



Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar meets AICC President and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge at his Sada shivanagar residence in Bengaluru on Saturday. Deputy Chief Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara was also present during the meeting.

RING OF FIRE RATTLED BY 22 QUAKES

A series of 22 earthquakes in the Pacific Ring of Fire, including a powerful 7.3-magnitude quake off Mexico, has renewed concerns over tsunami threats and heightened seismic activity across the region.



► Vikrama Vahini | Mexico

The Pacific Ring of Fire, the world's most seismically active region, has recorded 22 earthquakes over the past 30 days, with the strongest measuring 7.3 magnitude striking off Mexico's southern Chiapas coast on Friday.

According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), the earthquake's epicentre was located near Puerto Madero at a shallow depth of 10 kilometres, resulting in strong ground shaking.

The quake prompted the US Tsunami Warning System to issue a tsunami alert for parts of the Pacific coastline, warning of possible high waves, dangerous sea currents and coastal flooding.

The latest tremor follows a series of significant earthquakes across the Pacific this week, including a 6.3-magnitude quake near the Loyalty Islands, a 6.2-magnitude earthquake off the Philippines and a 5.8-magnitude tremor near Tonga.

Together, these events account for 22 earthquakes recorded in the region during the past month.

Stretching about 40,000 kilometres around the Pacific Ocean, the Ring of Fire is responsible for nearly 90 per cent of the world's earthquakes and contains around 75 per cent of all active and dormant volcanoes.

The region experiences frequent seismic activity due to the continuous movement of tectonic plates beneath the Earth's surface.

Seismologists continue to monitor the region closely as the recent series of earthquakes highlights the ongoing risk of powerful tremors and related hazards across the Pacific basin.

Authorities across several Pacific nations have strengthened disaster preparedness measures and urged coastal residents to remain alert for official advisories as seismic activity in the region continues.

BJP Eyes United NCP Before NDA Push

► Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is reportedly exploring a political strategy in Maharashtra that favours the reunification of the two Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) factions before considering any formal expansion of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).



According to party sources, the BJP believes the rival factions led by Ajit Pawar and Sharad Pawar should first resolve their differences and reunite before any future political

arrangement within the NDA. However, leaders from both factions have denied that merger talks or alliance negotiations are currently underway.

The NCP split in July 2023 after Ajit Pawar joined the BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra. The Election Commission later recognised his faction as the official NCP, while Sharad Pawar's group has since functioned separately as the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) or NCP (SP). Sources said the BJP is not in

favour of inducting Sharad Pawar or his supporters into the NDA individually and would prefer to deal with a united NCP. The ruling NCP, already part of the NDA in Maharashtra, has also sought representation in the Union Cabinet whenever Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertakes a cabinet expansion.

The renewed political buzz comes ahead of the Centre's proposed Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, which seeks to increase the Lok Sabha strength to 850 seats and initiate a



fresh delimitation exercise. The NCP (SP), with eight Lok Sabha MPs and one Rajya Sabha member, could play a significant role if the government seeks wider political support.

Recent meetings between leaders of both NCP factions and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis have further fuelled speculation.

However, party leaders maintained that the discussions were purely administrative and denied any political negotiations or merger plans.

Shira vs Tumakuru: Airport Face-Off

► From PG

Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara reiterated that Tumakuru city remains his preferred choice for the state's second international airport. He said the final decision would be based on technical assessments and recommendations from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The state government has already examined multiple proposed locations, including areas along Kunigal Road and the Bidadi-Nelamangala corridor. Officials are evaluating factors such as land availability, connectivity, environmental impact and future growth potential before finalising the site.

The proposed greenfield airport is expected to reduce pressure on Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, while improving air connectivity and supporting industrial development across Karnataka. The location decision is likely to be made after completing all technical and regulatory clearances.

Meanwhile, Parameshwara said he had supported Tumakuru as the preferred location from the beginning. He stated that technical evaluations of proposed sites, including Kunigal Road and Bidadi-Nelamangala regions, have been completed and the final decision will be based on the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) assessment.

The airport project has emerged as a key development issue, with leaders stressing the need for regional balance and long-term economic growth. The final site selection is expected to involve detailed consultations between the state and central governments.

The Karnataka government is currently reviewing multiple proposals, with the final site expected to be selected after technical and regulatory approvals.

Op Sindoor Showcases India's Defence Might

► From PG

He said reducing dependence on foreign suppliers remains a key priority for the government to ensure national security during times of crisis.

Youth Driving Defence Innovation

Describing India's youth as "technological partners" in national security, Singh said the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has evolved

into a national innovation platform by bringing together scientists, startups, academic institutions, private companies, defence public sector units and over 17,000 MSMEs. He said this collaborative ecosystem is accelerating innovation and strengthening India's defence manufacturing capabilities.

India Emerging as a Global Security Partner

The Defence Minister said India is

increasingly being recognised as a trusted global security partner, expanding its strategic engagement from the Indian Ocean to the Indo-Pacific region.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent international visits, Singh said India's global partnerships have deepened across defence manufacturing, the BrahMos missile programme, trade, uranium supplies and cultural cooperation.

