the royal family, denies the most serious charges against him. One charge of rape involves intercourse while a woman was asleep.

Australian woman dies after becoming snagged in ski lift in Japan





RUSSELL 'WANTS TO GO HEAD-TO-HEAD' WITH VERSTAPPEN

Mercedes driver George Russell says his hope for the 2026 Formula 1 season is to find himself in a title fight with Red Bull's Max Verstappen. Russell said he would "love for it to turn out that way" as he and Mercedes officially launched their new car on Monday. The 27-year-old Briton added that he did not feel any more pressure as a result of his status as pre-season favourite. "I do want to go head-to-head with Max and obviously Lando [Norris, McLaren's world champion] had a great season last year but, no, it didn't add any more pressure," he said. Russell has won five F1 races for Mercedes since joining the team in 2022 but, up until now, has not had a car consistently fast enough to challenge for a drivers' championship. F1 has made the biggest regulation change in its history over the winter, with the



cars, engines, tyres and fuel all new heading into 2026. Russell said that although the first test in Barcelona had gone well for Mercedes, he had been impressed by other teams, especially Red Bull, who are producing their first in-house engine in partnership with Ford for this season. "Probably the fans and

people were expecting potentially Mercedes versus McLaren because there was a lot of anticipation that Mercedes would clearly have the best power unit," Russell said. "But it seems like the other power-unit manufacturers have done a good job and we know that Red Bull have always had an amazing

car. Even through the years of dominance of Mercedes, it was their engine that was letting them down not their car and we obviously know how good Max is. So I think he's very much going to be in the fight this year and that is great." Russell and team boss Toto Wolff were downplaying expectations

of Mercedes, saying it was impossible to know at this stage which team was the most competitive. "It's still very early days but, quoting Toto, it doesn't look like it's a turd, which is a bonus," Russell said. "In the early days like this, you know when it could be a really bad car and you can sort of highlight those negatives early on. "We don't believe it is, but is it a car that can produce a world championship? It's still way too early to say." Wolff added: "We don't have really a performance picture yet because we haven't seen Max driving the car fast and we haven't seen McLaren and Ferrari doing what they can do. So I would carefully refrain from saying that was great for us. We simply don't know." Russell, who said he felt ready to fight for a title, was generally positive about the new generation of cars.

ICC Contemplates 'Suspending' Pakistan As T20 World Cup 'India Boycott' Row Deepens

The T20 World Cup 2026 has become a battleground between the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the International Cricket Council (ICC), with the global body now preparing for a meeting that could change the map of world cricket forever. Outside, the clock is ticking: 48 hours remain before the governing body is expected to drop a verdict that might leave the PCB in total isolation. Sources have told NDTV that the Jay Shah-led ICC is contemplating imposing severe sanctions on Pakistan after the nation announced a boycott of the T20 World Cup match against India on 15 February, in solidarity with Bangladesh, who were replaced by Scotland in the



biennial event. The tension, which had been simmering since the removal of Bangladesh, reached a boiling point on Sunday. In a move that stunned the cricketing world, the Pakistani government cleared its team to travel to Sri Lanka but made a "selective participation" announcement. The

Pakistani government's official X (formerly Twitter) account clarified that its team has received the go-ahead for participation in the T20 World Cup, but it has been barred from taking the field against India on 15 February. The PCB, led by Mohsin Naqvi, framed this as a stand of solidarity with

Bangladesh, whose request to move matches out of India was rejected by the ICC. To Pakistan, it was a matter of principle; to the rest of the world, it felt like a wrecking ball swung at the heart of the tournament's commercial and sporting integrity. Historically, India has faced immense pressure to boycott fixtures against Pakistan due to geopolitical tensions. Despite this, the Indian team fulfilled its 2025 Asia Cup fixture in Pakistan, with the BCCI prioritising the stability of associate members and the global game. However, when required to reciprocate this commitment, Pakistan chose political posturing over sporting integrity.

"Regrettable": Shahid Afridi's Blunt Take On Pakistan's Refusal To Play Against India In T20 World Cup 2026



kept separate, expressed 'regret' over Pakistan's decision to not play against India in the T20 World Cup. However, he also stood behind his government's decision while asking the ICC to resolve the matter through impartial actions. "I've always believed cricket can open doors when politics closes them. Regrettably, Pakistan

won't play India at the #T20WorldCup, but I stand behind my government's decision."

