



Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
H 33° C L 25° C	H 35° C L 26° C	H 36° C L 26° C



Revanth-Rahul Meet Ends Rift Talk

- Rahul Backs Telangana Meetings
- Caste Census, SC Quota Discussed
- Congress Plans Telangana Rallies
- Rahul Likely to Visit Telangana
- Cabinet Expansion on Agenda



TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 :Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at his Ten Janpath residence in Delhi after several weeks of speculation about a gap between the two leaders. This meeting has put an end to rumors that Rahul was not giving time to Revanth.

suggest that Rahul has assured his participation.

Addressing Rumors of a Rift

In recent months, Rahul Gandhi had not met Revanth Reddy despite the CM's multiple visits to Delhi, leading to speculation within AICC circles that their relationship was strained. Some rumors suggested that Rahul was displeased with Revanth's alleged closeness to industrialist Gautam Adani. However, Revanth consistently denied these claims, stating that he had not requested a meeting earlier. With this latest meeting, political circles now believe that any doubts about a rift have been put to rest.

During the meeting, Revanth explained the Telangana government's decisions on the caste census and its results. He also briefed Rahul on the establishment of a Dedicated Commission and the issue of SC classification. As part of these initiatives, Revanth proposed holding two major public meetings in Telangana and requested Rahul's presence. The final dates will be decided based on Rahul's availability.

Cabinet Expansion and Party Appointments Discussed

Apart from governance issues, Revanth reportedly discussed internal party matters with Rahul Gandhi. The two leaders talked about the formation of the state party executive and the much-awaited cabinet expansion. This meeting also coincided with Meenakshi Natarajan replacing Deepa Das Munshi as the AICC in-charge of Telangana affairs, making Revanth's meeting with Rahul even more significant.

Public Meetings on Caste Census and SC Classification

The Congress government in Telangana plans to organize a caste census meeting in Gadwal and an SC classification meeting in Suryapet. Earlier, the party had planned multiple public events, including one on Telangana Formation Day, where they intended to invite Sonia Gandhi. However, due to health reasons, she could not attend. Now, with the completion of the caste census—an issue Rahul Gandhi has strongly advocated for—party leaders are confident he will attend the upcoming meetings. Reports

With this development, Congress leaders in Telangana expect more clarity and direction in the coming days, especially regarding cabinet expansion and party leadership decisions.

Caste Politics Heats Up in Telangana

- ▶ BJP Slams Revanth's Claims
- ▶ Caste Politics Heats Up
- ▶ BC, SC Reservation Row Grows
- ▶ Modi's BC Status Sparks Clash
- ▶ Revanth's Remarks Trigger Backlash
- ▶ BJP Defends Modi, Hits Revanth
- ▶ Political Firestorm Over BC Status

gana regarding BC reservations and the population census. The opposition and BC organizations have accused the state government of attempting to reduce the number of BCs in official records. The issue of Scheduled Caste (SC) classification has also caused dissatisfaction, especially with the government's proposal for a single-member commission to enhance women's reservations. Amid this, Revanth's remarks on Modi have further intensified caste-related discussions.

BJP MP Laxman also refuted the allegations, asserting that Modi was elected as Gujarat's Chief Minister from the BC category. Several other BJP leaders, including MPs Rajender, Arvind, and Raghunandan Rao, criticized Revanth for misleading the public. They accused him of making provocative statements to divert attention from Congress's unfulfilled promises and to counter the rising influence of BJP leaders like Bandi Sanjay.

BJP Leaders Strongly Respond

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has strongly condemned Revanth's statements. Union Minister Kishan Reddy dismissed the comments, stating that the Gujarat Congress government had already recognized Modi's caste as BC in 1994. He urged Revanth to address issues within the Congress party instead of making baseless claims.

Political Implications

Revanth's comments have further escalated the BC and SC classification debates in Telangana. The strong backlash from BJP leaders has turned the issue into a major political controversy, with both parties engaging in a war of words. Analysts suggest that the dispute will play a crucial role in upcoming political battles, as caste dynamics continue to shape Telangana's political landscape.

TPN PARDHU, Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's recent remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi have ignited a political firestorm. Revanth accused Modi of not being a genuine Backward Class (BC) leader, claiming that he belonged to the upper caste until 2001 and was recognized as BC only through legal reclassification. The CM questioned why the 2021 census did not include caste-based data if Modi was truly committed to BC welfare. He further alleged that Modi's policies reflect an anti-BC mentality.

BC Reservation and Caste Politics Intensify

Revanth's comments have added fuel to an already heated debate in Telan-

Revanth: Modi Must Prove BC Commitment

No Rift with Rahul, Focused on Congress Agenda

Telangana CM Pushes for 42% BC Reservations

Caste Census Will Be Transparent, Says Revanth

Revanth Hits Back at BJP Over Modi's BC Status

Congress Govt Conducting Historic BC Census



TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy once again made significant remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's caste. Speaking to media representatives in Delhi on Saturday, he clarified that his statements were not meant to insult the Prime Minister personally or disrespect his position. He maintained that his comments were based on facts, asserting that Modi is not a Backward Class (BC) by birth. He challenged the Prime Minister to

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Bandi Sanjay: No BC Quota for Muslims

Centre Unlikely to Approve Telangana's BC Quota Bill
Telangana's 42% BC Quota Faces BJP Opposition
State BJP Wants Muslims Removed from BC List
MLC Polls to Test Public Opinion on BC Quota

TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 :The Centre will not accept Telangana's proposal to expand the Backward Classes (BC) reservation to 42 percent, Union Minister of State for Home Bandi Sanjay Kumar said on Saturday.

His statement comes after the Telangana government announced plans to pass a bill in the Assembly increasing OBC reservations beyond the 50 percent cap and sending it to the Centre for parliamentary approval.



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Govt Pledges Full Support to Builders



Hyderabad to Lead as a Net Zero City

Musi River Rejuvenation a Top Priority

Fourth City to Become Global Hub

Rs 10,000 Cr Allocated for Hyderabad's Growth

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Indiramma Housing Begins in Key Districts

- Strict Protection of Government Lands
- Government to Promote Short Films
- Satellite Townships for Urban Growth
- Affordable Housing for the Middle Class

TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu has directed housing officials to commence the construction of Indiramma Houses in the joint Mahabubnagar and Ranga Reddy districts, where the MLC election code is not in effect.



On Saturday, he chaired a budget review meeting for the 2025-26 fiscal year at the State Secretariat, alongside Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy. Senior officials from the Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations (I&PR) departments were present.

The Deputy CM stated that the Congress Praja Prabhat government has allocated funds for constructing 3,500

houses in each of these seven constituencies to provide homes for the poor. He emphasized that the Indiramma Housing initiative is a key component of the government's six guarantees.

Bhatti Vikramarka instructed revenue officials to expedite the resolution of legal disputes involving government lands and ensure their protection. He urged continuous monitoring of court cases and active coordination with the GP and AGP to reclaim valuable gov-

ernment land.

The government will also promote social awareness through short films, encouraging filmmakers to contribute to development initiatives. The I&PR department was directed to publicize government schemes effectively through these films.

With Hyderabad's rapid expansion, the housing department has been tasked with developing satellite townships around the Outer and Regional Ring Roads to benefit middle-class and low-income families. The government aims to revive the model of LIG, MIG, and HIG housing projects seen in areas like SR Nagar, Barkatpura, Kukatpally, and ECIL.

Additionally, Bhatti Vikramarka emphasized the adoption of modern technology for digital land surveys and directed officials to install solar power in government buildings as part of the state's green energy initiative.

Senior officials, including Special Chief Secretary of Finance Ramakrishna Rao and Principal Secretary of Revenue Naveen Mittal, participated in the meeting.

KTR Defends Farmers Against Tax Seizure

TPN , Correspondent

Suryapet , Feb 16 : BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has launched a scathing attack on the Congress government, accusing it of harassing farmers by reintroducing water tax, which was abolished by the BRS in 2018. The criticism follows the seizure of motor starters from six farmers in Lingala village, Penpahad mandal, for non-payment of water taxes.



The gates of the L-27 Mahatma Gandhi lift irrigation canal were lifted yesterday, and today, the motor starters were taken away, leaving farmers in a bind as their fields dry up. KTR questioned if farmers would be the next to be "picked up," highlighting the plight of debt-ridden farmers.

"Such a pity... Is the Congress so angry with the farmers who are in trouble? There is no irrigation water for cultivation... But if the farmers are suffering, it is like harassment," KTR stated, decrying the government's apparent lack of sympathy for the agricultural community. He

further criticized the government for not fully waiving farmers' loans and for imposing restrictions that threaten their security.

KTR warned that the farmers would not tolerate such actions, which he described as "evil practices," and pledged that they would unite to fight back. He accused the Congress of bringing back the agricultural crisis that once blighted the united state to Telangana's soil.

The incident has stirred considerable unrest among local farmers, who are now questioning the logic behind the government's actions amidst ongoing agricultural challenges.

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Bandi Sanjay: No BC Quota for Muslims

"We are very clear. The Centre will not accept the inclusion of 10 percent of Muslims in the BC category. We oppose religion-based reservations," Kumar said. He warned that including Muslims in the BC quota would impact backward-class communities in jobs, education, and budget allocations.

State BJP leaders will attempt to persuade the Centre to consider the bill only if the Telangana government removes Muslims from the BC list. "Muslims already receive benefits as minorities and under the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category," he added.

Kumar claimed that Muslims could dominate BC-reserved seats in upcoming Telangana local body elections, as "their voting is one-sided." He also stated that other castes oppose the inclusion of Muslims in the BC category, fearing it would reduce opportunities for BCs.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka affirmed that the Telangana government will push the Centre to approve the bill. The state recently conducted a caste survey, revealing that backward classes, including backward Muslims, constitute 56.33 percent of the population.

Kumar also chaired a meeting on "Enemy Properties," directing officials to complete a ground survey and verification of such properties in Telangana by March. Enemy properties refer to assets left behind by individuals who became citizens of Pakistan or China.

The MLC elections on February 27 are expected to serve as a referendum on the reservation issue.

Revanth: Modi Must Prove BC Commitment

demonstrate his commitment to BCs by ensuring a caste-based census in the country.

Addressing speculation about his relationship with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Revanth Reddy dismissed any notion of a rift, stating that opposition leaders were spreading misinformation. He reiterated that he was working under Rahul Gandhi's guidance and that his primary responsibility as Chief Minister was to implement the Congress leadership's agenda.

Revanth Reddy emphasized that the Telangana government has conducted a BC caste census more comprehensively than any other state. He announced that the government is organizing another round of the

census to include those who were missed earlier. He challenged opposition parties to find any errors in the caste census data, asserting that the details were recorded based on information provided by the people themselves. Each enumerator was assigned 150 houses to ensure accuracy.

Criticizing the previous government led by K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), he claimed that KCR's survey was limited to just four categories: BCs (51%), SCs (18%), STs (10%), and OCs. In contrast, the new survey conducted under his government included five categories and accounted for BCs among both Hindus and Muslims, bringing the total BC population to 56%.

Revanth Reddy also revealed plans to introduce a resolution in the Telangana Assembly seeking 42% reservations for BCs and forwarding it to Parliament for approval. He assured that the process was being handled through a commission to avoid political interference. He further criticized discrepancies in KCR's survey, stating that it inaccurately classified SCs, reducing them from 82 castes to 59. Even minor spelling mistakes in the previous survey had resulted in the misrepresentation of certain castes, he added.

The Chief Minister also confirmed his recent meetings with Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, stating that cabinet expansion and PCC working committee discussions were not part of their agenda.

