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Mann ki Baat: PM Modi calls for united front against drug abuse

■ New Delhi

Cautioning against the perils associated with drug abuse, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday appealed to citizens to unite against this scourge and build a stronger future for the youth, noting that addiction engulfs not just an individual but impacts the entire society.

In his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat', he noted that the 'Drug-Free Youth for a Developed India' campaign is rapidly gaining momentum across the country and stressed that its objective is clear: 'Drug-free youth, drug-free India'.

The prime minister said he was happy that this campaign has not remained merely a formality, as many people, especially the youth, are becoming a part of it in large numbers.

"After all, this is our collective resolve for the health, happiness, and bright future of India's youth. Let us all play our part in this noble mission



to keep India's youth away from drugs and free from addiction," he said.

Modi said drug addiction does not just engulf a single individual, as the entire family and society have to bear the consequences.

"I would like to commend those who raise awareness against drugs and step forward to help individuals struggling with addiction," he said.

The Drug-Free India through the 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan' (NMBA) is a flagship initiative of the Government. The campaign seeks to prevent substance

abuse through awareness generation, community participation, treatment, rehabilitation, aftercare and social reintegration.

The prime minister also highlighted the PM SVANidhi Yojana welfare scheme for street vendors, noting that lakhs of women are gaining strength from it.

Lakhs of women across the streets of cities and towns are engaged in selling vegetables or fruits, running tea stalls, while some are selling flowers, earthen lamps, and 'pooja' material, he noted.

"Often, a mere lack of capital prevents their busi-

BJP, RSS conspiring to reduce tribal quota through delimitation, alleges Congress

■ Ranchi

The Congress on Sunday alleged that the BJP and RSS were conspiring to weaken tribal representation by seeking to reduce seats reserved for them in legislatures through delimitation, and vowed to oppose any such exercise based on the 2007-08 delimitation report.

Addressing the 'Adivasi Ekta Mahajutan Rally' at Ranchi's Morabadi Ground, Jharkhand Congress in-charge K Raju said the party would stand with tribals in their fight to protect their political representation and rights over land, water and forests.

"The BJP tells 'adivasis' (tribals) they are forest dwellers, but our leader Rahul Gandhi clearly said you are 'moolvasi' and you have full rights over water, forest and land," he said.

Raju claimed that Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, had told him to convey to the gathering that the proposed delimitation was a "BJP conspiracy" aimed at reducing tribal



People take cover under umbrellas as they take part in the Adivasi Ekta Mahajutan Rally organised by Congress in Ranchi on Sunday

PTI

seats in the Lok Sabha and State assemblies.

All India Adivasi Congress chairman Vikrant Bhuria said the party was protesting against any move to reduce tribal representation through delimitation.

"The BJP is trying to reduce our seats of representation during delimitation. We have come to protest against that through this rally," Bhuria said.

He said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had demanded that delimitation be postponed for another 25 years so that tribal representation reflected their future

population and reservation.

"All of you should always remember, as many seats as we have, that much will be our strength. They are going to reduce our power to contest elections," he claimed.

Congress MP Sukhdeo Bhagat alleged that tribals had borne the brunt of displacement caused by mining, industries, large projects and dams.

"Tribal land is being snatched. Now, the BJP and RSS are conspiring to silence the tribals by reducing their seats in the name of delimitation. But they will never

succeed in this land of Birsa Munda. Adivasi seats will not decrease; their voice will not be suppressed," he said.

Former state minister Bandhu Tirkey said the Congress would oppose any delimitation exercise based on the 2007-08 report.

"The BJP and the RSS want to reduce our seats. But we want to make it clear that if they carry out the delimitation exercise based on the 2007-08 report, we will not tolerate it. The tribals are ready to fight for their rights," he said.

Tirkey also alleged that the proposed delimitation could weaken constitutional safeguards under the Fifth Schedule and provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, or PESA.

The Centre had accepted the Delimitation Commission's report on February 14, 2008, but the exercise was deferred in Jharkhand, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh until 2026 following a subsequent amendment.

Jarange sets September 12 deadline for Mumbai march

■ Jalna/Nagpur

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday reached out to fasting Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange, who has warned of marching to Mumbai if the Government fails to act on his demand for Kunbi (OBC) caste certificates for all eligible Marathas by September 12.

Fadnavis said the Government is open to discuss legally viable demands that are constitutionally valid, and not violative of the Supreme Court's orders.

On the second day of the indefinite hunger strike in Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district, Jarange targeted Deputy CM Eknath Shinde, who belongs to the Maratha community, rebel Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Jadhav, and state minister Sanjay Shirsat over a farmer event being held in Parbhani city in the Marathwada region.

Speaking to reporters in Nagpur, Fadnavis said representatives of the Government are attending the Parbhani event to discuss the demands of demonstrators.



"Earlier also we found a way to address their issues, and we are going forward to resolve their demands. Similarly, Eknath Shinde is also very sensitive to these issues from the very beginning," he said.