This is the moment for @ICC to lead and prove through decisions, not statements, that it is impartial, independent, and fair to every member," Afridi's post on X (formerly Twitter) read. Afridi himself was at the centre of a

PGA TOUR SUCCESS VINDICATES REJECT-ING LIV - ROSE



Three PGA Tour victories and two near misses in the majors have left Justin Rose feeling vindicated by his decision to reject offers from the Saudi Arabia-backed LIV Golf series. The Englishman claimed his 13th PGA Tour title on Sunday after a dominant week at Torrey Pines in California, winning with a tournament record score. In 2022, some of the sport's biggest names chose to defect to the breakaway LIV Golf with lucrative contracts being offered by the controversial new competition. Rose, however, chose not to move and since then the 45-year-old has climbed to third in the world rankings. He has won three times on the American circuit, finished runner-up at the 2024 Open Championship and was beaten in a play-off at last year's Masters by Rory McIlroy. "I feel like my career goals have only been attainable by staying on the European Tour and the PGA Tour because access to them is not possible the other way," said Rose. "I've been sniffing and knocking on the door for a couple of majors

Australia Skipper Shuts Down Pakistan Reporter Over T20 World Cup India Boycott Question



As Pakistan confirmed its stance of barring the national team from taking the field against India in the T20 World Cup 2026 match on February 15, a reporter looked to pounce on the opportunity by asking Australia skipper Mitchell Marsh his views on the matter. The Australian team, at present, is in Pakistan for a 3-match T20I series. After the conclusion of the series, Marsh had to face some unexpected questions in the press conference. The Pakistani reporter asked Marsh two questions: Pakistan's boycott of the India match and Bangladesh's removal from the T20 World Cup. But was shut down on both occasions. The reporter's attempt to draw a reaction from Marsh fell flat on both occasions as

the Australian skipper maintained a clear stance of focusing on only what he and his team have to do in the upcoming T20 World Cup. Here's how the conversation went: Reporter: Just came to know about the Pakistan-India match on the 15th February. You know, Pakistan is going to boycott the Pakistan-India match. So, your point of view,

if you want to add some words about this. Mitchell Marsh: Yeah, I don't really have a comment on that at this point in time. You know, we're going to the World Cup to just focus on what we're doing, and we'll let that stuff take care of itself. Reporter: Also, ICC full member Bangladesh is not going to participate in this World Cup

due to security concerns. As a player, how do you feel that an ICC full member is not going to participate in this World Cup? Mitchell Marsh: Yeah, I think the same goes for my previous answer, that we're going to the World Cup to try and win it, and we're solely focused on that. And as the Australian team, we trust the people who are in place to keep us safe, and that's all I'll say. Yeah. The tour of Pakistan didn't end on the most promising note for Australia, with the visitors suffering defeats in all three matches, hence incurring a 0-3 sweep at the hands of Salman Ali Agha and Co. But, Australia do have some injured and absent stars returning as they kick off their T20 World Cup 2026 campaign on February 11.

Will Seahawks stop Patriots' record bid?

Lowdown on Super Bowl 2026



The NFL's 2025 season has provided the most wide-open race for the Super Bowl in years. Now just the New England Patriots and the Seattle Seahawks remain and they will meet on Sunday to decide the NFL champions. It is a title New England have held six times but this is their first Super Bowl since 2019 and the departure of legendary quarterback Tom Brady and coach Bill Belichick. A revitalised Patriots team have come from nowhere to reach Super Bowl 60 in California and secure a record-extending 12th appearance in the NFL showpiece. The Seahawks have reached their fourth Super Bowl, and their first

since 2015, when the Patriots denied them back-to-back championships. Now a Briton could become the first overseas coach to win arguably the biggest game in world sport having helped turn Seattle back into title contenders. There will also be a historic half-time show from a Latin

superstar amid concerns over how US immigration agents handle an event which for each of the past three years has been the most-watched broadcast in American television history. How the Patriots can make NFL history Brady and head coach Belichick led New England to nine