Govt Pledges Full Support to Builders

TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 : The Telangana government will extend full cooperation to builders and real estate developers, treating them as key contributors to the state's development. Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu said on Saturday at the Telangana Builders Green Summit held at Novotel.

The Deputy CM assured that the government would implement policies that support builders without creating obstacles. He also warned against misinformation campaigns targeting real estate developers, stating that strict action would be taken against those spreading false propaganda.

Transforming Hyderabad into a Green and Smart City

The government has taken several policy decisions to make Hyderabad a global model for sustainable urban development. As part of its Net Zero City commitment, Hyderabad aims to become an environmentally friendly metropolis. "We are ensuring Hyderabad does not face the pollution crisis that Delhi has experienced," he said.

A key initiative includes replacing all diesel vehicles in the city with electric vehicles in phases. Despite the revenue loss from reduced registration charges, the government is committed

to promoting electric mobility to improve air quality. "Public health is more important than revenue," Vikramarka emphasized.

Musi River Rejuvenation and Future City Development

Highlighting the Musi River Rejuvenation Project, he called it a historic milestone and reaffirmed the government's commitment to transforming Musi into a fresh water river. "We will go ahead with the project, no matter the hurdles or costs," he stated.

Additionally, the Fourth City, envisioned as Hyderabad's "Future City," will be developed as a global hub, ensuring sustainable and modern infrastructure.

Unprecedented Budget for Hyderabad

For the first time in Telangana's history, Rs 10,000 crore has been allocated exclusively for Hyderabad's development. The government has also set ambitious targets to generate 20,000 MW of green power by 2030, scaling up to 40,000 MW by 2035.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Industries Minister Sridhar Babu's recent visit to Davos resulted in securing Rs 1.8 lakh crore in investments for Hyderabad's expansion.

Bandi Sanjay Reviews Enemy Properties



Survey of Enemy Properties Ordered

Encroachments Under Review

Joint Inspection to be Conducted

Settlement Deadline: March 2025

Legal Disputes to be Resolved

TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar has directed officials to complete the record review and ground survey of enemy properties under the Custodian Property of India (CPI) in Telangana by the end of March. He chaired a review meeting on Saturday at Begumpet Hotel Tourism Plaza, focusing on enemy properties in Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Kothagudem, and Vikarabad districts.

Review of Encroachments and Disputes

Bandi Sanjay sought updates from Rangareddy District Collector Narayana Reddy regarding enemy properties in Kotwal Guda and Miyapur. Officials reported encroachments by both individuals and farmers. The minister emphasized the need to protect government land while ensuring justice for long-term occupants. He ordered a joint inspection of enemy properties in Hyderabad and Kothagudem districts and directed officials to submit a report by March-end.

In Hyderabad's Bakaram, 5,578 yards of the disputed 25,503-yard land is classified as enemy property, with 20 families constructing residential and commercial complexes on it. Additionally, 3,300 yards in Rikab Ganj, Bahadurpura, are under dispute, while the survey

details of DS Deodi Ghalib remain untraced.

Resolving Disputes Under Section 8A

Bandi Sanjay reviewed the status of 17.22 acres of enemy property in Vikarabad's Allampalli, occupied by the family of Shubhprada Patel Nuli. Officials noted that the Railway Department had acquired 2.18 acres. The minister directed the implementation of Section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, which allows for regularization of land occupied by unaware buyers or leased by the government.

Sepi Office to be Established in Hyderabad

The minister announced plans to establish a Sepi Affiliated Office in Hyderabad, as part of a broader initiative to set up such offices in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala. Currently, enemy properties in these states are monitored by the Mumbai office.

What Are Enemy Properties?

Enemy properties refer to assets left behind by individuals who migrated to Pakistan or China after the wars of 1962, 1965, and 1971 and took citizenship there. The Custodian Property of India (SEPI) safeguards these properties. Nationwide, there are about 13,000 enemy properties across 21 states and two union territories, with an estimated market value in thousands of crores. The Centre can sell these properties under Section 8(A) of the Enemy Property Act, though many face legal disputes.

Senior officials, including Revenue Principal Secretary CCLA Naveen Mittal, Hyderabad District Collector Anudeep Durisetty, Rangareddy District Collector Narayana Reddy, and officers from SEPI's Mumbai division, participated in the meeting.



VH Slams Kishan Reddy, Questions BJP's Commitment to BCs



TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 :Senior Congress leader and former MP V. Hanumantha Rao (VH) strongly criticized Union Minister Kishan Reddy, urging him to refrain from making misleading statements. Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Saturday, VH questioned BJP's contributions over the past ten years, particularly regarding employment promises. He pointed out that the BJP pledged two crore jobs annually but failed to deliver even that many in a decade.

VH highlighted Congress's achievements, including Indira Gandhi's land reforms, bank nationalization, and reservation policies in IITs and IIMs. He also noted Mahatma Gandhi's Rostgar Yojana, which benefited weaker sections.

Calls for Caste Census and Criticism of BJP

Responding to BJP's comments about Rahul Gandhi's caste, VH asserted that Rahul represents weaker sections and is the only leader committed to conducting a caste census. He challenged BJP to implement the caste census in its ruled states and accused BJP leaders of lacking sincerity towards BCs.

VH defended CM Revanth Reddy, stating that he is implementing Rahul Gandhi's vision and urged BJP to stop its fear-mongering about Muslims. He reminded that Muslims actively participated in the freedom struggle and accused BJP of seeking only their votes while ignoring their contributions.

MLA Payal Shankar Accuses CM Revanth of Insulting PM Modi



TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 :BJP MLA Payal Shankar has accused Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of insulting Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his recent comments on Modi's caste. Revanth Reddy, during the caste census presentation, claimed that Modi was originally from an OC caste and was included in the BC category only after becoming Gujarat CM in 2001. He also alleged that Modi avoided conducting a population census in 2021 to prevent addressing BC reservations.

In response, Payal Shankar criticized Revanth Reddy's remarks, stating that the Telangana caste census survey was poorly managed. He questioned the decrease in BC population figures in the survey and accused the government of creating confusion with excessive questions. According to him, a simpler survey with 7-8 key questions would be sufficient instead of the 70-75 questions currently included.

He further stated that Revanth Reddy was making baseless claims and that the caste census would not deliver justice to BCs in its current form. The BJP MLA demanded clarity from the state government regarding the accuracy and purpose of the survey results.

DK Aruna Slams CM Revanth Reddy Over Modi Remarks

TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 :Mahabubnagar MP DK Aruna has strongly criticized Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy over his comments on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's caste. She questioned whether Revanth would still challenge Modi after witnessing the political fate of former Chief Ministers Arvind Kejriwal and K. Chandrashekar Rao.

Aruna expressed anger over Revanth Reddy's remarks, which claimed that Modi is a

"converted BC," a statement that has sparked controversy in state politics. BJP leaders have been actively countering Revanth's comments, defending Modi's background and leadership.

DK Aruna demanded to know who Revanth Reddy was to speak about the Prime Minister's family. She accused him of making such statements purely for attention and political gain. She further stated that if Revanth were not the Chief Minister, no one would take his words seriously.

Kavitha Demands Proportional BC Reservations

Kavitha Demands Proportional BC Quota Seeks Village-Wise Caste Data Release Push for 56% BC-Muslim Reservation

TPN , Correspondent

Khammam, Feb 16 :Telangana Jagruthi President and MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has demanded that BC reservations in education, employment, and politics be based on their population proportion. Speaking to the media during her visit to Khammam on Saturday, she criticized the government's calculation, stating that BCs constitute around 48% of the state's population after the resurvey, yet are being allocated only 42% reservation. She questioned the basis for this decision.

Kavitha pointed out that Congress had promised 42% reservation in local bodies, but warned that a single bill covering education, employment, and politics could face legal challenges. She suggested passing separate bills for each

sector to prevent legal invalidation. She also proposed a total of 56% reservation for BCs and Muslims, urging that Muslim reservations be based on their population without creating conflicts among communities.

Demands for Transparency in Caste Census

MLC Kavitha urged the government to release caste-wise population data at the village level and publish the Dedicated Commission's report immediately. She emphasized that people should be able to verify the accuracy of government data. She called on BRS workers to actively participate in the survey and publicize the toll-free number to ensure widespread awareness.

BRS Commitment to BC Welfare Highlighting BRS's commitment to BC welfare, Kavitha stated that the

Calls for Separate Bills on Reservations Urges Govt to Publish Commission Report



party has provided 51% representation to BCs in various posts and allocated funds based on the 2014 Comprehensive Family Survey. She argued that if BC reservations had constitutional protection, India could have surpassed the U.S. in development.

She also credited Telangana Jagruthi's efforts for the installation of Ambedkar's statue in the Assembly and granting state festival status to Bathukamma. She reaffirmed Telangana Jagruthi's commitment to fighting for BC rights and social justice.

R. Krishnaiah Slams Revanth Over Modi's Caste Remarks



TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 :BC Welfare Association National President and Rajya Sabha MP R. Krishnaiah has strongly condemned Telangana

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's remarks that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a converted BC. Krishnaiah demanded that Revanth retract his statement and apologize, stating that some upper castes cannot tolerate a BC Prime Minister doing great work.

Accusations of Diverting BC Issues

Speaking at BC Bhavan in Vidyanagar, Krishnaiah alleged that Revanth Reddy is trying to divert attention from BC issues by making baseless claims about Modi's caste. He criticized the BC caste census, calling it flawed, and accused Modi of bringing caste to the forefront to sideline the reservation issue.

He insisted that there is no evidence proving Modi is not a BC and labeled Revanth's remarks as an insult to BCs across the country. He praised Modi for taking steps to protect BC interests, including granting constitutional status to the BC Commission.

Call for a Fresh BC Census

Krishnaiah demanded a resurvey on BC reservations, arguing that the previous survey asked unnecessary questions. He proposed a simplified house-to-house survey with just three key questions. He also warned that pushing the BC reservation issue under the Center's purview is unacceptable and reiterated the demand for 42% reservation for BCs.

TPCC Chief Supports Deepadas Munshis



TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 :Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) chief Mahesh Kumar Goud has come out in support of Deepadas Munshi, the former Telangana AICC in-charge, amid allegations that she neglected party activities. In a statement on Saturday, he described her as a committed and disciplined leader who worked hard to strengthen the Congress in Telangana.

He criticized media reports claiming that Munshi failed in her responsibilities and warned that legal action would be taken against those spreading false information. He stated that Munshi had additional responsibilities in Kerala and

that the recent changes in Telangana's AICC leadership were part of an internal reorganization. Meenakshi Natarajan was appointed to take over the role in Telangana, ensuring full-time leadership in both states. Goud emphasized that the leadership change was not due to any shortcomings on Munshi's part but was a strategic decision by the AICC.

He highlighted her strong political background, mentioning that she is the wife of veteran Congress leader Priyaranjan Das Munshi and has always worked with integrity and dedication. He reaffirmed the party's support for her and urged the media to avoid spreading baseless claims.

Eatala Calls for National Recognition of Sant Sewalal Jayanti

TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 16 :Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender reaffirmed the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) commitment to preserving and promoting the culture and history of the Lambadi community. He attended the 286th birth anniversary celebrations of Sant Sewalal Maharaj at Raja Bollaram Thanda in Medchal Malkajgiri district as the chief guest and paid tributes to the revered leader.

Addressing the gathering, Eatala praised Sant Sewalal Maharaj, who was born in united Andhra Pradesh and is now an inspiration for the 12-crore-strong Banjara community across India. He acknowledged the challenges still faced by the Lambadi community, including a lack of

shelter and employment opportunities. He highlighted their significant role in the freedom struggle and their unwavering dedication to land, hard work, and tradition.