The chief minister underlined the Government's commitment to discuss and resolve legally viable demands that are constitutionally valid, and not violative of the Supreme Court's orders.

Earlier in the day, reacting to the Parbhani event, Jarange questioned the need to hold the programme, which he said was arranged to mock the Maratha community.

Opposing the event, Jarange claimed he had

Govt to decide on cashless UPI for foreign pilgrims at Simhasth

■ Bhopal

Efforts have already begun to enable foreign pilgrims to attend Simhasth Mahakumbh 2028 in a 'cashless' manner. Foreign pilgrims can go cashless at the Simhasth Mahakumbh only if the 'UPI KYC' and visitor wallet facility are made available to them. Towards this end, FoMP submitted a memorandum through Kartik Pande, Deputy High Commissioner of India in London, United Kingdom, and the High Commission of India has now taken up this memorandum for processing. It is now for the Government of India to act on it.

Speaking to MPPPOST, Rohit Dixit, Founder of FoMP, said that through the efforts of MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and the State Government, Simhasth will bring a large number of NRI, OCI, and foreign passport-holding pilgrims to Ujjain, including senior citizens, multi-generational families, and first-time visitors to India.

The memorandum requests a proposed two-stage onboarding process.

UK, before departure, The participating RBI-authorized

issuer, either directly or through an appropriately regulated service provider, completes passport and visa checks, OCI verification, applicant verification and liveness checks, customer due diligence, sanctions/AML and fraud screening, and mobile and email verification. The issuer records its decision and places the wallet in a "verified pending" status. App setup, payment education, and any permitted funding preparation can also be completed before travel.

India, after arrival. Following electronic or other reliable confirmation of the pilgrim's entry status, the issuer immediately activates the wallet. There should be no repeat physical KYC, agent appointments, or separate verification queues at the airport.

Pilot operational features. Eligibility is focused on a representative group of UK-resident pilgrims arriving without access to Indian banking, including foreign-passport family members and OCI cardholders without NRE or NRO accounts. Wallet funding would be via eligible international debit or credit cards, with all exchange rates, loading fees, refunds,



MP CM Mohan Yadav, Founder of FoMP Rohit Dixit

and other charges clearly disclosed before confirmation. Usage would be limited to person-to-merchant (P2M) payments at UPI QR-enabled merchants, subject to issuer controls, transaction monitoring, and applicable RBI and NPCI requirements. The memorandum also proposes evaluating an enhanced "Fully Verified Simhastha Pilgrim" limit of up to Rs 1 lac compared with the current pilot limit of ₹50,000 - entirely subject to RBI risk assessment and prescribed safeguards. Governance and safeguards. FoMP UK will act only as a coordinator and facilitator alongside the High Commission. It will not carry out any regulated KYC, onboard customers, issue wallets, hold or move customer funds, or take on

issuer liability. Customer due diligence, screening, risk decisions, records, wallet issuance, security, disputes, and compliance will remain entirely with the RBI-authorized issuer and its approved partners. At no cost and without performing any regulated function, FoMP UK stands ready to contribute - as a representative pilot group of UK-based pilgrims - community venues in the United Kingdom for verification camps organized or supported by the High Commission, a register of interested pilgrims to assist capacity planning, outreach, mobilization, scheduling, and translation across the UK diaspora community, trained volunteers to assist elderly and less digitally confident applicants, and a structured

response to any consumer difficulties encountered during the pilot's operation. The next step is a request to the High Commission for support for (i) a time-bound feasibility pilot, and (ii) an inter-agency roundtable involving the High Commission, Madhya Pradesh and Simhasth authorities, the Reserve Bank of India, NPCI, NPCI International, relevant ministries, and authorised issuers. The roundtable could settle the verification pathway, entry-confirmation mechanism, limits, consumer protection, data handling, and success metrics.

This is not a request to create a new payment system, nor to relax KYC. It is a request to move actual verification to the first stage, preserve regulated accountability, and operationalise an existing visitor-payment model at the scale and speed that Simhasth will require. A successful UK pilot would allow pilgrims to arrive payment-ready, ease pressure on airports and helpdesks, and give India, through its missions, a responsible, repeatable model for extending UPI One World ahead of Simhasth and future major events.

Karantaka Governor accepts Nagendra's resignation

■ Bengaluru

Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot has accepted B Nagendra's resignation as minister, according to an official notification.

The governor accepted the resignation on the recommendation of Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

The official notification issued in this connection on August 29 was released to the media on Sunday.

"I have accepted the recommendation of the Chief Minister and in exercise of the powers vested in me under Article 164 (1) of the Constitution of India, I, Thaaawarchand Gehlot, Governor of Karnataka, hereby accept the resignation



Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot

of B Nagendra, Minister for Planning and Statistics from the Council of Ministers with immediate effect," he said.

Nagendra, slammed by the opposition for his alleged role in the Rs 89 crore Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki ST Development Corporation 'scam', had announced his resignation on Friday, just

25 days after his re-induction in the Shivakumar-led Cabinet in an expansion.