JAMES A SURPRISE SELECTION FOR NBA ALL-STAR GAME



LeBron James has been selected for a record-extending 22nd consecutive NBA All-Star game by being named among the reserves from the Western Conference. The 41-year-old Los Angeles Lakers star was not selected as a starter in January but was among the seven reserves chosen from each of the Eastern and Western Conferences by NBA coaches. James, who missed his side's first 14 matches of the 2025-26 campaign because of sciatica, has played 31 times this season and is averaging 21.9 points per game. "It wasn't a goal of mine to come into the season, miss the first 14 games and say, 'OK, I can be an All-Star,'" James told reporters after playing in the Lakers' 112-100 defeat against the New York Knicks. "I just wanted to get back to playing the game at a high level I knew I was capable of once I kind of worked the rust off of missing pre-season, training camp and my summer workouts, which I've never done in my whole career. "So I didn't think about the All-Star Game, to be honest." James was selected for the NBA All-Star game in 2025 but did not play because he picked up an injury. Kevin Durant, who plays for the Houston Rockets, Devin Booker of the Phoenix Suns and Anthony Edwards from the Minnesota Timberwolves were also selected as a Western Conference reserves. The All-Star game has been revamped this season and will feature two teams of players from the United States and one team of international players. They will compete in a round-robin tournament of four 12-minute games. The top two teams will then face each other in a championship game.

MARY KOM BREAKS SILENCE ON CONTROVERSIAL "DIDN'T EARN A SINGLE RUPEE" DIG AT EX-HUSBAND



Indian boxing icon Mary Kom, who has been in the news over her personal life, has officially addressed the social media firestorm surrounding the comments she made against her ex-husband K Onler Kom at a talk show. The decorated athlete, known for her composure inside and outside the ring, sought to clear the air regarding the controversial comments she made at the show, saying the outburst was a result of long-suppressed emotions over fallout with her husband and personal issues. She further said that the comments were in no way directed towards the male community overall. The controversy erupted following an emotional segment on Aap Ki Adalat where Kom discussed her personal life, leading to a viral "Ek Rupiya Bhi Nahi Kamaya" (not a single rupee was earned) remark that many felt targeted her former partner's career and contributions.

baad bhi maine public ya media mein koi statement nahi diya. Mein hamesha dignity aur restraint ke saath khud ko conduct kar rahi hoon." A significant portion of the backlash came from sports fans who felt her comments belittled the struggles of aspiring footballers. Mary Kom was quick to dismiss any notion that she holds a bias against the sport, citing legends like Sunil Chhetri as examples of the determination she admires. "Mere is remark ko social media par galat direction mei leke chale gaye, jo kaafi unfortunate hain.

I HOPE BARABAR PREMISTHA GIVES CHANDRA HASS A STRONG BREAKTHROUGH: AADI SAIKUMAR AT THE PRE-RELEASE EVENT

Barabar Premistha, starring Attitude Star Chandra Hass in the lead, is directed by Sampath Rudra. Presented by Kakarla Satyanarayana, the film is produced by Geda Chandu, Gayatri Chinny, and AVR under the banners of CC Creations and AVR Movie Wonders. Miss India finalist Meghna Mukherjee plays the female lead, while Arjun Mahi (of Ishqam fame) essays the antagonist's role. The film is all set for a grand theatrical release on February 6th. Ahead of the release, the makers hold a pre-release event on Sunday (February 1). The event was graced by chief guests Jayanth C Paranjee, JD Chakravarthy, and Aadi Saikumar, along with the film's cast and crew. Chandra Hass said: "I am a big fan of Jayanth sir's films like Teen Maar and Shankar Dada. Aadi Anna has made an incredible comeback—he is truly an inspiration to me. JD Chakravarthy sir looks the same even today. I'm deeply grateful that so many people came here for me. I can never repay the debt of my father Prabhakar, who gave birth to



me and raised me. Meghna will become a big heroine in Telugu cinema. Dhruvan is extremely talented and has delivered fantastic songs for this film. My thanks to Chinny garu, Chandra garu, and Venky garu for producing this movie without any compromises. Special thanks to cinematographer Shekhar Anna, who played a key role in bringing this project to me. This film will not bore the audience even for a second. With countless and unimaginable twists, it will keep viewers glued from start to finish. Director Sampath has made this film beautifully and presented me really well. I hope audiences watch and support Barabar Premistha

on February 6." Aadi Saikumar stated: "I worked with Prabhakar Anna on Next Nuvve. Even back then, he spoke highly of Chandra Hass and said he would become a good hero—and I believed it. I've seen how hard Chandra Hass works with complete honesty. I sincerely wish him a big hit. I hope Barabar Premistha becomes a major turning point in Chandra Hass' career. I urge audiences to watch the film in theatres on February 6 and support the team." Prabhakar acknowledged: "Aadi is my first hero. When Shambhala became a hit, I was happier than even Sai Kumar garu. I'm delighted that Aadi attended this event. DOP Shekhar brought this story to me, and the entire team worked extremely hard on this film. I hope their efforts are rewarded on February 6. Dhruvan has given excellent music.

good singer. Meghna too has great energy and attitude. Sampath has directed the film wonderfully, and I really liked all the songs composed by Dhruvan. I strongly believe this film will be a big hit. I request everyone to watch Barabar Premistha on February 6 and support the team." Director Sampath Rudra said: "I've always admired Aadi garu's love stories, and I'm happy he came to support us today. Producer Venky is my classmate—without him, this film wouldn't exist. Chandra and Chinny joined the project later. Chinny and I worked together as assistant directors on Rechipo. Dhruvan has delivered outstanding music. No commercial film like this has come with a Telangana backdrop before.