Eatala credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking several steps to uplift marginalized communities, including the establishment of an inspiration center in Maharashtra and the appointment of an Adivasi tribal woman as the President of India. He assured the Lambadi community of his continued support and pledged to work towards their welfare. He also mentioned his recent request to the Union Culture Minister to officially recognize and celebrate Sant Sewalal Maharaj Jayanti nationwide.



Cyber Attack on Megha Company

Fraudsters Steal ₹5.47 Crore via Fake Email



According to the complaint, Megha Company had placed an order for equipment from a Netherlands-based firm. The payments were made online, and the company received confirmation emails after each transaction. However, cybercriminals created a deceptive email address that closely resembled the supplier's official email, altering just one letter.

₹5.47 crore in two installments.

The scam came to light when the actual supplier later sent another email stating that they had not yet received the payment. Realizing they had been deceived, Megha Company immediately lodged a complaint with the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau.

Authorities have launched an investigation into the incident and are tracking the fraudulent transactions. The Cyber Security Bureau has urged businesses to verify financial transactions thoroughly, especially when dealing with large amounts and email-based communications.

The fraudsters then sent an email claiming that the original payment account was not functional and requested that the amount be transferred to a different account. Believing the email to be genuine, Megha Company transferred

communications. The company's account manager, Srihari, has filed a complaint with the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau, which is now investigating the case.

TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Megha Company has fallen victim to a cyber fraud amounting to ₹5.47 crore after cybercriminals manipulated email com-

Bandi Sanjay Responds to Raja Singh's Resignation Threat



TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar addressed BJP MLA T Raja Singh's resignation threat, stating that the party cannot amend its rules for an individual.

Raja Singh had expressed dissatisfaction after his nominee was overlooked for the Golconda BJP unit president post, which falls under his constituency. Instead, the position reportedly went to someone linked to AIMIM, despite Singh recommending a Backward

Class (BC) or Scheduled Caste (SC) candidate.

Bandi Sanjay clarified that BJP follows strict guidelines for appointments, and even his own recommendations were not always accepted. "In Karimnagar, my choice was not given a post, but I did not protest, as the decisions are made by the party leadership," he said.

He acknowledged Raja Singh as a dedicated BJP leader but advised him to address concerns within the party rather than going public. "It is not good for anyone to take internal issues to the streets," he remarked.

The statement comes amid growing tensions within the Telangana BJP over leadership appointments and internal disagreements.

Karnataka Police Announce ₹5 Lakh Reward for Bidar ATM Heist

TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Karnataka Police have announced a cash reward of ₹5 lakh for anyone providing information leading to the arrest of Aman Kumar and Alok Kumar, the two suspects involved in the Bidar ATM cash van heist and Hyderabad's Afzalgunj shooting.



The accused, residents of Vaishali district in Bihar, are wanted for a daring daylight robbery on January 16. They shot dead 40-year-old ATM guard Giri Venkatesh and critically injured another guard while stealing ₹93 lakh from an ATM cash van outside the State Bank of India (SBI) Main Branch in Bidar. Before firing at the

guards, the robbers threw chili powder to disorient them. Despite attempts by locals to stop them, the duo escaped on motorcycles.

The suspects later traveled to Hyderabad, where they abandoned their bike at Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station and attempted

to book tickets to Raipur at Roshan Travels. The travel agency manager, Jahangir, became suspicious of their nervous behavior and insisted on checking their bags, which contained stolen cash. When questioned, one of the suspects shot Jahangir with a country-made pistol before fleeing with the money.

Karnataka and Hyderabad police are working together to track down the fugitives. Informants can contact DIGP Kalaburagi (+91 9480800030), SP Bidar (+91 9480803401), or DSP Bidar (+91 9480803420). The police have assured that the identities of informants will remain confidential.

Rana & Koratala Launch Arrival Hotels



TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Varma Steel has officially launched Arrival Hotels, a new premium hospitality brand, with the grand inauguration at Madhapur, Opp Durgam Cheruvu, Inorbit Mall Road. The event was graced by acclaimed actor Rana Daggubati, renowned filmmaker Koratala Siva, and A.V.P. Varma, Chairman & MD, along with actors Srinivas Reddy, Shivaji, and Rajitha.

Arrival Hotels aims to redefine luxury with a focus on modern design, sustainability, and personalized service. Catering to business and leisure travelers alike, the hotel features state-of-the-art rooms and suites, smart

technology, and world-class dining experiences. Guests can enjoy gourmet delights at 2gathr Café and Savva, an authentic restaurant celebrating regional flavors.

For events, V Banquets offers an elegant venue with a 200+ guest capacity, ideal for weddings, corporate events, and social gatherings. Speaking at the launch, A.V.P. Varma emphasized the brand's commitment to quality, innovation, and crafting memorable experiences.

With plans for expansion across India and internationally, Arrival Hotels sets a new benchmark in hospitality, combining elegance, comfort, and excellence in service.

TPCC Chief Goud Criticizes BJP Over Caste Census

Pink Book Could Expose More Scams, Warns Mahesh Goud
Modi Became BC by Law, Not by Birth – TPCC's Counter to BJP
Sonia Gandhi's Indianness and BJP's Political Diversions

TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Chief Mahesh Goud has criticized the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue of caste census and BC representation. Speaking at Gandhi Bhavan, he stated that Modi was legally included in the BC category in 1994 but was not a BC by birth.

status have left BJP leaders shocked, Goud claimed. He also pointed out that despite Modi serving as an OBC Prime Minister for ten years, he has done nothing significant for BCs. He urged the BJP to conduct a caste census along with the population census if they are sincere about BC welfare.

Goud also accused the BJP of diverting attention by questioning Rahul Gandhi's caste while failing to acknowledge the sacrifices made by the



Gandhi family. He challenged BJP leaders to conduct a caste census and visit Rahul Gandhi's house if they are truly interested in the matter.

Referring to Union Minister Bandi Sanjay, Goud remarked that despite his hard work, he was sidelined by the BJP

during elections. He also reminded Sanjay that India is a secular country and that he should act responsibly as a Union Minister.

On Kavitha and the alleged Delhi scam, Goud cautioned her against opening the 'Pink Book,' warning that more scams could be exposed.

Telangana HC Suspends Order Removing Waqf Board CEO

TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : The Telangana High Court has suspended the earlier order removing Telangana Waqf Board CEO Md Asadullah, allowing him to continue in his role.



Earlier, Justice Nagesh Bheemapaka had ordered Asadullah's removal, citing his ineligibility as he was not of deputy secretary cadre. The court had also directed Liyakhat Hussain to serve as in-charge CEO.

The Telangana government challenged the decision, arguing that Asadullah, a special grade deputy collector (SGDC), plays a key role in protecting Waqf land from encroachments. It explained that an SGDC, as part of the state civil services, handles executive work, unlike a deputy secretary, whose role is largely ministerial.

A division bench comprising Justice Abhinand Kumar Shavili and Justice Tirumala Devi Eada ruled that a single judge cannot pass removal orders in a contempt case, leading to the suspension of the previous ruling.

Case Filed Against JC Prabhakar Reddy

TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : Former TDP MLA and Tadipatri Municipal Chairman JC Prabhakar Reddy has landed in legal trouble after Cyberabad police registered a case against him based on a complaint by actress and BJP leader Madhavilatha. She alleged that Prabhakar Reddy made obscene comments against her and that his followers had issued threats against her.



The dispute reportedly began during New Year celebrations when JC Prabhakar Reddy organized a women-only event at JC Park in Tadipatri. Madhavilatha criticized the event, questioning women's safety during late-night travel. This reportedly angered Prabhakar Reddy, leading to an inappropriate verbal exchange.

In her complaint, Madhavilatha claimed that Prabhakar Reddy's remarks were intended to humiliate

her and that she had received death threats from his followers. Following public backlash, Prabhakar Reddy issued an apology, stating that he had spoken in anger. However, Madhavilatha remained distressed and shared a video expressing her anguish over the harassment she faced.

She also lodged a complaint with the Film Chamber and the Human Rights Association. Film Chamber Treasurer Siva Balaji assured her complaint was brought to President Manchu Vishnu's attention. Madhavilatha emphasized the need to protect the dignity of film personalities in politics.

Bird Flu Scare: Poultry Manager Arrested



TPN , Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 16 : A poultry farm manager was arrested after dead chickens were found floating in the Akkampally Reservoir, a major water source for Hyderabad, Secunderabad, and 600 villages in Nalgonda. The discovery on February 13 raised fears of bird flu, prompting officials to launch an investigation.

Revenue and irrigation department officials, along with Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB), inspected the site. A drone survey and high-level inquiry were conducted, and nearby poultry farms were examined. The HMWSSB assured that the water remains safe for consumption, undergoing a triple chlorine treatment per IS standards, maintaining 0.5 ppm chlorine levels.

The incident coincides with growing concerns over bird flu in Hyderabad following confirmed cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in neighboring Andhra Pradesh. In response, the Telangana government issued advisories to district collectors on February 11 to raise awareness among poultry farmers and the public.

To prevent contamination, Telangana police set up checkpoints, including one in Suryapet, to inspect poultry vehicles. Officials turned back poultry transport from Andhra Pradesh at Pullur Toll Plaza in Jogulamba Gadwal District. Andhra Pradesh's Animal Husbandry Minister K. Atchannaidu assured that affected poultry farms are under a red zone, with rapid response teams taking immediate control measures.

Kavita Visits Jailed Activist, Blasts Congress Rule



TPN , Correspondent Khammam , Feb 16 : BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavita has strongly condemned the alleged illegal arrests of party activists, accusing the Congress government of targeting leaders who question its failures. On Saturday, she visited

BRS activist Lakkineni Surender at Khammam Jail, where he was reportedly imprisoned on false charges.

Speaking to the media, MLC Kavita alleged that the Congress government is misusing the SC/

ST Atrocities Act to suppress opposition voices. She asserted that despite these tactics, the BRS and its supporters remain steadfast in their mission to expose the government's shortcomings.

She criticized the ruling party for failing to deliver on its promises, claiming that people across all sections of society—farmers, students, and women—are frustrated with its governance. She stated that during the 14 months of Congress rule, no significant progress has been made in the state, and out of fear, the government is resorting to filing cases against those who question its

inefficiencies. Kavita further alleged that Surender was jailed merely for raising concerns about government failures in village assemblies. She warned that no amount of intimidation would cover up the administration's inefficiency and lack of welfare initiatives. She reaffirmed that BRS will continue to hold the Congress accountable until all promises are fulfilled, vowing not to bow down to illegal cases.

The BRS leader urged party workers to stay strong and continue their fight against what she described as the Congress government's oppressive tactics.

Kishan Reddy Urges Teachers to Support BJP in MLC Elections



TPN , Correspondent Nalgonda, Feb 16 : BJP Telangana State President and Union Minister Kishan Reddy participated in the upcoming Teacher MLC elections in Nalgonda. Addressing a teachers' conference, he highlighted the crucial role of the Legislative Council in addressing teachers' and graduates' concerns.

years, stating that both TRS and Congress have ignored their concerns.

He accused the Congress government of failing to fulfill its election promises, including establishing international schools in every mandal, issuing education assurance cards, allocating 15% of the budget for education, and filling vacant teacher posts. He also pointed out that five DA payments for employees remain pending and that 20,000 teachers continue to suffer due to GO 317.

Kishan Reddy emphasized that BJP has always fought for teachers' rights and pledged that if elected, BJP MLCs would raise teachers' voices in the Legislative Council without yielding to political pressure. He urged educated voters to support BJP candidate Sarottam Reddy in the elections to bring real change to Telangana.