Asserting that he had no role in the scam, Nagendra said he resigned voluntarily to avoid embarrassment to the party and the Government.

The opposition BJP-JD(S) combine had kept up the

Jitendra Singh promises action on armed forces HQ demands



■ New Delhi

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Jitendra Singh, on Sunday interacted in New Delhi with a delegation of the Armed Forces HQ

Association, during which various demands and service-related concerns of employees were discussed.

The delegation submitted a memorandum to the Minister and held detailed discussions on issues concerning career progression, promotions and pending service-related matters, an official statement said.

Mumbai library restores rare Persian, Urdu translations of Hindu scriptures

■ Mumbai

Inside a century-old building overlooking the bustling streets of south Mumbai, a quiet effort is underway to save rare Persian and Urdu translations of Indian scriptures - the last remnants of the country's multi-cultural and inclusive past.

The Karimi Library, housed within the 152-year-old Anjuman-I-Islam institute, has embarked on a restoration drive to rescue more than 32 sacred Hindu texts, including Mahabharat, Ramayan, Bhagavad Gita, and Shiv Puran, printed

between 1867 and 1896.

The structure, which stands near the iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, is home to books, newspapers, manuscripts in Sanskrit, English, Urdu, Persian, Marathi, Pashto, Arabic, books on history, philosophy, theology, literature, geography and varied subjects, some of which were printed more than 150 years ago.

Padma Shri Dr Zahir Kazi, president of Anjuman-I-Islam founded by Badruddin Tyabji in 1874, said that the library was established in 1898 after merchant Kazi Abdul Karimi Porbandari donated 4,500 valuable texts, and it was



named after him. Besides religious scriptures and royal decrees from Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, the archive features rare newspapers dating back to 1875, including the Jaipur Gazette,

Ambala Gazette, and Cairo's Al Kaibra, offering glimpses into India's early freedom movement.

"The books have become old and pages brittle. They need to be treated with

special chemicals to weed out fungus and pests. Books that are not in good shape are pasted with special paper for preservation," Kazi said.

A team of experts has been roped in for the ongoing digitisation process, and pages are being uploaded to Anjuman-I-Islam's cloud account, he explained.

"These books reflect so much of tolerance. It is an eye-opener for Indians that the country's heritage is very much there in this library," he said.

Library in-charge Mohammad Ghalib Mulla confirmed more than 100,000 book pages, along-

side 70,000 pages from newspapers and periodicals, have been digitised, leaving just 2,250 pages to complete the archiving project.

"The newspapers give details about the initial days of the freedom struggle, the social and political situation of those times, how journalism was - pro and anti-British," Mulla said.

The source of newspapers is mostly unknown. The newspapers and periodicals must be from Anjuman-I-Islam, as the institute has been a learning hub since its commencement and it would have subscribed to those publications, Mulla said.

Anti-conversion Bill to be tabled in Goa Assembly

■ Panaji

The three-day monsoon session of the Goa Assembly will begin on Monday, with a discussion likely on the proposed anti-conversion legislation, which has drawn criticism from Opposition parties.

The House will take up 883 questions during the session, submitted by members of both the ruling and Opposition parties, joint Secretary (Legislature Department) Mohan Gaonkar told PTI on Sunday.

The Goa Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2026, will be tabled during the session. The BJP-led State Cabinet on Wednesday approved the bill, proposing life imprisonment among other stringent penalties.

The bill proposes strict punishment for religious conversion allegedly carried

out through force, coercion, undue influence, allurements, fraudulent means or marriage.

Under the bill, offenders may face life imprisonment, and it proposes fines of at least ₹50,000 and compensation of up to ₹5 lakh to victims.

The Congress has alleged that the bill is aimed at flaring communal tension in the otherwise peaceful State.

Independent MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, who supports the Government, also claimed that such a law would create communal disharmony in the coastal state and appealed to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to reconsider tabling the bill in the assembly.

The strength of the 40-member Goa Assembly has been reduced to 38 following the deaths of two MLAs - then Agriculture Minister Ravi Naik and Taleigao MLA Jennifer Monserrate.



Goa Assembly

FILE PHOTO

EDITORIAL

All eyes on RBI: Will it cut rates to prop up growth?