SRI SUBUDHENDRA THEERTHA SWAMIJI CALLS FOR HARMONY

► Vikrama Vahini | Haveri

Sri Subudhendra Theertha Swamiji, the Peethadhipathi of Mantralaya, has called for maintaining harmony among the three major Hindu philosophical traditions and urged people not to make statements that could disturb the foundation of the Vedic tradition.

Addressing devotees at Hosaritti in Haveri district during the golden covering ceremony of the Brindavana of Sri Sushilendra Theertha swamiji, he said the teachings of Sri Adi Shankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhwacharya have guided humanity and should be respected by all.

Respect All Acharyas, Avoid Personal Criticism

Sri Subudhendra Theertha swamiji said Sri Shankaracharya revived and strengthened Vedic philosophy through his works and extensive travels across the country. He also highlighted the contributions of Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhwacharya in establishing and explaining their respective philosophical traditions.

He stressed that ideological discussions and debates may continue, but personal criticism of revered acharyas should be avoided. "Criticism of

individuals and attempts to create divisions among followers will not benefit society," he said.

Call for Social Harmony

The seer condemned recent incidents and media discussions that, according to him, hurt religious sentiments and disturb social harmony. He appealed to scholars, youth and followers of different traditions not to encourage divisive statements.

He said followers should focus on the values, teachings and human principles taught by the acharyas rather than engaging in disputes.

Protect Cultural Values

Sri Subudhendra Theertha swamiji also expressed concern over disrespectful remarks against Sri Shankaracharya and said efforts were made earlier to correct references in Karnataka government textbooks through discussions with officials.

Calling for unity among communities, he said protecting Hindu traditions and maintaining social harmony was the responsibility of everyone. He urged followers of different schools of thought to remain united and work towards the welfare of society.



ENTERTAINMENT

72nd National Film Awards Winners Revealed

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

The winners of the 72nd National Film Awards were announced on Saturday, recognising the finest achievements in Indian cinema for films certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) between January 1 and December 31, 2024. The prestigious awards honour excellence across feature films, non-feature films and cinema literature.

The announcement, which came after a delay of nearly two weeks, was made in New Delhi. An 11-member jury, headed by acclaimed filmmaker Jayaraj, selected the winners after evaluating entries from across the country.

The top honour for Best Feature Film went to Srikanth, while Kartik Aaryan and veteran Malayalam superstar Mammootty shared the Best Actor award for their outstanding performances.

Actress Yami Gautam received the Best Actress award for her powerful role in Article 370, while Rajkumar Periasamy was named Best Director for Amaran.

Among the supporting categories, Sanjay Mishra won Best Supporting Actor, while Ropashree Varkady and Sachana Namidass jointly received the Best Supporting Actress award.

Science-fiction epic Kalki 2898 AD was recognised as the Best Feature Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment and also won the Best Production Design award.

Captain Miller received the award for Best Film Promoting National and Social Values, besides earning a Special Mention for actor Dhanush.

The Best Screenplay award went to Sukumar for Pushpa 2, while Venky Atluri won Best Dialogue Writer for Lucky Baskhar. Shashwat Sachdev received the

Best Music Direction (Songs) award for Article 370, while Amaran won Best Background Score and Best Editing.

The Best Cinematography award went to Shehnad Jalaal for Bramayugam.

Playback singing honours went to Abhay Jodhpurkar for the Marathi song Gharat Ganpati from Navasachi Gauri Mazi, and Vaikom Vijayalakshmi for the Tamil song Angu Vaana Konilu from ARM. Stree 2 won Best

Choreography, while Bhool Bhulaiya 3 received the award for Best Sound Design.

Regional Cinema Honoured

Regional cinema continued to receive strong recognition, reflecting the diversity of Indian filmmaking. Mithya was adjudged Best Kannada Film, while

Feminichi Fathima won Best Malayalam Film. Raayan emerged as the Best Tamil Film, Committee Kurrullu won Best Telugu Film, and Chalchitra Ekhn received the Best Bengali Film award.

Other regional winners included Mukkam Post Bombilwadi (Marathi), Lahari (Odia), Maaran (Gujarati), Sunita (Manipuri) and Mog Asum (Konkani).

Non-Feature Film Awards

In the non-feature section, Bhangaar (Obsolete) won the Best Non-Feature Film award. Ravi Raj Murmu was honoured with the Best Debut Film of a Director award, while Kakori won the award for Best Biographical/Historical Reconstruction Film.

Main Nida was recognised as the Best Art and Culture Film, while Piplantri: A Tale of Eco Feminism won Best Film Promoting Social and Environmental Values. Touched as Water received the Best Animation Film award and Hamsafar was named Best Short Film.