Kishan Reddy criticized the TRS (BRS) government for weakening the Legislative Council by co-opting MLCs elected by teachers and graduates. He lamented the lack of discussion on teachers' issues in recent

MP Arvind Slams Revanth Over Modi's Caste Remarks



TPN , Correspondent Nizamabad , Feb 16 : Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind strongly criticized Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, accusing him of making divisive remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's caste. Arvind stated that CM Reddy's comments were aimed at creating rifts among Hindus and hurting the sentiments of Muslims.

In a video statement on Friday, Arvind pointed out that it was the Congress party that was in power

when Modi's caste was included in the Backward Classes (BC) category in Gujarat in 1994. He also noted that the Congress-led government was in power at the national level in 1999, dismissing any allegations against the BJP regarding this issue.

Arvind further criticized the caste-based discussions taking place in the state, calling the ongoing caste census in Telangana "nonsense." He alleged that one crore people have gone missing in government records and accused both the Congress and the BRS of exploiting caste politics for electoral gains.

He asserted that BJP leaders and workers would not fall into this political trap and urged the public to remain united. Arvind emphasized the importance of resisting such divisive strategies and called on people to stand together for the integrity of the nation.

Tension Erupts in Nizamabad Market Yard as Security Officer Attacked

TPN , Correspondent Nizamabad , Feb 16 :

Extreme tension prevailed at the Nizamabad market yard on Saturday after workers attacked Security Officer Srinivas. The incident occurred amid growing frustration over the alleged theft of turmeric brought for weighing at the yard.

Angered by the incident, workers halted the weighing process in protest, demanding action against those responsible for the theft. As the situation escalated, police rushed to the spot to restore order. Srinivas was placed in a police vehicle for safety, but some workers attempted to open the vehicle's door and attack him. However, the police intervened and managed to bring the situation under control. Authorities are currently investigating the matter, and further details are awaited.



No Contamination in Akkampalli Reservoir, Says Collector

TPN , Correspondent Nalgonda, Feb 16 :

District Collector Tripathi has assured the public that the Akkampalli Balancing Reservoir remains uncontaminated despite the incident of dead chickens being dumped nearby. Speaking to the media, he clarified that the chickens were discarded 9 km away in the Link Canal, and no carcasses were found in the reservoir itself.



A multidisciplinary team from the Irrigation, Police, Revenue, Veterinary, and Water Board departments investigated the inci-

dent. Water samples were sent to Lucid and further testing is being conducted in Bhopal. Monitoring will continue for the next 10-15 days with drones deployed to oversee the canal, reservoir, and pumping station.

A poultry farm owner responsible for dumping 45 dead chickens has been arrested, remanded, and charged under the Public Nuisance Act. The Collector emphasized that drinking water un-

dergoes three levels of filtration before supply, ensuring safety. Additionally, swab and viral culture tests on poultry in surrounding villages are underway. Officials, including Devarakonda ASP Mounika, RDO Ramana Reddy, Irrigation DE Nagayya, and Veterinary Surgeon Mahender Reddy, were present during the inspection. The district administration has urged the public not to be misled by misinformation.

Sabitha Reddy Rallies Farmers for Amangal Dharna



TPN , Correspondent Badangpet, Feb 16 :

MLA Sabitha Reddy has urged farmers and BRS supporters to participate in a large-scale Rythu Dharna at Amangal mandal, Rangareddy district, on the 18th at 9 AM. Speaking at a preparatory meeting with BRS leaders in Jillelaguda, she accused the Congress government of betraying farmers by forcibly acquiring their lands for road projects, Triple R, and industrial zones.

She announced that BRS Work-

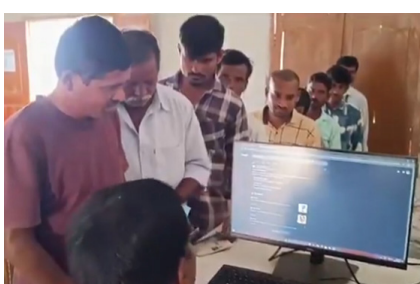
ing President KTR would hoist the pink flag in Thukkuguda before leading a rally to Amangal. Reddy assured farmers that BRS would fight until justice is served. She also criticized the Congress government for failing to resolve any farmer-related issues since coming to power.

The meeting was attended by BRS leaders Arkala Kamesh Reddy, Ramidi Ram Reddy, Arjun, Pawan, Ashok, Raju Nayak, Ravi Nayak, Anil Kumar Yadav, Yadagiri, Sidhala Lavanya Beerappa, and Janga Reddy.

Farmers Protest at Rythu Vedika Over Unpaid Farmer Assurance

TPN , Correspondent Mahabubabad, Feb 16 :

Farmers staged a protest at the Narsimhulapet Rythu Vedika, expressing anger over delays in receiving farmer assurance benefits. Kadudula Uppalaiah, a farmer from Kommulavancha village in



Narsimhulapet mandal, owns 1.28 acres of land but has not received a single rupee under the scheme. Frustrated by the lack of response from officials, Uppalaiah, along with fellow farmers, staged a dharna, demanding immediate action. The protesting farmers accused agricultural officials of negligence, stating that their concerns were being dismissed without any clear answers. They urged the government to intervene and ensure that eligible farmers receive their rightful financial support without further delays.

BRS Leader Names Grandson After KCR in Tribute to Former CM



TPN , Correspondent Adilabad, Feb 16 :

In a heartfelt gesture, a BRS leader from Adilabad has named

his grandson after former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR). Mukhra (K) village sarpanch Gadge

Meenakshi Subhash recently welcomed a grandson and announced that the child would be named after KCR as a mark of gratitude for his contributions to the village.

Subhash stated that KCR's efforts in the development of Mukhra (K) village could never be repaid, and this was his way of honoring the former CM. The decision has been met with enthusiasm from local BRS leaders and party supporters, who see it as a testament to KCR's influence and legacy in the region.

It is common for admirers to name their children after favorite actors or politicians, and this latest instance reflects the deep respect KCR commands among his supporters.

Telangana Government to Legalize Caste Survey

- Proposes 42% Reservation for BCs



TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 16 :

Telangana Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnambhakaram reaffirmed the state government's commitment to conducting a caste survey, fulfilling Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's election promise made during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. The survey, carried out with one lakh government employees covering one crore 12 lakh households, aims to ensure equitable reservations.

Addressing the media, Prabhakar acknowledged that while the survey was not 100% complete, only 3.1% (around 3.54 lakh houses) remained. The government has extended the survey till February 28 to cover the remaining households. He criticized BJP leaders like Kishan Reddy and Laxman for distorting facts and opposing the caste survey.

Prabhakar announced that the Telangana government would introduce a cabinet resolution and a law in the Legislative Assembly to provide 42% reservation for the 56% BC population identified in the survey. He challenged BJP leaders to support the move and take it up with the Prime Minister instead of misleading the public.

Responding to criticism of CM Revanth Reddy's comments on the Prime Minister's BC status, Prabhakar accused BJP of contradicting its own claims. He urged the central government to conduct a nationwide caste survey to assess the socio-economic conditions of SCs, STs, BCs, and minorities.

He reiterated that the Congress government stands for social justice and democratic governance, ensuring that weaker sections get their rightful opportunities in political, educational, and employment sectors.



A Forgotten Crisis? Nagaland's Peace Process Drags On For Years But Sees No Solution

The Naga peace process has been dragging on for decades, with little to show for the significant efforts made by both the Indian government and insurgent groups. Despite multiple agreements, the situation remains unresolved, leaving Nagaland in a state of turmoil. On February 12, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) or NSCN (I-M) clarified that the 2015 Framework Agreement with the Indian government should not be seen as the final peace deal. Instead, it emphasized that the agreement was just a starting point for future negotiations and should not be confused with the Agreed Position signed with the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) in 2017.

The NSCN (I-M) has been in talks with New Delhi since 1997, with the 2015 Framework Agreement initially hailed as a historic step. However, internal disagreements and key demands, such as the call for a separate Naga constitution and flag, have kept the peace process from reaching a resolution. The Indian government has been firm in rejecting these demands, fearing that granting such concessions would encourage separatism, as seen in Jammu and Kashmir.

Recently, 21 opposition parliamentarians raised concerns about the stalled peace process, pointing out the absence of a full-time interlocutor since 2021. They also criticized the lack of



transparency in the negotiations. However, the MPs overlooked the Agreed Position signed by the NNPGs, sidelining a crucial part of the peace process. This omission undermines the role of the NNPGs, who represent a significant portion of the Naga population and have worked alongside the NSCN (I-M) to resolve the issue.

Additionally, the former interlocutor, N Ravi, caused confusion by claiming that the talks had concluded in 2019. If the talks were indeed completed, why is the peace process still

at an impasse? This raises questions about whether the NSCN (I-M) has been stalling the process by refusing to compromise. The demand for a separate constitution and flag remains a major obstacle. The Indian government cannot afford to grant such provisions, as they would set a dangerous precedent for separatism. For peace to prevail, all parties must engage in constructive dialogue and work together to find a lasting solution that addresses the aspirations of all Naga tribes.



What India Needs to Do in the Indian Ocean

The Indian Ocean has become a vital arena for global geopolitics, with the "Indo-Pacific" discourse at the forefront of international discussions. India, with its strategic location in the heart of this region, must prioritize its maritime interests and take proactive measures to ensure peace, security, and economic growth in the Indian Ocean.

India's historical relationship with the Indian Ocean dates back thousands of years. From ancient trade routes to the influence of dynasties like the Pallavas and Cholas, India has long been a seafaring nation. However, post-independence, India focused more on land-based security, neglecting its maritime potential. Over the past few decades, India has begun to realize the immense importance of the Indian Ocean to its economy, security, and global positioning. The Indian Ocean is a critical maritime corridor, with nearly 70% of the world's container traffic passing through it and 80% of India's external trade traversing its waters. Ad-

ditionally, 90% of India's energy imports rely on this region, making it essential for the country's economic stability. Recognizing this, India has strengthened its diplomatic and military engagement with countries in the region, including Oman and Singapore, and has been instrumental in hosting initiatives like the Indian Ocean Conference (IOC).

However, the region faces numerous challenges, including piracy, terrorism, and environmental threats like rising sea levels. External powers, particularly China, have ramped up their influence through infrastructure investments and military presence in strategic locations. China's Belt and Road Initiative and its growing naval presence add complexity to the regional security dynamics. India must respond by enhancing its naval capabilities and asserting its influence in the region.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "SAGAR" (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative launched in 2015 emphasized India's commitment

to regional peace and cooperation. India must now focus on enhancing its blue-water navy, capable of projecting power across the vast Indian Ocean. Strengthening alliances with regional powers, addressing piracy and transnational crimes, and ensuring safe maritime routes are crucial for India's strategy.

India must also take a leadership role in shaping the security architecture of the Indian Ocean to ensure that it remains a region of peace and cooperation, not one dominated by external powers. Through greater diplomatic engagement and military cooperation, India can promote regional stability and economic growth, reinforcing its position as a key player in the Indo-Pacific.

In conclusion, India must prioritize its maritime strategy, leveraging its historical influence, expanding naval power, and building partnerships to ensure a secure, prosperous Indian Ocean. By doing so, India will solidify its role as a global maritime power in the 21st century.



Deals, Dil, And A Terrorist: PM Modi's US Visit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the United States marked a significant advancement in the Indo-US relationship, focusing on defence, artificial intelligence (AI), trade, and counterterrorism. The trip, characterized by the warm personal rapport between Modi and President Trump, underscored the growing strategic convergence between the two nations.