The Union Budget 2025-26 has finally met the long-awaited demand of the middle class, pinned down as it is by a persistent inflation, particularly of food items, and stagnancy in wages despite a record surge in the after-tax profits of corporates. FM Nirmala Sitharaman did not waver at the outgo of Rs 1 lakh crore due to tax exemption for up to Rs 12 lakh, saying the tax base itself is small and reposes trust in the middle class loosening their purse strings to boost private consumption – a critical factor amid RBI lowering GDP forecast to 6.6% from 7.2%, and govt lowering it to 6.4%. Also Read - Centre mulls new IT Act for tech-driven taxpayers Even as the dust has settled and analysts are poring over allocations for critical sectors, the euphoria among the middle class is spilling over and all eyes are now on the Reserve Bank of India if it will also cheer them by easing interest rates. The next RBI Monetary Policy Committee meeting is scheduled from February 5 to 7. There are keen expectations from the common man and the industry alike for lower rates. Following a budget booster to private consumption, in view of slackness in investments by industry and businesses, people feel enthused about the new RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra recognising the need to support growth rather than status quo for fear of stoking inflation further. They feel the onus is on the RBI to further stimulate the demand generation. Also Read - Govt creating new Income Tax Act for techdriven taxpayers, scrapping convoluted older law In recent weeks, the RBI undertook certain measures to infuse liquidity in the system, despite the inflation ruling above its target (4% with +/- 2%). For more than four years, it has shunned easing the repo rate from 6.5%. The repo is the rate that the RBI lends to commercial banks. RBI also uses cash reserve ratio or CRR, the percentage of a bank's deposits that it must keep in reserves with the RBI. By raising or lowering the CRR, the central bank affects liquidity in the economy. In December 2024, the RBI slashed the CRR by 50 basis points to 4% to infuse ₹1.16 lakh crore into the banking system. Also Read - Budget caters to every section of society:CM It is true that interest rate cuts won't increase disposable incomes of consumers, unlike fewer taxes or more direct benefit transfers; but, they will lead to more investments and less unemployment. A cut in repo rate will lead to lower loan interest rates, paving way for more borrowing and spending in the economy. But there are as many sceptics as hopefuls. They point out that with the inflation not showing any signs of abatement, the central bank may not be willing to risk making borrowing any less expensive for banks. If done, it will increase money supply in the system, making it difficult to cool down inflation. They are pouring water on high expectations of interest rate cuts in wake of record depreciation in the rupee value, by as much as 3%, due to external pressures and a slowing economy.

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A hand-drawn illustration of a hand writing on a notepad, with a newspaper clipping titled 'TRICOLLOUR ESTATE' and a spiral notebook in the foreground.

Adani To Develop India's Largest 'Skill And Employ' Program, Partners With Singapore's ITEES

Ahmedabad: In line with Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani's social philosophy of emphasis on service, the Adani Group has partnered with ITE Education Services (ITEES) of Singapore to build a skilled talent pipeline for serving the needs of industries, including those relating to green energy, manufacturing, Hi-tech, project excellence and industrial design. To build this talent pool of industry-ready workforce, the Adani family will donate over Rs 2,000 crore for establishing internationally benchmarked schools of excellence. Each of these finishing schools, called Adani Global Skills Academy, will select students from technical and vocational education backgrounds in India aligned to their industry and role aspiration, the conglomerate said in a release on Wednesday. Once these students have been certified in their chosen field of study, they will be employed within the Adani Group as well as the broader industry, depending on their role and field of training. "This will ensure that trained professionals are first-day first-hour industry ready and benchmarked to global standards of excellence," the release said. Adani Group Chairman said in a post on X that they are launching the world's largest finishing school in Mundra. "Delighted to announce one of India's largest Skill & Employ initiatives! In partnership with Singapore's ITEES, the global leader in technical training, the Adani Group is launching the world's largest finishing school in Mundra. This state-of-the-art facility will blend AI-driven immersive learning with cutting-edge innovation centres, and annually train over 25,000 learners to help accelerate the Make in India movement," he said. Adani Group partners with ITE Education Services (ITEES) of Singapore to build a skilled talent pipeline. (X@gautam_adani) The Adani Group release said that in its initial phase, the program will prioritize establishing the world's largest finishing school for technical training in Mundra, Gujarat, aiming to skill over 25,000 learners annually for a wide range of industry and service roles. These learners would be fresh graduates and diploma holders with vocational and technical qualifications from ITIs or Polytechnics and would be selected for an intensive boot camp experience within the schools. The release cited Gautam Adani's social philosophy is "seva sadhna hai, seva prarthna hai aur seva hi prarthna



hai". The Adani Global Skills Academy will be the largest of its kind in the world and provide an immersive learning experience, with innovation centres and AI-based simulators combined with mixed reality-based learning, within a fully residential facility for students and faculty, the release said. To ensure a high-quality learning experience, Adani is partnering with ITEES Singapore, a world leader in providing career-oriented technical and vocational training and a key developer of national occupational skills certification and standards. TEES Singapore will serve as a knowledge partner towards creating a continuous feeder for this technically qualified and industry-ready talent. The areas of collaboration will include creating a best-in-class learning experience that leverages world-class infrastructure, and immersive technical content and roping in leading faculty with deep expertise across new-age industries. "This partnership is critical to our initiative as a Group to build high-level technical talent and is in line with our commitment towards the Make-in-India focus across our portfolio. With deep engagement across academic quality assurance, certification-led learning pathways, faculty and student exchange programs and leadership development, this partnership will embed the best of application-led learning to support industries across sectors, thus contributing to Viksit Bharat," said Robin Bhowmik, CEO of Adani Skills and Education. "ITEES is pleased to collaborate with Adani to share ITE's expertise and knowledge in skills education and training. Through this meaningful partnership, ITEES aims to enhance skill development and create lasting impact by transforming education and lives," said Suresh Natarajan, CEO of ITEES, Singapore. Over the years, ITEES has received many accolades for its trailblazing transformation in technical education, including being the first education institution to win the Singapore Quality Award with special commendation in 2011. At his son Jeet's wedding, Gautam Adani announced Rs 10,000 crores to various social causes, including building infrastructure in healthcare, education and skill development. He also announced over Rs 6,000 crore to build two integrated health campuses, Adani Health Cities (AHCs), in Ahmedabad and Mumbai. Headquartered in Ahmedabad,