Chandra Hass never lets negativity affect him—he always moves forward positively. Meghna is extremely passionate about cinema. I request audiences to watch and encourage this film." JD Chakravarthy stated: "Whatever Chandra Hass does naturally attracts people. I will definitely watch this film for Prabhakar. Starting his life as a constable and rising to become a television star, Prabhakar's journey is truly inspiring. Meghna looks impressive, and Dhruvan's music is excellent. My best wishes to the entire team. Don't miss Barabar Premistha in theatres on February 6." Director Sampath Rudra said: "I've always admired Aadi garu's love stories, and I'm happy he came to support us today. Producer Venky is my classmate—without him, this film wouldn't exist. Chandra and Chinny joined the project later.

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Couple Friendly will be a memorable film in my career Santosh Shobhan at the Trailer Launch Event



Couple Friendly, starring Santosh Shobhan in the lead role, features Manasa Varanasi as the female lead. Presented by the reputed production house UV Creations and produced under the banner UV Concepts, the film is being made on a grand scale in Telugu and Tamil. Ajay Kumar Raju P. serves as the co-producer, while Ashwin Chandrasekhar has directed the film. Touted as a musical romantic love story, Couple Friendly is set for a Valentine's Day release on February 14 in both Telugu and Tamil. Passionate producer and

distributor Dheeraj Mogilineni is releasing the film across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The film's trailer was launched today at a grand event held in Hyderabad. Manasa Varanasi said, "I played the character of Mithra in Couple Friendly, and I'm very happy to have received such a beautiful role. I connected deeply with Mithra on a personal level. Just like me, she believes in taking action without hesitation when something needs to be done. She doesn't overthink or doubt herself. This film is like a roller-coaster ride a

fresh, youthful love story set against the Chennai backdrop. We shot guerrilla-style across many locations in Chennai, which added great authenticity. Santosh Shobhan is a wonderful actor. I closely observed his dedication and his constant desire to perform better in every scene, and I learned a lot from him. Aditya has composed beautiful music. Two songs have already been released and turned into chartbusters, and my favourite songs are yet to come. I'm also very happy that Dheeraj garu is distributing our film.

The film 'Winter', jointly produced by Crescent Cinemas and TSR Makers, launched grandly with traditional pooja



Highlights

■ 'Winter' features Ram, Aaditya Suraj Singh, Kusuma Chandhaka, Shashikala, and Srijita Ghosh in lead roles. The film is being produced by Riyaz Ahmed and T. Srinivas Rao. Suresh Lankalapalli, who received critical acclaim for Racharikam, is handling the story, screenplay, and direction for this project.

'Winter' features Ram, Aaditya Suraj Singh, Kusuma Chandhaka, Shashikala, and Srijita Ghosh in lead roles. The film is being produced by Riyaz Ahmed and T. Srinivas Rao. Suresh Lankalapalli, who received critical acclaim for Racharikam, is handling the story, screenplay, and direction for this project. Notably, Winter is being made based on real-life incidents that occurred in Kashmir. The pooja ceremony marking the commencement of the film was recently held in a grand manner, with the entire team in attendance. The rituals were performed seeking the film's success and a smooth, obstacle-free production journey. Details regarding the remaining cast and technical crew will be announced soon.

HRIM HERO PAWAN'S GRANDFATHER HAS GREAT TALENT - HERO NANDU AT PAWAN'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



Pawan Tata and Chaminda Varma star in the film 'Hreem'. Sujatha Mallala presented it under the banner of Shivam Media and Shivam Mallala produced it. Rajesh Ravi is the director of this film. On Monday, Sri Nandu, the hero of 'Dandora' and 'Psych Siddhartha', participated in the birthday celebrations held at the film office on the occasion of the film's hero Pawan Tata's birthday. On this occasion, Nandu said: "I have just seen the posters and

glimpses of the film 'Hreem'. This is the content that excited me the most when I saw it. Soon, all of you will also see this content. I have a special connection with the producer of this film. Our journey has been going on for many years. If I ever have any doubts about anything, I share it with Shivam Mallala's brother without thinking. He is a well-wisher to many people in the industry. My gratitude to hero Pawan's grandfather and heroine Dr. Chaminda