A key takeaway was the agreement to enhance defence cooperation, including discussions on the purchase of F-35 fighter jets. While the procurement process for such sophisticated equipment will take years, this agreement signals a move toward a more advanced defence partnership. The process involves detailed discussions, technology transfers, and logistical planning, highlighting the commitment to strengthening security ties.

AI also featured prominently in the discussions. While India stands to gain from AI collaboration, the partnership appears to be more beneficial to the US, which views AI as a strategic asset. India must ensure that its AI ecosystem remains independent and does not become reliant on foreign interests, especially given that the US seeks to maintain technological supremacy. India's role should be more than just a supplier of resources to global AI engines; it should strive to harness AI for public good.

Trade was another critical issue. Both sides set a target to double bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030. However, the negotiations were influenced by Trump's transactional approach to diplomacy, using tariffs as leverage. In contrast, the Biden administration has focused on defence and technology cooperation, sidestepping contentious trade issues that could disrupt the relationship.

A landmark development during Modi's visit was the approval for the extradition of Tahawwur Rana, a suspect in the 2008 Mumbai attacks. This marked a significant step in counterterrorism cooperation between the two countries. While this is a positive development, a more comprehensive counterterrorism strategy should target financial networks that sustain terrorist organizations. Strengthening intelligence-sharing and financial tracking should be prioritized.

Overall, Modi's visit to the US strengthened Indo-US ties, particularly in defence, AI, and counterterrorism. While challenges remain in the implementation of agreements, the trajectory of the relationship is positive, with Modi's leadership adeptly navigating the evolving diplomatic landscape.



Naxals Are Indian Citizens: Ruthless Force Is Not the Solution

The Naxal issue in India is one of internal rebellion, where the government faces its own citizens, primarily tribals, fighting due to deep-seated grievances. While the government rightly uses force against foreign terrorists, the Naxal issue requires a different, more nuanced approach. The Naxals are not external enemies but citizens who, for various reasons, joined the movement after feeling marginalized and oppressed by the state.

The Naxals' grievances are real. Historical reports, such as one from the Ministry of Rural Development in 2006, highlighted how tribals were deprived of their land, pushed out of forests, and displaced for industrialization. This alienation led to frustration, and many joined the Naxal movement, which over time adopted a Maoist ideology. However, for many, the core issue was not Marxism but a struggle against perceived injustice by the state. This makes the situation complex, as force cannot be the only solution.

While security forces are necessary for tackling violent uprisings, a more constructive and compassionate approach could yield better results. A ceasefire, even for a short period, could encourage the Naxals to come forward and surrender. The government could promise rehabilitation, address individual cases, and ensure justice for those who have grievances. Such an approach would not only prevent further bloodshed but would also offer a chance for reconciliation.

In contrast, the current strategy of relentless force and the ongoing "war on Naxals" has resulted in heavy casualties on both sides. Reports of killings in Chhattisgarh and other Naxal-affected regions only add to the cycle of violence. The government's current rhetoric of eradicating Naxalism by 2026 is concerning because it risks alienating the very people who need to be brought into the fold.

A broader strategy must include political initiatives, land reforms, and socio-economic inclusion for the tribals who have been left behind. The state must stop viewing the Naxals as a simple enemy to be defeated and instead address the root causes of their discontent. A balanced approach, combining firmness with empathy, could lead to long-lasting peace.

The Naxal issue cannot be solved on a strict timeline. Past home ministers, such as P Chidambaram and Rajnath Singh, set deadlines that proved unrealistic. Instead, the government should focus on genuine engagement with the people and recalibrate its approach to foster peace and stability without resorting to endless violence.

PM Modi to Inaugurate New Pamban Bridge in Tamil Nadu on February 28

- India's first vertical lift bridge.
- Boosts connectivity and tourism.

PM MODI TO INAUGURATE NEW PAMBAN BRIDGE



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu on February 28 for the grand inauguration of the new Pamban Bridge. The bridge, which spans 2.1 kilometers, is a vital railway link connecting mainland India to Pamban Island. This new infrastructure project, worth Rs 550 crore, replaces the old Pamban Bridge, which had become unusable due to severe corrosion.

The new bridge, which took six years to complete, is expected to significantly enhance connectivity between the island and the rest of Tamil Nadu. It will play a crucial role in improving transportation and the economic development of the region by facilitating faster and more reliable rail services. The upgraded infrastructure is seen as a major step toward boosting tourism and trade in the area.

The inauguration ceremony is expected to be a significant event, lasting for about three hours, and will be attended

by various dignitaries. The new Pamban Bridge is equipped with modern features designed to ensure safety and durability, and it is anticipated to reduce travel time between Rameswaram and the mainland.

The bridge is also a part of the Indian government's broader initiative to improve transportation infrastructure across the country, especially in regions that have been historically underdeveloped. The project showcases the government's commitment to improving connectivity and promoting regional growth.

Rameswaram, a popular pilgrimage destination, will benefit from the new bridge, which will make it more accessible to tourists and devotees. The old Pamban Bridge, built during British rule in the 19th century, had long been an iconic structure but was rendered obsolete due to corrosion and wear over time. The new bridge, however, promises to serve as a modern marvel, reinforcing the region's position as a key link in India's transportation network.

Akhilesh Yadav Urges Extension of Maha Kumbh Amid Overwhelming Crowds



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav has called on the Uttar Pradesh government to extend the duration of the Maha Kumbh, citing the immense number of devotees still hoping to attend the spiritual gathering. Yadav pointed out that in previous years, the Maha Kumbh and Kumbh Mela lasted for 75 days, while this year's schedule is notably shorter.

"Even now, many people want to go to Maha Kumbh but cannot. In such a situation, the government should extend the time limit of Maha Kumbh," Yadav said.

Reports and visuals on social media have highlighted the heavy congestion on roads and trains, with massive crowds making their way to the Maha Kumbh. Earlier this week, roads leading to the event saw severe traffic jams that stretched for miles. The Prayagraj Sangam railway station had to temporarily shut down due to the overwhelming influx of people.

Yadav also accused the state government of hiding the true number of casualties caused by a stampede at the Maha Kumbh last month, adding to the concerns surrounding the gathering.

The Maha Kumbh, the world's largest spiritual gathering, commenced on January 13 and is scheduled to conclude on February 26, coinciding with Maha Shivaratri. As of Friday evening, state government reports show that over 50 crore people have participated in the holy dip at the Sangam, which is more than the combined population of Russia and the United States.

With large crowds continuing to make their way to the event, Yadav's plea for an extension underscores the challenges faced by both the attendees and the authorities in managing the largest religious congregation in the world.

Kiren Rijju Confirms Statehood Restoration for J&K in Due Course

TPN Correspondent | Srinagar

Union Minister Kiren Rijju stated on Saturday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have made it clear that Jammu and Kashmir will regain its statehood in due course, though he refrained from giving a specific timeline. Rijju, who oversees the parliamentary affairs and minority affairs portfolios, said the central government has always indicated that statehood will be restored and that the powers and functions in the region will be clearly defined.

"The Prime Minister and Home Minister have made clear indications in the past that statehood will be restored to Jammu and Kashmir in due course of time," Rijju told reporters, adding that the specific timeline for the restoration of statehood or the division of powers between the lieutenant governor and the elected chief minister was not for him to comment on at this moment.

Rijju, who represents Arunachal West in the Lok Sabha, was in Kashmir for the Union Budget-related events and emphasized that his visit was focused solely on financial matters. "At this time, Jammu and Kashmir is a Union Territory, with the lieutenant governor serving as the administrative head. However, we have a functioning and



elected government," he added, highlighting the recent election victory.

On the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Rijju assured that the legislation aims to bring transparency to the management of properties for the benefit of Muslims, emphasizing that no one would be able to seize the properties. He also noted that several political leaders, including Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, have supported the bill, as have several Muslim MPs.



Law says everyone innocent until proven guilty: J&K CM Criticizes Dismissals

TPN Correspondent | Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah raised concerns on Saturday over the dismissal of government employees accused of terror links by the Lt Governor, questioning the legal process behind such actions. He highlighted that the law presumes innocence until proven guilty and emphasized that dismissals without clear proof or a fair hearing could undermine this principle.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha invoked Article 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution on Saturday to terminate the services of three government employees after investigations by law enforcement and intelligence agencies allegedly linked them to terror activities. This follows a series of similar dismissals over the past few years, bringing the total number of government employees dismissed on similar grounds to over 70.

While reacting to the latest dismissals, Abdullah raised concerns about

the lack of a fair trial, pointing out that every accused individual is entitled to a hearing and an opportunity to prove their innocence. "If there is proof against them and they are given an opportunity to clear the allegations but fail, then such steps could be justified," Abdullah said. He also emphasized that the law presumes all accused are innocent until proven guilty.

Furthermore, Abdullah responded to questions regarding Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's remarks about the government choosing Amritsar as the landing site for Indian deportees from the United States. Abdullah stated that Mann, as the CM of Punjab, had a vested interest in the issue and would naturally express his concerns regarding such decisions.

The ongoing issue of dismissals based on terror links has sparked significant debate, with critics calling for more transparency and fairness in the process, particularly regarding the protection of employees' rights.



Fadnavis and Shinde Hold Separate Kumbh Mela Review Meetings in Nashik

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

Two days after skipping a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis regarding the Kumbh Mela in 2027, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited Nashik on Friday to hold a separate review meeting for the event. His actions have sparked rumors about a potential rift within the ruling alliance, raising questions about the coordination between the Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Shinde, however, quickly addressed the speculations, asserting that his decision to hold a separate review meeting was due to his visit to Nashik for a party rally. He emphasized that there was no conflict or tension between the alliance partners and sought to quell the rumors.

During his visit, Shinde also commented on the issue of the guardian minister's post for Nashik and Raigad districts, revealing that the matter would be resolved soon.

Punjab CM Criticizes Centre's Deportation Flights to Amritsar, Calls It a Conspiracy

TPN Correspondent | Punjab

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann has vehemently opposed the Centre's decision to land deportation flights carrying Indians back from the US at Amritsar airport, accusing the BJP-led Union government of orchestrating a conspiracy to tarnish Punjab's image.

Addressing the media, Mann strongly criticized the government's actions, claiming that despite Punjab's vital contributions to the country as the "food bowl" and "sword arm," the Cen-

tre is attempting to defame the state. He questioned the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for choosing Amritsar airport as the destination for deportation flights, given that several other airports across the country were available.

"I have already raised this issue with the MEA and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), but I haven't received a satisfactory response," Mann said. He highlighted that a deportation flight had landed a few days ago and expressed concerns over the arrival of two more flights carrying deported



individuals to Amritsar without clear justification.

Mann further accused the BJP of targeting Punjabis unfairly, stating, "The Prime Minister and his party dislike Punjabis, despite the fact that more than 90% of those martyred, jailed, or exiled during India's freedom struggle were from Punjab." He went on to suggest that the Centre's actions are part of a broader smear campaign against the people of Punjab, noting that the state has consistently been at the forefront of the nation's struggles and contributions.

PM Modi's Meeting with Trump Called a "Masterclass" by US Media

- US media calls Modi-Trump meeting a "masterclass."
- Modi secures key trade and defense deals.
- CNN praises Modi's negotiation skills.

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the United States has drawn widespread praise from the American media, especially for the way he handled his meeting with US President Donald Trump. Journalists have described Modi's approach as a "masterclass" in diplomacy, setting an example for world leaders on how to navigate high-stakes negotiations.