BHEL received ₹6,200-crore order from DVC for Raghunathpur Thermal Power Project in West Bengal



Varun Kesavan Managing editor E Mail I'd – varunkesavanpressmedia@gmail.com" State-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) on Tuesday (February 11) said it has received a letter of intent (LoI) from Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) for the steam generator island package of the 2x660 MW Raghunathpur Thermal Power Station phase-II project in Purulia, West Bengal. "The contract, valued at approximately ₹6,200 crore (excluding taxes and duties), was awarded through international competitive bidding." "Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited

(BHEL) has received Letter of Intent (LOI) from DVC for Steam Generator Island Pkg. of 2x660 MW Raghunathpur Thermal Power Station Phase-II project," according to a stock exchange filing. "The scope of work includes the supply, erection, testing, and commissioning of steam generators and auxiliaries, electrostatic precipitators (ESP), flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) systems, ash handling systems, and related electrical and control instrumentation (C&I) works. Additionally, BHEL will undertake associated civil works. "The execution timeline for the project is set at 48 months and 52 months for the respective units. "BHEL's net profit increased 170% to ₹124 crore, while its revenue grew 32% from last year to ₹7,277 crore. While revenue beat expectations, the net profit missed analyst estimates of ₹175 crore. "BHEL's earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA), grew 40% to ₹304 crore, while the EBITDA margin expanded 30 basis points to 4.2% from 3.9% last year. The margin expansion was kept in check by a steep jump in other expenses. "Shares of Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd ended at ₹199.45, down by ₹3.45, or 1.70%, on the BSE.

OYO to expend \$10 million in US-based G6 Hospitality's digital assets



Varun Kesavan Managing editor E Mail I'd – varunkesavanpressmedia@gmail.com" Tech unicorn OYO on Tuesday announced its plans to invest \$10 million to grow the digital assets of US-based G6 Hospitality, including its website and app. "OYO recently acquired iconic American budget hotel chain Motel 6 and Studio 6 brands from Blackstone Real Estate for \$525 million in an all-cash transaction, as it eyes expansion in the US. "The company plans to accelerate G6 Hospitality's growth, targeting the addition of over 150 hotels in 2025 under the Motel 6 and Studio 6 brands. "This expansion is expected to strengthen the brands' presence in key markets such as Texas, California, Georgia and

Arizona. "The company plans to focus on growing the Motel 6 website and the My6 app. It aims to increase app installs by 4X before the summer season kicks in and will also use advanced digital targeting strategies, focusing on high-intent customers through direct partnerships with leading digital platforms like Google and Microsoft," OYO said in a statement. "The investment will power targeted digital campaigns aimed at reaching customers actively searching for accommodations. "The investment underscores G6's commitment to supporting its franchise network by driving direct bookings and reducing dependency on third-party platforms," said Shashank Jain, Head of Online Revenue of G6 Hospitality. "G6 Hospitality recently announced a strategic partnership with HotelKey, a hospitality technology provider, to enhance its technological capabilities across its network of properties in the US and Canada. G6 Hospitality recently formed a strategic partnership with HotelKey, a company that provides technology for the hospitality industry. This partnership aims to improve the technology used across its properties in the US and Canada. Oyo reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 166 crore in Q3 FY25, which is six times higher than the Rs 25 crore in the same period last year. Its revenue also grew to Rs 1,695 crore, reflecting a 31% year-on-year increase, showing a strong recovery from the flat growth seen in FY24.