Other major winners included Statue

of Unity: Ekta Ka Prateek for Best Direction, Life in Loom for Best Cinematography, Blue for Best Sound Design, NDA for Best Editing, Parat 41' chya Magavar (On the Trail of 41') for Best Music Direction, Little Planet: A Tale of Frogs for Best Narrator, and Obur (Clouds) for Best Script. Special Mentions were awarded to Chola Dora aur Sui and Bhadra-Kali Natakam.

Cinema Literature Also Recognised

The Best Film Critic award was presented to Sanjeev Shrivastava for his contribution to Hindi cinema criticism.

The award for Best Book on Cinema went to Naaniruvude Nimagaagi Naadiruvude Nanagaagi: Kannada Cinemada Thathva Matthu Rajakeeya, authored by Kenchanuru Pradeep Kumar Shetty.

Strong Competition Across Categories

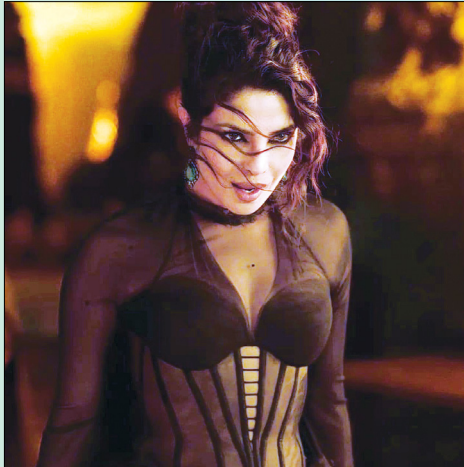
This year's awards witnessed stiff competition, with several critically acclaimed and commercially successful films, including All We Imagine As Light, Laapataa Ladies, Pushpa 2: The Rule, Stree 2, Hanu Man, Manjummel Boys, and Premalu, among the prominent contenders.

In the non-feature category alone, 161 films representing 24 Indian languages competed across 16 award categories, highlighting the growing diversity and creative excellence of Indian cinema.

The 72nd National Film Awards once again celebrated outstanding storytelling, technical brilliance and artistic achievement across India's vibrant film industry, recognising excellence from both mainstream and regional cinema.

The award winners will receive the prestigious National Film Award medal, a citation and cash prize from the President of India at a special ceremony to be held in New Delhi. The awards continue to serve as the country's highest recognition for excellence in filmmaking, celebrating creativity and cinematic achievement across diverse languages and genres.

Rajamouli Unveils Priyanka's 'Varanasi' Look



► Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru

Director S.S. Rajamouli has unveiled the first look of Priyanka Chopra's character from his much-awaited film 'Varanasi' on the occasion of the actress's birthday.

Priyanka, who plays the character 'Mandakini' in the film, was introduced with a striking poster featuring her in a dark warrior-like outfit, showcasing an intense and powerful avatar. Rajamouli described her character as a strong, fierce and unforgettable figure who travels across the world.

The filmmaker shared two contrasting looks of Priyanka — one portraying a fierce and intense side, while the other showing her graceful and vibrant appearance. The posters have sparked speculation among fans about the character having multiple shades.

Earlier, Priyanka's look in a yellow saree with a gun had created excitement among audiences. However, the latest reveal presents a completely different and more powerful side of her role.

'Varanasi' marks Priyanka Chopra's return to Indian cinema after nearly seven years following her 2019 film 'The Sky Is Pink'. The film has generated significant buzz as it brings together Rajamouli's direction and Priyanka's comeback to Bollywood.

BUSINESS

Forex Reserves Cross \$675 Billion

► Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

India's foreign exchange reserves registered a second consecutive weekly increase, rising by \$964 million to \$675.16 billion for the week ended July 10, 2026, according to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The increase follows a sharp \$7.26 billion rise recorded in the previous week, signalling improved external stability despite global economic uncertainties and elevated crude oil prices.

The steady rise in reserves is being viewed as a positive indicator for the Indian economy, strengthening the country's ability to manage external financial pressures and support the value of the rupee.

Foreign Currency Assets Lead the Growth

The largest component of India's forex reserves, Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), recorded the biggest increase during the reporting week. FCA rose by \$930 million to \$546.51 billion. These assets comprise holdings in major global currencies, including the US dollar, euro, pound sterling and Japanese yen, and form the backbone of the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Gold Holdings Edge Higher

India's gold reserves also witnessed a modest increase, rising by \$24 million to \$105.23 billion during the week.

Meanwhile, the country's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased by \$3 million to \$18.626 billion. India's reserve tranche position with the IMF also improved by \$7 million, reaching \$4.793 billion.

Below Record High but Showing Recovery

India's forex reserves had touched an all-time high of \$728.494 billion in the week ending February 27, 2026. However, reserves declined in the following months due to volatility in global financial markets triggered by rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, which also exerted pressure on the Indian rupee.

Foreign exchange reserves are considered one of the key indicators of a country's economic strength. Robust reserves enable a nation to comfortably finance imports, meet external debt obligations, stabilise the domestic currency during periods of volatility and withstand global economic shocks.