PM Modi, one of the first world leaders to engage with Trump in a bilateral meeting, arrived in Washington on the



same day that Trump announced reciprocal tariffs on US allies and competitors, a move that had already caused tensions. Despite the timing, Modi was able to turn what could have been a difficult situation into an opportunity for strengthening bilateral ties. President Trump, who had pre-

viously criticized India for its tariffs, took a different tone during the meeting, calling Modi a "great leader" and expressing excitement about future trade deals between India and the United States. "We're going to make some wonderful trade deals for India and the US," Trump said. By the end of

their discussions, the two countries secured key agreements covering a wide range of areas, including trade, energy, defense, security, manufacturing, and technology. This outcome, despite the tariff tensions, was seen as a diplomatic win for Modi and a demonstration of effective leadership.

US and Ukraine Signal Urgency for Peace Deal Amid Ongoing War with Russia



TPN Correspondent | Ukraine

At the Munich Security Conference on February 14, US Vice President JD Vance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky emphasized the pressing need for a peace deal with Russia, as the war between Ukraine and Russia approaches its third year.

During a meeting at the conference, Vance reaffirmed Washington's commitment to securing a "lasting peace," stressing that the goal was to prevent future conflict in Eastern Europe. "We want to achieve a durable, lasting peace, not the kind of peace that's going to have Eastern Europe in conflict just a couple of years down the road," Vance stated as he wrapped up discussions with Zelensky.

Vance also indicated that more talks would follow in the coming weeks and months, focused on how peace could be reached. This comes as US President Donald Trump made headlines with his own announcement of plans for a truce with Russian President Vladimir Putin. While Trump's stance added uncertainty, Zelensky remained committed to seeking peace, expressing optimism that their meeting was "our first meeting, not last." Zelensky also emphasized the urgency of peace talks, stating, "We are ready to move as quickly as possible towards a real and guaranteed peace," and mentioned that a US envoy would visit Kyiv soon.

In an interview, Zelensky also underscored Ukraine's dependence on US support, stating, "We will have low, low chance to survive without support of the United States." Despite concerns about Trump's recent moves, Zelensky reassured that Trump had shared his personal number with him during past conversations.



Protests In New York As 'Transgender', 'Queer' Scrubbed From Rights Website

TPN Correspondent | New York

The National Park Service (NPS) has removed references to transgender and queer individuals from its website dedicated to the Stonewall National Monument, a key site in the LGBTQ rights movement. The monument, located at the historic Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, commemorates the 1969 Stonewall riots, which were pivotal in the fight for LGBTQ rights.

The website, which previously included the acronym "LGBTQ" (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer), now only uses "LGB," erasing mentions of transgender and non-binary individuals who do not identify strictly as male or female. This change has sparked protests in New York City, with hundreds of activists gathering to express their outrage. Slogans like "Silence = Death" and "There's no Stonewall without the T" were displayed during the demonstration, calling for the recognition of transgender people's vital contributions to the movement.

The controversy comes amid broader political shifts, as President Donald Trump has advocated for a return to a binary definition of gender. This stance has been reflected in various executive orders, such as one that restricts gender recognition to male and female, excluding non-binary and transgender individuals.



Donald Trump Fires 'Disease Detectives' As Bird Flu Fears Rise

TPN Correspondent | Washington

In a significant move that has raised concerns within the public health community, the Trump administration dismissed nearly half of the elite Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) program officers, widely known as "disease detectives." The decision, which affects about 30 officers from two graduating classes, comes at a time when fears of a potential bird flu pandemic are growing, as well as growing concerns over future health crises.

The cuts, as part of the broader downsizing efforts by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, are particularly controversial because the affected individuals had been integral to the CDC's ability to respond to outbreaks. The EIS program, established in 1951, has been a critical part of the CDC's efforts in investigating and containing health threats such as Ebola and Covid-19. Former officers, who have helped eliminate smallpox globally, have expressed deep concern over the cuts.

"I'm so angry," said a senior epidemiologist from the CDC, who supervises several of the dismissed employees. "We're on the verge of potentially another pandemic and we're firing the people who have probably more expertise than anyone else in the country collectively." The decision affects the class of 2024 and leaves the class of 2023 in uncertain status, though some officers remain protected due to their hiring through different mechanisms under the US Public Health Service.

With approximately 1,300 CDC employees dismissed in total, the EIS program's elimination is seen as a direct threat to national health security. Experts like infectious disease physician Amesh Adalja have voiced strong opposition to this move, emphasizing the program's importance to the nation's health infrastructure.



Yunus and Musk in talks for Starlink satellite service in Bangladesh

TPN Correspondent | Bangladesh

Bangladesh's Chief Adviser, Professor Muhammad Yunus, revealed on Friday that he has held discussions with Tesla CEO Elon Musk about the possibility of launching Starlink satellite internet services in Bangladesh.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Yunus shared details of his meeting with Musk, stating, "Had great meeting with Mr @elonmusk. We agreed to work together. Hoping to launch Starlink in Bangladesh soon together with him."

The conversation took place following a video call on Thursday, where Yunus and Musk explored potential collaborations, specifically to introduce Starlink, a satellite internet service developed by Musk's company SpaceX. The service, which aims to provide high-speed internet access in underserved areas, could significantly improve connectivity in Bangladesh, where internet access remains a challenge in rural and remote areas.

Yunus also extended an invitation to Musk to visit Bangladesh for the potential launch of the service. Musk responded positively to the invitation, underscoring the importance of the initiative for Bangladesh's development.

The collaboration is expected to play a pivotal role in enhancing internet accessibility across Bangladesh, offering a solution to the country's digital infrastructure challenges. If successful, the Starlink service would help bridge the connectivity gap, providing high-speed internet to more people and businesses, contributing to the country's growth.

Hamas Releases 3 Israeli Hostages In Exchange For 369 Palestinian Prisoners

TPN Correspondent | Hamas

On Saturday, Hamas released three Israeli hostages—Israeli-Argentine Yair Horn, Israeli-American Sagui Dekel-Chen, and Israeli-Russian Sasha Troufanov—following successful mediation efforts by Egyptian and Qatari officials. The hostages had been seized by Hamas militants during an attack on October 7, 2023. The release, part of a broader prisoner swap agreement, saw 369 Palestinian prisoners freed in exchange for the Israeli captives. The hostages were handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Gaza's southern city of Khan Yunis before being transported to

Israeli forces. The Israeli military confirmed that the freed hostages have returned to Israel and are reportedly in good health. The hostages were seen holding gift bags and certificates marking the end of their captivity.

This release is part of ongoing efforts to maintain a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. However, tensions remain high in the region. The Israeli military has been accused of obstructing aid shipments to Gaza, worsening the already dire humanitarian crisis. Hamas has warned that it may suspend further hostage releases if Israel does not meet its aid obligations.



India's Merchandise Exports Projected to Reach \$446.5 Billion in FY25



India's total merchandise exports for the financial year 2024-25 are expected to reach \$446.5 billion, marking a 2.2% increase from the previous fiscal year, according to the Export-Import Bank of India. In the fourth quarter of FY25, goods exports are forecasted to hit \$124.8 billion, reflecting a 3.64% year-on-year growth. The positive growth trend is anticipated to continue into the first quarter of FY26, although challenges such as trade policy uncertainty and geopolitical tensions remain risks to the outlook.

The bank attributes the projected growth to several favorable factors. A strong agricultural harvest, recovery in manufacturing activity, and improving demand prospects from trading partners are expected to support the growth in India's exports. The government and industry stakeholders are optimistic that these factors will contribute to a resilient export performance despite the challenges posed by global economic uncertainties.

Non-oil exports are projected to reach \$382 billion for FY25, contributing significantly to the overall

export growth. Meanwhile, non-oil and non-gems and jewellery exports are expected to total \$350 billion, further highlighting the diversification of India's export base. The outlook reflects continued resilience in sectors like agriculture, textiles, and engineering goods, which have shown robust performance in recent quarters.

However, the Export-Import Bank of India also cautioned that factors such as geopolitical tensions, global trade disruptions, and policy shifts in major economies could impact export growth in the upcoming year. Despite these risks, the overall export trajectory remains positive, supported by strong fundamentals in key sectors.

As India continues to expand its presence in global markets, the focus on diversification and strengthening trade relations with partners will be crucial in sustaining export growth and mitigating external risks. The government and industry leaders are expected to continue efforts to boost competitiveness and navigate challenges in the global trade landscape.



India cuts customs duty on bourbon whiskey to 50%

India has reduced the import duty on bourbon whiskey to 50% in a move seen as a step toward strengthening trade relations with the United States. The decision, which was officially notified on February 13, comes just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-level talks with US President Donald Trump.

This reduction in customs duty on bourbon whiskey is part of India's broader efforts to negotiate a significant trade deal with the US. The move is expected to benefit American distillers, particularly those producing bourbon whiskey, a product that has seen growing demand in India. In the 2023-24 financial year, India imported bourbon whiskey worth \$2.5 million, indicating a rising consumer preference for the popular American spirit.

The duty cut is seen as a gesture of goodwill in anticipation of ongoing trade discussions aimed at resolving trade imbalances and addressing various trade barriers between the two nations. India's decision to lower the tax

on imported bourbon aligns with its broader trade agenda to boost economic ties with the US, which is one of India's largest trading partners.

The move also comes at a time when India and the US are working towards improving their trade relationship, with both sides keen on addressing concerns related to tariffs, market access, and intellectual property rights. As both nations continue to explore opportunities for deeper economic cooperation, this reduction in import duty signals India's willingness to engage in meaningful trade discussions.

Experts believe that the duty reduction on bourbon whiskey will not only benefit American exporters but also provide Indian consumers with greater access to premium international products. The decision is expected to contribute to the growing demand for global beverages in India, a market that is increasingly becoming an important destination for foreign goods.

India's Forex Reserves Grow for Third Consecutive Week, Adding \$7.65 Billion



India's foreign exchange reserves have increased for the third consecutive week, following a period of nearly four months of decline. As of the week ending February 7, the reserves rose by \$7.65 billion, reaching a total of \$638.261 billion, according to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This marks a significant rebound after a prolonged downward trend that saw reserves drop in 15 of the previous 16 weeks, hitting an 11-month low.

The decline in India's forex reserves began after they peaked at an all-time high of \$704.89 billion in September. As of now, reserves are approximately 10% lower than their peak. The decrease in reserves is widely attributed to the RBI's interventions aimed at curbing a sharp depreciation of the Indian Rupee. The Rupee is currently near its historic low against the US dollar, prompting the central bank to take action to stabilize the currency.

The latest RBI data reveals that India's foreign currency assets (FCA), which make up the largest portion of the country's forex reserves, stand at \$544.106 billion. Additionally, gold reserves are valued at \$72.208 billion.

India's forex reserves are considered sufficient to cover approximately 11 months of projected imports. In 2023, India's foreign exchange reserves increased by around \$58 billion, a contrast to the \$71 billion decline in 2022. In 2024, reserves have grown by just over \$20 billion.

Foreign exchange reserves are crucial for a nation's economic stability, as they provide a buffer against external shocks, such as currency volatility or global market fluctuations. The RBI frequently manages liquidity by buying or selling foreign currencies, including dollars, to prevent excessive fluctuations in the exchange rate. The strategic purchase of dollars strengthens the Rupee, while selling dollars helps mitigate depreciation pressures.

Gold and Silver Prices Soar Amid Heavy Buying, Silver Hits Rs 1 Lakh Mark

Gold prices surged to a new all-time high of Rs 89,400 per 10 grams on Friday, witnessing a sharp increase of Rs 1,300, driven by heavy buying from jewellers and retailers. This rise follows a closing price of Rs 88,100 per 10 grams the previous day, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Gold of 99.5% purity also saw a similar climb, increasing by Rs 1,300 to hit Rs 89,000 per 10 grams, compared to its previous close of Rs 87,700 per 10 grams. The relentless demand from the retail sector, particularly due to festival-related purchases and a favorable sentiment in the global market, has contributed to this steep price hike.