CPI Inflation Eases To 4.31% In Jan 2025: Government Data

New Delhi: The All India Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month of January 2025 over January last year is 4.31% (Provisional), as per the Government data. There is a decline of 91 basis points in headline inflation of January 2025 in comparison to December 2024. Data shows that it is the lowest year-on-year inflation after August 2024. Data also revealed that inflation in a dozen of the states is higher than the national inflation rates. Kerala (6.76), Odisha (6.05) and Chhattisgarh (5.85) top the chart. The three-day Invest Karnataka 2025 summit commenced in Bengaluru on Tuesday, drawing over 5,000 business representatives and diplomats from 16 countries. The event aims to showcase Karnataka's investment potential and reinforce its position as a global economic hub. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, inaugurating the summit, emphasised Bengaluru's role in shaping India's future. "Karnataka, with its world-class infrastructure and conducive business environment, is a prime destination for investment. Entrepreneurs investing here will find nationwide support," he said. Highlighting Bengaluru's contributions to technology and research, he added, "Anyone with doubts about India's future should visit this city and witness its advancements in IT, startups, and revolutionary research." He noted that Bengaluru is poised to launch the first AI model from India, leveraging its vast talent pool. Singh also addressed the evolving business climate in India, stating, "Earlier, investors faced bureaucratic hurdles, but today, they are welcomed with open arms. With India emerging as the world's largest marketplace, critical policy decisions are aligning with its economic growth." Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah reaffirmed Karnataka's commitment to being the most investor-friendly state in India. "With a stable policy environment and business-friendly governance, we ensure that every investment made here thrives," he said. Tracing Karnataka's rich economic history from ancient craftsmanship to modern technology, he highlighted its leadership in research and development. "With over 400 R&D centres specialising in AI, robotics, biotech, and space, Karnataka is India's intellectual hub. Our academic and industry collaborations are upskilling youth for future industries." Stock markets closed with losses for the fourth consecutive day on Monday with the benchmark Sensex declining by 548 points as fresh US tariff threats shook investor confidence and triggered selling in bluechip banking, metal and oil shares. The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 548.39 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at a week's low of 77,311.80. Intra-day, it tanked 753.3 points or 0.96 per cent to 77,106.89. The NSE Nifty declined 178.35 points or 0.76 per cent to 23,381.60 dragged by losses in Trent, Tata Steel and Power



Grid. Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth has said work concerning developing a taxonomy for climate finance is going on and it should be ready in the next six months or so. "Work is happening, and in fact, the steel ministry has completed their work. They have issued their taxonomy for the steel sector," he told PTI in an interview. However, he said, a much more comprehensive exercise covering all sectors of the economy is going on and a concept paper has already been shared with stakeholders concerned and their views have been obtained. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said she is likely to introduce the new income tax bill, which will replace the six-decade-old I-T Act, in the Lok Sabha in the coming week. After introduction in the Upper House, the bill will be sent to a parliamentary standing committee for scrutiny. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the bill on Friday. Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Friday as the RBI's rate cut did not spring any major surprise for the markets and investors turned to profit-taking amid foreign fund outflows. Registering its third day of decline, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex dropped 197.97 points or 0.25 per cent to settle at 77,860.19, in a volatile trade.

Where Are We Failing?': Samantha Ruth Prabhu Reacts After Kerala Teen's Death by Suicide; Demands Justice



Hyderabad: In a tragic incident a 15-year-old boy in Kerala died by suicide on January 15 after allegedly facing ragging and bullying in school. The suicide of the schoolboy has left the general public furious over the state of affairs. Many had called for justice for the student's parents at this testing time. Joining them, actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu shared a strong message demanding justice for the victim. Samantha expressed her grief and rage on her Instagram handle. Sharing a lengthy note, the actor wrote: "This news has absolutely shattered me! It's 2025. Yet, we've lost another bright young life, snuffed out because a few individuals, filled with hate and venom pushed someone to the brink! Mihir's tragic death is a stark reminder that bullying, harassment, and ragging are not just 'harmless traditions' or 'rites of passage'! They are violence-psychological, emotional, and sometimes even physical." Shedding light on the laws around bullying, she wrote "We have stringent anti-ragging laws apparently, yet our students continue to suffer in silence, afraid to speak up, afraid of consequences, afraid that no one will listen. Where are we failing? This cannot be met with just condolences. It demands action. I hope the authorities get to the bottom of this, and I hope truth is not silenced by the system. Mihir deserves justice. His parents deserve closure. Strict and immediate action must follow." Demanding strict and immediate action, she urged young people to speak out and get help. Her message read: "To all my young followers - If you see bullying, call it out. Speak up. Support the victim. Silence enables abuse. If you are bullied, seek help. There is always a way out. Let's teach our children empathy and kindness, not fear and submission. Mihir's death should be a wake-up call. Justice for him means ensuring that no other student has to endure