Varma, who are planning their careers in a big way with this film. This is a great opportunity for Rajesh, who is going to become a director after working in MaTV. All the best to everyone," he said. Hero Pawan said, "This birthday is very special for me. I got a good opportunity through the film 'Hreem'. Thanks to everyone who believed in me and gave me the opportunity. I am very happy that my family members, my aunt Renukamma, Gopi and Rekha, are all par-

icipating in this celebration. I hope that all of you will also praise me after watching the content," he said. Heroine Chaminda Varma said, "My first film co-star Pawan acted very well. Happy birthday to him. Thank you Nandu garu for participating in this celebration and wishing our team." Producer Shivamallala said, "Thank you to Nandu for participating in our hero Pawan's birthday celebrations as soon as I asked and giving energy to all our team.

"One by Four (One/4) is being embraced by audiences across all sections; absence of heroines during promotions caused loss to our film" – Movie Team at Success meet

T ejas Gunjal Films and Rohit Gunjal Films banners have produced the action crime drama "One by Four (One/4)", starring Venkatesh Peddapalem, Aparna Mallick, and Heena Soni in lead roles. The film is directed by Bahubali Palani K, who earlier worked as an associate director for the blockbuster Baahubali. The movie is jointly produced by Ranjana Rajesh Gunjal and Rohit Ramdas Gunjal. Recently released, "One by Four (One/4)" has emerged as a successful film, receiving appreciation from audiences across all categories and running successfully in all centers. On this occasion, the success meet was held at the Hyderabad Film Chamber, where the team shared their thoughts. Director Bahubali Palani K



said: "Audiences have made One by Four (One/4) a blockbuster. Collections are good in every theatre. Once again, viewers proved that if the content is strong, even a small film can achieve big success. Hero Venkatesh impressed everyone with his fight and performance. He has already done action films in Kannada, and he has a

bright future in Telugu cinema as well. Our producers Ranjana and Rohit came from Mumbai with great passion for cinema and entered Tollywood. I hope they produce many more films. However, it is unfortunate that some actors who initially come seeking opportunities do not show up during promotions. They should at least promote the film with gratitude." Producer Ranjana Rajesh Gunjal said: "Our film One by Four (One/4), which carries a strong message along with entertainment, is being well received by audiences. The success is purely due to its solid content. The character 'Pavitra' is getting special appreciation, and hero Venkatesh's performance is

being widely praised. The film shows the struggles a woman faces due to blackmail, making it a thought-provoking experience. We are deeply hurt that we did not receive promotional support from the heroines. Despite providing all facilities, they did not show gratitude towards the film. Their absence during promotions caused losses to the movie. It feels better to encourage and cast Telugu girls as heroines rather than depending on North Indian heroines." Producer Rohit Ramdas Gunjal said: "Out of love for Telugu cinema, we came from Mumbai to Tollywood. Achieving success with our very first attempt is very encouraging. The message we wanted to convey through this film reached the audience, and collections are strong. Viewers

never reject a good film. Unfortunately, the actors themselves did not cooperate during promotions; otherwise, the film would have reached even more people." Hero Venkatesh Peddapalem said: "All of us worked extremely hard for One by Four (One/4). We also faced release issues due to competition from bigger films, but our producers bravely overcame all hurdles and released the movie. The film is receiving good talk from all the theatres. Many are saying this is a must-watch film for women. Even now, when we want to continue promotions, the heroines are not attending press meets. Actors who skip promotions should think about the situation of producers who invest so much passion and money into making a film."

Mumbai: Choreographer and director Farah Khan revealed how actress Malaika Arora came on board the iconic song 'Chaiyya Chaiyya' for Mani Ratnam's 'Dil Se..'. The song has reportedly been adapted from the lyrics of 'Tere Ishq Nachaya', written by Bulleh Shah. Oscar-winning composer A.R. Rahman has provided the score, with lyrics penned by Gulzar. The track has been crooned by Sukhwinder Singh and Sapna Awasthi. The iconic number has been performed on top of a moving train by Malaika and the protagonist Shah Rukh Khan. Choreographed by Farah, the mesmerizing number continues to be one of the most memorable tracks, remembered for its energetic steps and deep lyrics. It still remains an inspiration for several dance enthusiasts across the country. "Dil Se.." further featured Manisha Koirala and Preity Zinta (debut movie) in significant roles.