In addition to gold, silver prices also witnessed a significant rally, rising by Rs 2,000 to touch Rs 1 lakh per kilogram. The metal had closed at Rs 98,000 per kilogram on Thursday. This sharp rise marks silver's highest price in four months, and it comes as



a result of a combination of factors including investor interest and heightened buying activity in the retail market.

Futures trading on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) also showed an upward trend for gold. Gold contracts for April delivery rose by Rs 184, bringing the price to Rs 85,993 per 10 grams, reflecting market optimism and expectations of continued demand. Experts believe that the upward momentum in gold and silver prices could persist due to factors such as geopolitical tensions, inflation fears, and a weaker dollar, all of which tend to drive investor interest toward safe-haven assets like precious metals.

As demand for both gold and silver remains high, particularly in the jewellery sector, consumers and investors are keeping a close watch on price fluctuations in the coming weeks.

FM Sitharaman Calls for SOP to Handle International Arbitration Cases

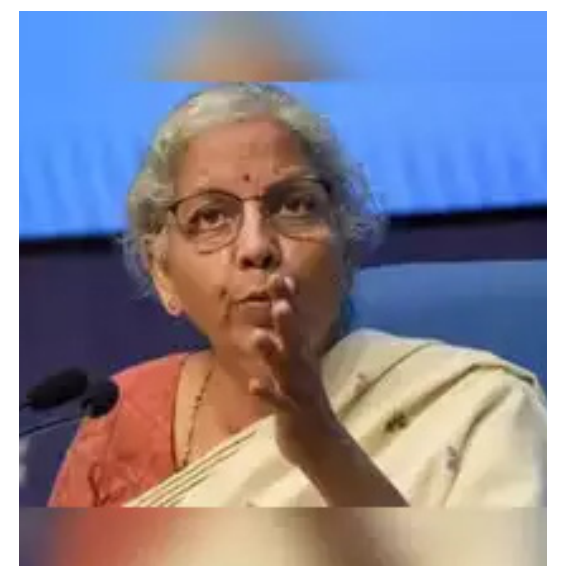
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday emphasized the need for a structured approach to handle international arbitration cases arising under bilateral investment treaties (BITs). She highlighted the absence of a formal standard operating procedure (SOP) in India for dealing with such cases and stressed the importance of establishing one at an early stage to effectively manage the growing number of disputes.

Sitharaman, addressing a gathering, pointed out that the increasing number of international arbitration cases related to BITs requires a more organized and timely response. At present, India lacks a well-defined official mechanism to handle these cases, which could lead to delays and inefficiencies in managing disputes between investors and the state. The need for an SOP has become more urgent as India continues to engage in BITs with multiple countries, facilitating foreign investment

but also increasing the possibility of legal disputes.

She suggested that having a well-organized SOP would help streamline the process of addressing arbitration cases, ensuring transparency and consistency in the handling of such matters. It would also contribute to building investor confidence in India's legal and regulatory framework, which is crucial for sustaining foreign investment and fostering economic growth. Sitharaman's call for a structured mechanism comes amid growing concern about the rise in disputes related to investment protection agreements. India has been involved in several international arbitration cases in recent years, and the lack of a clear process to handle such disputes has raised concerns among legal experts and foreign investors.

By implementing a standard procedure, the government could improve its responsiveness to international arbitration



claims, reduce legal risks, and provide more clarity to investors. Sitharaman's statement underscores the government's commitment to improving the investment climate in India by ensuring fair and efficient dispute resolution mechanisms.

Swiggy Breaks Valentine's Day Sales Records With 581 Chocolate Orders Per Minute

This Valentine's Day, Swiggy Instamart experienced a remarkable surge in orders as people flocked to the platform to celebrate love, despite rising costs. The platform recorded impressive sales, with chocolates and roses being the top choices for customers looking to express their affection.

Swiggy's co-founder Phani Kishan shared data revealing that during peak hours, the platform saw a staggering 581 orders of chocolates and 324 orders of roses per minute. He humorously compared the rush to a "bull run" in the stock market, emphasizing the overwhelming demand. This spike in orders mirrored the record-breaking sales witnessed by Swiggy Instamart during New Year's Eve, highlighting a consistent trend of high demand during significant celebrations.

Kishan further detailed the day's sales, sharing that in just 24 orders, 174 chocolates were delivered, amounting to Rs 29,844 in total. By 10:53 AM



on Valentine's Day, Swiggy Instamart had already delivered twice as many chocolates as it did on the same day last year. The platform also reported a five-fold increase in orders compared to a typical Friday. Sharing the data on X, Kishan wrote, "Someone in Delhi is taking 'Tohfa sabke liye' very, very seriously. Love (and chocolates) are in the air." The surge in orders was particularly noticeable in cities like Ludhiana, Rajkot, and Kanpur, which saw higher-than-usual demand, while Bhubaneswar and Mangaluru were among the busiest.

In addition to chocolates and roses, chips, soft drinks, and grapes were in high demand. In some locations, grapes ran out of stock due to the overwhelming orders. Interestingly, cities like Chennai, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad also experienced heightened demand for items such as ice, reflecting a celebratory spirit across the country.

Valentine's Day proved to be a record-breaking day for Swiggy Instamart, with customers indulging in sweet surprises to make the occasion even more special.

NASA Shares Stunning Aerial View of Mount Everest from Space



Astronauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS) have captured a breathtaking image of Mount Everest, providing a unique aerial view of the world's highest peak and its surrounding glaciers. Unlike the traditional ground-level perspective, this photo showcases the iconic mountain from orbit, blending seamlessly with the landscape around it.

NASA posted the image on its official website, offering a rare perspective of Everest, which rises to an elevation of 29,028 feet (8,848 meters). The view is strikingly different from what one might expect from the ground, where the mountain's sheer size dominates the horizon. From space, however, the

peak appears as part of a larger landscape, nestled near a V-shaped valley with multiple glaciers surrounding it. The photo, taken during the STS-80 mission on November 30, 1996, aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia, provides a fascinating aerial look at Everest and its glaciers. NASA's caption reads, "This view from the space shuttle Columbia shows Mount Everest, along with many glaciers. Mount Everest is to the left of the V-shaped valley." The image was part of the shuttle's final flight of the year, which also involved the deployment and retrieval of two research spacecraft.

Astronauts on the ISS regularly capture stunning images

of Earth, documenting some of the planet's most recognizable landmarks, including the Great Wall of China and the Pyramids of Egypt. These photographs not only offer a new perspective but also serve as invaluable tools for scientists to analyze natural landscapes from a fresh angle.

NASA continues to share these awe-inspiring views, showcasing the beauty of Earth from space. In addition, the agency is closely monitoring asteroid 2025 CR, which will pass Earth safely at a distance of 3.09 million miles. The asteroid, measuring 93 feet across, is being tracked by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Zepto Delivering Skoda Kylaq In 10 Minutes? Here's The Truth

A recent claim circulating on social media suggested that Zepto, the quick-commerce platform, had partnered with Skoda India to deliver cars to customers within 10 minutes. The post, shared by a user on X (formerly Twitter), read: "Big news! Skoda and Zepto are partnering to deliver cars in just 10 minutes." However, PTI Fact Check has debunked the claim, finding it to be false.

Zepto clarified that the campaign was not about delivering full-scale vehicles but was focused on generating interest in Skoda Kushaq test drives. The campaign, which launched in early February, was designed to create curiosity around Skoda's latest offerings, particularly the Kushaq, and was not related to any 10-minute car delivery service.

To investigate the claim, the PTI Fact Check Desk traced the viral image using Google Lens and found that several social media users had shared the same post, which led to confusion. A closer look at Zepto's official Instagram account revealed a post from February 4, which included a teaser about a collaboration with Skoda India.



The caption stated, "Humare pass mixer hai, phone hai, tablet hai, aur abb...Coming soon on 8th Feb!" This post was shared by both Zepto and Skoda India, teasing an upcoming announcement but not about car deliveries. Zepto's partnership with Skoda was aimed at promoting the test-driving experience, not facilitating quick car deliveries.

The post created curiosity, leading to a misunderstanding about the nature of the campaign.

Thus, the viral claim of Zepto offering 10-minute car deliveries is not true. Instead, the focus was on a promotional campaign designed to generate buzz around Skoda's test drives, not vehicle deliveries.

Is Gurugram Vendor Using Body Scrub Powder for Coffee? Viral Video Sparks Debate

A viral video showing a Gurugram street vendor seemingly using body scrub powder to make coffee has left social media users divided. The video, shared by content creator Himanshu Jatana, shows the vendor at a roadside juice stall, which also sells cold coffee. During his visit, Jatana noticed a jar labeled as body scrub but containing what appeared to be coffee powder.

The video has gained nearly 1.5 million views, with many users sharing their opinions in the comments. While some believed the vendor was merely using the body scrub container as a storage jar for coffee powder, others humorously joked about consuming body scrub. One user quipped, "Coffee is cheaper than that body scrub," while another added, "It's an inner gut scrub. Healthy and healing." However, some users attempted to explain the situation more logically, suggesting that the vendor was simply reusing the body scrub container, which likely held coffee powder. "The scrub from that brand is more expensive



than the coffee itself," one user explained, asserting that the vendor wouldn't use it for coffee due to the high cost and that the scrub likely only contained waste coffee. Despite the explanations, the incident has raised questions about hygiene and safety, with some commenters expressing concern over the potential risks of using a body scrub container for food items. "This

probably has silicon beads and harmful effects," one person cautioned.

The video has stirred both humor and skepticism, with viewers debating whether the vendor's actions were harmless or concerning. As the debate continues, the clip has sparked a larger conversation about food safety, hygiene, and the creative ways vendors store ingredients.

AI-Powered Virtual Boyfriends Make Entrepreneur Yao Runhao a Billionaire in China

In China, a dating simulation game called *Love and Deepspace* has taken the digital world by storm, revolutionizing the concept of romantic relationships. The game, which features AI-powered virtual boyfriends, has grown immensely popular, allowing users to interact with their ideal partners without the frustrations typically associated with real-life relationships.

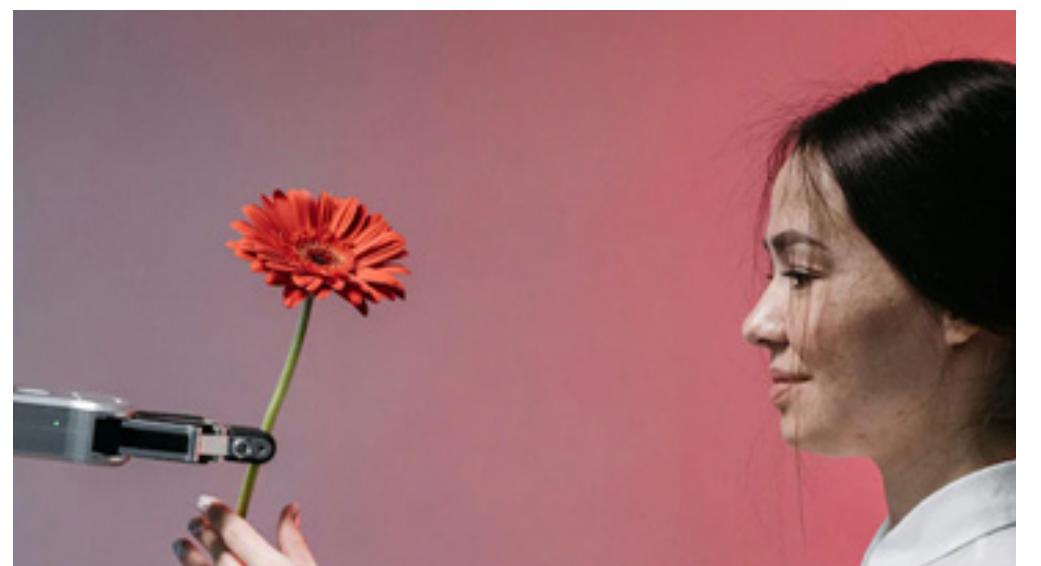
The game's success has turned its creator, Yao Runhao, into a billionaire. *Love and Deepspace*, launched in January 2024 by Paper Games, allows players to engage with AI-driven male characters who are designed to

be attentive, responsive, and supportive, providing the perfect solution to common relationship woes. Users, such as 32-year-old Alicia Wang, a Shanghai-based editor, have fallen for the game's virtual characters like Zayne, a 27-year-old surgeon, who always answers texts promptly, listens attentively, and maintains a calm demeanor. The catch? Zayne is entirely fictional, residing only in the digital realm.