the same pain. We owe him that much. #JusticeForMihir" For the unversed, the victim Mihir was exposed to brutal ragging, everyday bullying, and physical assault leading to his death. As per his mother, he was bullied by a gang of students at school and on the school bus for his skin colour. His family has written a detailed petition to the Chief Minister's Office and the Director General of Police, seeking an immediate and impartial investigation. Actor Swara Bhasker expressed her frustration after her account on X (formerly Twitter) was permanently suspended. The suspension, according to Bhasker, was triggered by alleged copyright infringements related to two of her posts, one of which was a Republic Day wish. Taking to Instagram on Thursday, the actor shared screenshots of the violation notices she received and wrote in the caption, "(You can't make this stuff up!!!!) Dear X, Two images from two tweets have been marked as 'copyright infringements'. Basis which my X account is locked / disabled, I can't access it and permanent suspension has been approved by your teams." Bhasker elaborated on the flagged content, stating that one of the tweets featured a widely recognised slogan from progressive movements in India. "One with an orange background and text in Hindi Devnaagri script reading 'Gandhi Hum Sharmindaa hain, Tere qaatil zindagi hain' is a popular slogan of the progressive movement in India. There is no copyright violation. It is akin to urban modern folk idiom," she explained. The second flagged post featured an image of Bhasker's daughter with her face concealed, waving the Indian flag, accompanied by the message "Happy Republic Day, India." Questioning the cause behind this, she wrote, "How can this possibly be a copyright infringement???? Who has a copyright on my child's likeness???" Bhasker further alleged that the suspension appeared to be a deliberate attempt to suppress her freedom of speech. "If these tweets have been mass reported they are aimed to harass the user i.e. myself and are aimed at suppressing my freedom of speech and expression. Kindly review and reverse your decision. Thanks, Swara Bhaskar," she wrote. Bhasker is known for speaking her mind on politics, and one will find a lot of online backlash directed at her. Last seen in the 2022 movie Mimamsa, the actor will be seen soon in Mrs. Falani. In 2023, she got married to politician and activist Fahad Ahmad and they introduced their daughter Raabiya the following year. 'KGF' fame Yash and Kiara Advani starrer 'Toxic' has already managed to create a lot of buzz among movie buffs. Going by the recent update regarding the much-anticipated drama, Yash and Kiara Advani have arrived in Bengaluru to kick-start a long and significant leg of the 'Toxic' shoot. A source close to the production house revealed, "After completing the pivotal schedule in Goa, Kiara Advani and Yash have now arrived in Bengaluru to begin a long and crucial leg of shooting for 'Toxic'. This schedule will delve into the film's intense narrative, and both Yash and Kiara are thrilled to bring this unique story to life." The source further claims that this schedule of the drama will incorporate some critical scenes that explore important aspects of the storyline. Prior to this, the makers shot a song sequence for the movie in Goa featuring Kiara Advani and Yash. Renowned choreographer Ganesh Acharya has helmed the track. 'Toxic' will see the return of Yash in a dancing avatar after a very long time. Aside from Kiara Advani and Yash, 'Toxic' will also see Lady Superstar Nayanthara, and Darrell D'Silva in pivotal roles, along with others. 'Toxic' is expected to be set against the backdrop of a bygone era.

Blake, Ryan to make a plea to dismiss Justin Baldoni's lawsuit

Los Angeles: Hollywood couple Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds are trying to silence actor-director Justin Baldoni, who has been accused of sexual harassment by Blake. Blake and Ryan Reynolds told a federal judge that they will seek to dismiss the defamation lawsuit filed by Justin Baldoni, reports 'Variety'. Attorneys for the two sides are due in court Monday for the first hearing on the feud between the two 'It Ends With Us' co-stars. As per 'Variety', Lively has accused Baldoni, who was also the film's director, of sexually harassing her on set, and then retaliating with a smear campaign when she dared to speak up about it. Baldoni and his publicists have countered that Lively defamed them by taking text messages out of context and mischaracterising their interactions. Baldoni also alleges that Lively and Reynolds pressured WME to drop him as a client, which WME denies. The couple's attorneys filed the notice Thursday in compliance with Judge Lewis Liman's order, which set out how the federal case will move forward. The judge asked for a letter that would "indicate in one sentence the Defendant's intent to make a motion to dismiss". Liman will set a deadline later to actually file the motion. "The Lively-Reynolds Parties intend to move to dismiss Plaintiffs' complaint," said Michael J Gottlieb, following the judge's instruction to keep it short and sweet. Publicist Leslie Sloane, who was also named as a defendant in Baldoni's suit, filed a similar notice. The judge has said he expects to schedule a trial for March 2026, and asked the parties to file a plan that would allow for a trial by that date. In a rare moment of agreement, attorneys on both sides have also indicated they have no objection to consolidating the two federal cases into one proceeding. At the hearing on Monday, the two sides are expected to argue about the conduct of Baldoni's lawyer, Bryan Freedman. Lively's lawyers have argued that Freedman is making prejudicial comments in the press,



which they say taints the jury pool. Freedman has countered that he has every right to defend his client publicly from Lively's media blitz. Actor Priyanka Chopra recently made headlines after a picture from the 2023 US screening of SS Rajamouli's blockbuster RRR resurfaced and went viral on social media. The photograph shows Priyanka posing alongside the acclaimed filmmaker and music composer MM Keeravani. At the time, Priyanka had shared the picture on Instagram, captioning it: "Least I can do to contribute to this incredible Indian film's journey. Good luck and congratulations RRR, SS Rajamouli, MM Keeravani, Ram Charan, Jr NTR, Alia Bhatt, Ajay Devgn, Prem Rakshith (choreographer), Kala Bhairava, Chandrabose." Fast forward two years, Priyanka Chopra and SS Rajamouli have reunited for his highly-anticipated film SSMB29, headlined by Mahesh Babu. Latest reports also add that John Abraham might be taking up a major role in this film, and Malayalam star Prithviraj Sukumaran is said to appear as the main antagonist, although no official words have been brought out yet. Earlier this month, a puja ceremony marked the film's official launch. Written by veteran screenwriter Vijayendra Prasad, SSMB29 is expected to be a grand cinematic spectacle, with filming slated to begin in April 2025 and continue until late 2026. The release is tentatively planned for 2027 or 2029. This is Priyanka Chopra's return to Indian cinema after her 2019 film The Sky Is Pink. The makers of upcoming Tamil film 'Bad Girl' are facing backlash as netizens allege that the film portrays the Brahmin community in a negative light. The film which will be making its premier on January 31 at the International Film Festival in Rotterdam is presented by popular filmmakers Vetri Maran and Anurag Kashyap, while Varsha Bharat debuts as a director. A teaser of the film which was recently released, has ruffled feathers and criticism came from netizens, people from the film fraternity and critics alike.

The Puligundla Project, which is showcasing its beauty amidst lush forests

(31.01.2025 PRESS MEDIA REPORTER Md. Rashid-Khammam) The Puligundla Project, which is showcasing its beauty amidst lush forests and a pleasant environment, is set to be developed as an Eco-Tourism destination starting in February, as per District Collector Muzammil Khan. On Wednesday, the District Collector, along with Khammam Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abhishek Agustya, Additional Collector of Local Bodies Dr. P. Sreeja, District Forest Officer Siddharth Vikram Singh, and other officials, visited the project site in the Kanakagiri Reserve Forest under the Sathupalli Forest division. The Collector walked about 5 kilometers through the forest trails and reached the top of the hill to inspect the Puligundla project area. As part of the Eco-Tourism plan, the Collector, along with other officials, traveled in a command jeep and explored the entire area to establish a pleasant environment while conserving the natural beauty of the forest. The team also visited the Palapitta Oriel Tower and observed the surrounding area through binoculars. During the visit, the Collector stated that there are many beautiful hills, lakes, and streams that can be developed into tourism spots, which would also bring significant economic benefits. He emphasized that the development of the area would help protect nature and enhance the region's tourism prospects for future generations.

Nandamuri Balakrishna honored with Padma Bhushan award -- Basavatarakam Cancer Hospital management, staff, "“--- Balakrishna says titles are not an adornment for him



Hyderabad: Prayagraj Mahakumbh's viral sensation Monalisa Bhosle is all set to make her acting debut in the film The Diary Of Manipur. Renowned film director Sanoj Mishra personally visited Monalisa's home in Maheshwar, Khargone district, Madhya Pradesh, to offer her the role. After discussions with her family, Monalisa agreed to work in the film. Speaking to ETV Bharat, Sanoj Mishra shared, "I visited Monalisa's village, Maheshwar, to meet her and her family. They are simple and humble people. I have taken responsibility, I will cast Monalisa in the film The Diary Of Manipur and make her future." Mishra, who has previously directed films like The Diary Of West Bengal and Gandhigiri, expressed confidence in Monalisa's potential. He plans to introduce her in The Diary Of Manipur, which is being made under the banner of a Mumbai-based Production Company. Monalisa, ecstatic about her new journey, said, "Sanoj Mishra came to Prayagraj to meet me and offered me this role. My family and I are happy with the opportunity. I will work very hard for the film." The agreement for the film has already been finalised, and Monalisa is set to begin her three-month training in Mumbai shortly. The director said, "Our film The Diary Of Manipur is currently being shot in London. I decided to include Monalisa's role. Monalisa will be called to Mumbai after two days, where she will be given three months of training." In The Diary Of Manipur, Monalisa will portray the daughter of an army officer. "If everything goes well, Monalisa will get the role of an army officer's daughter in the film," said the director. Veteran actor Anupam Kher has been cast as the army officer, with other notable actors like Deepak Tijori, Mukesh Tiwari, and Amit Rao also part of the film.

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Talent Awards 2025.



1st Feb. 2025. Bharat Samachar, Hyderabad. "In a press meet the organisers of International films festival talent awards stated that on 9th February 2025 they will hold film talent awards function in the NTR auditorium of Potti Srimulu Telugu University, Nampally Hyderabad. The function will be jointly organised by Saumith Media and Moard foundation. Organising committee members Dr. Vamsi Krishna, CEO Saumith media, Dr. Andhekar Srinivas, Founder of Moard foundation, Mrs. Priyanka Award winner of Mrs. Telangana and Mrs. Minu Actor and Fashion designer addressed the media persons and extended welcome to the General public and artists to witness the function and encourage the unrecognised and hidden talents of our great country, so as to impart good messages which are useful to the society and nation building. They also said that so far more than 100 entries of feature films, documentaries and short films came up, out of which the jury selects the best ones. They thanked the media and requested them to give wide publicity for the scheduled event. Press Media and Bharat Samachar group is the Media partner for this event. Organisers thanked Md. Parvaiz, Chairman & MD of Bharat Samachar / Press Media group for his good gesture of promoting this talent awards function.