The game's appeal lies in its ability to provide an idealized version of companionship, one that removes common relationship challenges such as delayed replies, missed calls, or

indifference. According to reports, there are now over six million active monthly players, with the game available in multiple languages, including Chinese, English, Japanese, and Korean.

Yao Runhao, the mastermind behind this innovation, has seen his net worth soar to an estimated \$1.3 billion, primarily due to his majority stake in Paper Games. The success of *Love and Deepspace* highlights the growing demand for virtual relationships, driven by the convenience and perfection these AI boyfriends provide, without the complications of real-life human connections.



Gulveer Singh Breaks National 3000m Indoor Record, Aims for Worlds Qualification



Indian distance runner Gulveer Singh started 2025 with a bang, breaking the national 3000m indoor record at the 2025 BU David Hemery Valentine Invitational in Boston. The 26-year-old, who won bronze in the 10,000m at the Hangzhou Asian Games, clocked 7:38.26 seconds, surpassing Surender Singh's 2008 record of 7:49.47. Gulveer's impressive performance has boosted his confidence, and he is now targeting the automatic qualification mark of 27:00.00 in the men's 10,000m for the 2025 World Athletics Championships in Japan. He has also set national records in both the 5000m and 10,000m outdoor events. Gulveer is currently training in Colorado Springs under coach Scott Simmons as he prepares for future challenges.

SWOT Analysis: Australia and South Africa Favoured to Reach Semis in Group B



Australia and South Africa are the favourites to progress to the Champions Trophy semifinals from Group B, although they will face stiff competition from England and Afghanistan. Australia boasts a strong batting line-up with stars like Steve Smith and Glenn Maxwell, but will miss key pacers like Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc. England's powerful batting squad, led by Jos Buttler

and Joe Root, faces challenges against spin. South Africa, with a balanced attack and a strong top order, aims to overcome past failures and add an ICC trophy to their collection. Afghanistan's experienced spinners and knowledge of subcontinent conditions could cause upsets, despite their lack of recent ODI match practice.

Gukesh Finishes Last at Freestyle Chess Grand Slam, Loses to Firouzja



World champion D Gukesh ended his campaign at the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam in disappointing fashion, finishing last after a loss to Iranian-French grandmaster Alireza Firouzja in the seventh-place playoff match. Despite a drawn battle on

the first day, Gukesh lost in just 30 moves after a mid-game mistake cost him his queen, allowing Firouzja to secure victory. Gukesh concluded the tournament in Weissenhaus without a single win. Vincent Keymer emerged as the surprise winner, defeat-

ing Fabiano Caruana. Magnus Carlsen took third place, while Hikaru Nakamura finished fifth. The event's success signals growing interest in Chess 960 and Freestyle Chess, despite FIDE's reluctance to endorse these formats.

Gujarat Stallions Defeat Hyderabad Falcons 84-73 in InBL Pro U25



The Gujarat Stallions delivered an impressive performance to defeat the Hyderabad Falcons

84-73 at the Thyagraj Indoor Stadium in the InBL Pro U25. From the outset, the Stallions asserted dominance, allowing the Falcons to lead for less than a minute. Trendon Hankerson led the charge with 21 points, while Jock Perry, named MVP of the game, posted a double-double with 17 points and 14 rebounds.

The Stallions established a 30-15 lead in the first quarter, with Perry's buzzer-beating three-pointer setting the tone. The Falcons responded in the second quarter, cutting the deficit to five, but Gujarat's offence led by Hankerson and Perry remained strong. In the third quarter, Perry's timely shots and Nate Roberts' alley-oop helped keep the Falcons at bay. Despite a late surge from Hyderabad, Gujarat held their ground with strong defence and rebounding, sealing the victory with crucial contributions from Hankerson and Roberts.

Punjab FC Concede Late Goal, Lose 1-2 to Chennaiyin FC in ISL



Punjab FC suffered a 1-2 defeat against Chennaiyin FC after conceding a late goal in an In-

dian Super League match at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. The match saw an early penalty for

Chennaiyin, with Wilmar Jordan Gil converting in the 25th minute. Punjab responded in the second half with Luka Majcen scoring the equalizer in the 48th minute. However, despite creating multiple chances, including three set up by substitute Muhammad Suhail, Punjab failed to capitalize. Chennaiyin struck in the 84th minute through Daniel Chima Chukwu, with a precise assist from Lukas Brambilla. Despite late pressure from Punjab, including two crucial saves by Chennaiyin goalkeeper Mohammad Nawaz and a goal-line clearance, the visitors held on for the win. Punjab remains ninth on the table with 24 points from 20 matches, while Chennaiyin sits one place below with the same points from 21 matches.

India Triumph 3-2 Over England in FIH Women's Pro League Opener

The Indian women's hockey team kicked off their FIH Women's Pro League campaign with a thrilling 3-2 victory over England at Kalinga Stadium on Saturday. India took an early lead in the 6th minute through Vaishnavi Vitthal Phallke's deflection from a penalty corner. England equalized in the 12th minute when Darcy Bourne capitalized on a rebound. India regained the lead in the 25th minute, with Deepika converting a penalty corner on her 50th international appearance.

The match saw intense action, with England mounting pressure in the final quarter. They equalized in the 58th minute through Fiona Crackles. However, India responded quickly, and in the 59th minute, Vice Captain Navneet Kaur netted the decisive winner. Two of India's goals came from penalty corners, reflecting an improvement in this area. The victory gave India a perfect start, earning them three crucial points.



Major League Cricket: Head, Miller, Cummins Not Retained Ahead of Season 3 Draft

Several star players have been released ahead of the Major League Cricket (MLC) season 3 draft, including Australia's Travis Head and Pat Cummins, and South Africa's Kagiso Rabada and David Miller, as reported by ESPNcricinfo.

Defending champions Washington Freedom retained 15 players, the most by any team, but let go of Head, their joint-highest run-scorer last season with 336 runs. The team also released bowlers Ake-

al Hosein and Andrew Tye. San Francisco Unicorns kept key players like Finn Allen and Jake Fraser-McGurk but released Cummins, Matt Henry, and Josh Inglis.

Other teams like Seattle Orcas, LA Knight Riders, MI New York, and Texas Super Kings also made significant changes, with notable players such as Quinton de Kock, Shakib Al Hasan, and Tim David not retained. The season 3 draft will take place on February 19.





Rajkummar Rao's Maalik Gangster Drama to Release on June 20, 2025



Rajkummar Rao's upcoming action-packed gangster drama *Maalik* is set to release in theatres on June 20, 2025. The official announcement was made by Tips Films on Instagram, promising an intense performance from Rajkummar as he portrays *Maalik*, a ruthless gangster. Directed by Pulkit, known for his work in thrillers and dramas, the film is currently in post-production. Rajkummar had earlier teased his look for the film on Instagram, sharing his excitement about the project. His last release, *Stree 2*, was a box office hit, and fans are eagerly anticipating *Maalik*.

'Thandell' Nears ₹100 Crore Mark with Massive Box Office Success



The film *Thandell*, starring Allu Aravind and presented by Buny Vas, the movie's music by Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad has been a huge hit, elevating the film further. The chemistry between Sai Pallavi and Chaitanya has resonated deeply with audiences, particularly in their roles as Bujjitalu and Raju. The emotional core of the film, especially in the Pakistan episode, has added depth to the narrative, making it a huge success. Produced by big Tollywood produc-

er Allu Aravind and presented by Buny Vas, the movie's music by Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad has been a huge hit, elevating the film further. The chemistry between Sai Pallavi and Chaitanya has resonated deeply with audiences, particularly in their roles as Bujjitalu and Raju. The emotional core of the film, especially in the Pakistan episode, has added depth to the narrative, making it a huge success. Produced by big Tollywood produc-

Mega Hero Sai Dharam Tej to Play Guest Role in Vishwambhara



The highly anticipated film *Vishwambhara*, starring Megastar Chiranjeevi and directed by young filmmaker Vashisth, is creating a buzz with the latest update that another mega hero, Sai Dharam Tej, will appear in a guest role. The film, produced by UV Creations, is a socio-fantasy story, and Sai Dharam Tej will shoot for his part over three days. He began filming on the first day, marking his

contribution to the project.

This film adds to the list of mega family members who have appeared in Chiranjeevi's films, including stars like Allu Arjun. While the shoot is almost complete, with just two songs and minor patchwork left, the film's significant CGI work may delay its release. The movie, initially slated for a May release, may now come out later.

John Abraham's The Diplomat Trailer: A Mission to Save "Bharat Ki Beti"

The trailer for John Abraham's upcoming film *The Diplomat* reveals him portraying the real-life Indian diplomat, JP Singh. The film centers on a high-stakes mission involving a woman, Uzma Ahmeed, seeking refuge at the Indian Embassy after a dangerous journey from Pakistan. As John's character investigates, tensions rise over her true identity and the humanitarian angle of her case. The trailer hints at suspense, twists, and emotional depth, with strong performances from John and Revathi. Directed by Shivam Nair, the film releases on March 7, 2025. John's last project was *Vedaa*.



Kangana Ranaut Opens Cafe in Himachal's Manali on Valentine's Day



Bollywood actress and Member of Parliament, Kangana Ranaut, has launched a café named 'The Mountain Story' in Manali, Himachal Pradesh, on Valentine's Day. Sharing the news on social media, Kangana described the café as the realization of a childhood dream. She expressed her gratitude to everyone who supported her in making this

dream a reality.

The café, set amidst the serene beauty of the Himalayas, aims to offer a peaceful and unique experience for visitors. Fans and netizens congratulated Kangana, with many wishing her success. Kangana's tweet resonated with those who admired her journey from Bollywood to entrepreneurship in the tranquil hills of Him-

Rashmika Mandanna Resumes Shoot for Sikandar, Shares Excitement About Actor's Chaotic Life



Rashmika Mandanna has returned to the sets of her much-awaited film *Sikandar*, starring Salman Khan in the lead role. The actress took to her Instagram stories on Friday to share a glimpse of her night shoot, expressing her excitement about diving back into the "chaotic life of an actor." She shared a picture making a heart gesture for the camera, captioning it, "PS - *Sikandar* night shoot. I guess finally we are back to this chaotic life of an actor."

• *Sikandar**, directed by AR Muru-

gadoss, marks Salman Khan's return to the big screen after his appearance in *Tiger 3*. The film reunites him with producer Sajid Nadiadwala, following their successful collaboration on *Kick* (2014).

In addition to *Sikandar*, Rashmika's latest release, *Chhaava*, has been creating a buzz. The film, based on Shivaji Sawant's Marathi novel *Chhava*, sees her portraying Maharani Yesubai alongside Vicky Kaushal as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj.