



**Weather Forecast**

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

# TELANGANA SILENT ON WATER CRISIS: KTR



**AP Diverting 10,000 Cusecs Daily, Claims Harish Rao**

**Nagarjuna Sagar, Srisaillam Reservoirs at Risk**

**Telangana Farmers May Be Forced to Protest**

**Government Must Act to Protect Water Rights**



## Telangana's Water Rights at Risk : Harish Rao

TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 17 : BRS MLA and former minister Harish Rao has strongly criticized the Telangana government for its inaction while Andhra Pradesh (AP) continues to divert Krishna River water. He accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy of failing to protect Telangana's water rights.

despite low storage levels in Srisaillam and Nagarjuna Sagar reservoirs.

Harish Rao also criticized the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), noting that the Tri-men Committee, responsible for overseeing water-sharing agreements, has not met this year, further worsening the situation. He blamed the Telangana government for its failure to exert pressure on the board to stop AP's actions.

Harish Rao questioned why the state government remains silent as AP has been diverting 10,000 cusecs per day from the Nagarjuna Sagar right canal for the past three months, amounting to 646 TMC annually. He asserted that Telangana's share of water is being taken unfairly while the Congress-led government watches without taking any action.

He warned that if the situation continues, farmers in Telangana will be forced to protest for water before summer even begins. Additionally, if water transfer is not halted immediately, the Sagar ayacut will suffer, and Hyderabad could face a severe drinking water shortage.

He pointed out that Sagar Dam is under central security and water should only be released under their supervision. However, AP is allegedly transferring water at will, depriving Telangana of its drinking water and irrigation needs. He also highlighted that AP continues to extract water through the Pothireddypadu and Sagar right canals

Harish Rao urged the state government to take immediate action, stop AP's water transfer, and pressurize the Krishna Board to intervene. He shared his concerns on social media, stating that Nagarjuna Sagar and Srisaillam reservoirs have already been depleted due to AP's aggressive actions and Telangana's negligence.

**KTR slams Congress on Krishna water**

**KTR: Congress failing farmers**

**Krishna water diversion unchecked**

**BRS vs Congress on water issue**

TPN , Correspondent  
Hyderabad, Feb 17 : BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has strongly criticized the Congress government in Telangana for its inaction while Andhra Pradesh continues to divert Krishna waters. He accused the state government of merely watching the water flow instead of taking measures to stop it.

government has failed to intervene or raise its voice against the issue.

He also criticized the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) for not acting against the alleged illegal water diversion. He accused the Congress-led state government of neglecting the interests of Telangana farmers, stating that fields in the Sagar and Srisaillam regions are drying up due to a lack of irrigation water.

current government has failed to protect farmers' interests. He questioned Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's frequent trips to Delhi, stating that the CM seems unaware of the crisis farmers are facing.

Criticizing the Congress administration, KTR alleged that the government is misleading people by claiming to provide water while agricultural lands continue to suffer. He called for immediate action and urged Telangana citizens to wake up and protest against the government's inaction with the slogan "Jago Jago, Jago Telangana Jago."

KTR alleged that Andhra Pradesh has already utilized 646 TMC of Krishna water, and for the past three months, water has been transported through the Nagarjuna Sagar Right Canal at a rate of 10,000 cusecs per day. Despite this, he claimed, the Congress

KTR further claimed that under KCR's leadership, Telangana had effectively utilized every drop of Krishna and Godavari waters to revive fallow lands, whereas the

## Kishan Reddy: New Telangana BJP President Soon

**Congress Failed in Caste Census, Says Kishan Reddy**

**BJP to Support BC Reservations**

**Revanth Reddy Following KCR's Path, Alleges Kishan Reddy**

**Congress Pushing Telangana into Financial Crisis**



TPN , Correspondent  
Warangal , Feb 17 : Union Minister and BJP Telangana President Kishan Reddy criticized the Congress government for failing to conduct a proper caste census in the state. During his visit to Warangal on Sunday, he stated that not a single BC community has endorsed the survey conducted by the Congress government. He assured that the BJP will support BC reservations and promised that if the BC communities submit their demands, the BJP will convince the Center for approval. He also took a dig at Rahul Gandhi, stating that a caste survey should be conducted with genuine intent to benefit the people.

nouncement that a new BJP state president will be appointed soon, before the local body elections. He explained that the delay in the appointment was due to the party's busy schedule. He dismissed any speculation of BJP aligning with BRS and accused BRS of being afraid to field candidates against Congress. He further alleged that there is an internal connection between the two parties.

The BJP leader accused Revanth Reddy of following in KCR's footsteps by exploiting projects for personal and political gain. He claimed that the Congress government is pushing the state into financial distress

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Kishan Reddy made a key an-

## IPL 2025 Schedule Announced

**IPL 2025 Begins on March 22**

**Final to Be Held at Eden Gardens on May 25**

**74 Matches Across 65 Days**

**New Venues Added to the Schedule**

**Opening Match: KKR vs RCB**

**Playoffs from May 20 to 25**



TPN , Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 17 :The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has officially announced the schedule for the 18th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025. The much-awaited tournament will begin on March 22, 2025, and conclude with the final on May 25, 2025, at

the historic Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

lengers Bangalore (RCB) at Eden Gardens. A total of 74 matches will be played over 65 days, with 10 teams competing for the prestigious title.

The opening match of the season will feature defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) against Royal Chal-

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## CM Revanth: IAS, IPS Must Step Out of Offices

**CM Launches Book by Former IAS Officer**

**Calls for Bureaucrats to Engage with Public**

**Criticizes IAS, IPS for Avoiding Field Work**

**Stresses Need for Change in Governance**

**Warns Officers Against Complacency**



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## KTR's Sharp Attack on Sitharaman

**KTR Responds to Sitharaman's Debt Remarks**

**BRS Defends Telangana's Financial Management**

**BJP Has No Moral Right to Talk About Debt: KTR**

**BRS Converted Debt into Growth, Says KTR**

**KTR Questions BJP's ₹125 Lakh Crore Borrowing**



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# RRR to Transform Hyderabad: Komatireddy

- Prajavani Resumes for Public Grievances
- RRR to Boost Hyderabad's Road Network
- Srisaillam Tunnel to be Completed in Two Years
- Nalgonda's Development is My Goal: Minister

TPN , Correspondent

**Nalgonda, Feb 17 :** State Roads, Buildings, and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy reaffirmed his commitment to the development of Nalgonda while continuing his Prajavani program at his camp office in Srinagar Colony. Despite his statewide responsibilities, the minister personally addressed public grievances and resolved issues on the spot, including financial aid for students and medical assistance for the needy.

He explained that officials were not invited to the Prajavani program due to the MLC election code but assured that such initiatives would continue. Speaking to reporters later, he emphasized the importance of the Regional Ring Road (RRR), stating that it would transform Hyderabad's infrastructure and boost economic growth. While tenders have been issued for the northern



section, the southern section is in the DPR stage, and work will begin soon.

Recalling past developments under YSR's tenure, including the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Komatireddy criticized KCR's administration for neglecting crucial projects and prioritizing commissions. He assured that radial roads along the RRR and ORR would resolve Hyderabad's traffic congestion and improve connectivity across Telangana.

The minister also highlighted the progress of the Srisaillam Tunnel Project, which aims to address irri-

gation and drinking water issues in Nalgonda. With a boring machine from the U.S. now at Chennai Port, he confirmed that the tunnel work would be completed within two years. He accused the BRS government of neglecting the project and emphasized that the Congress government had allocated sufficient funds to ensure its completion.

Komatireddy expressed gratitude to Nalgonda voters, pledging to fulfill all promises and make the constituency a model of development. He assured that major projects worth crores of rupees were already underway, promising better facilities for the people once completed.

# KTR to Deliver Keynote at TIS 2025

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17 :** BRS Working President and former IT Minister K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has been invited as the chief guest for the Tech & Innovation Summit (TIS) 2025, scheduled to take place in Bengaluru on February 27-28, 2025.



KTR will deliver a keynote address on the first day of the summit, speaking on "Driving Digital India: Innovations & Strategies for a Technologically Advanced Future". The event, themed "The AI Techade", will focus on the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on business and technology.

The summit will bring together top industrialists, investors, and government representatives, featuring over 150 dis-

tinguished speakers. Discussions will cover key sectors such as AI, Digital Transformation, Autotech, Spacotech, and Healthtech. The event will also include the prestigious "Gala Idea Awards", recognizing groundbreaking contributions in the tech industry.

# Telangana Farmer Honored with National Award

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17 :** Mavuram Mallikarjun Reddy, a farmer from Peddakurmapalli village in Choppadandi Mandal, Karimnagar district, has been awarded the prestigious Fellow Farmer Award by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) annually recognizes outstanding farmers across the country for their contributions to agriculture, selecting them in categories such as Fellow Farm-

er and Innovative Farmer. This year, Mallikarjun Reddy is one of six farmers chosen for the Fellow Farmer Award and the only recipient from South India.

His selection acknowledges his dedication to promoting organic and integrated farming practices among fellow farmers. His efforts have contributed to raising awareness and encouraging sustainable farming methods in the region.

Mallikarjun Reddy will receive the award at a ceremony in Delhi on February 22.

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# IPL 2025 Schedule Announced

The league stage will run until May 18, followed by the playoffs from May 20 to May 25.

## Matches at Multiple Venues

As in previous seasons, IPL 2025 will be played across multiple cities. This time, 13 venues have been selected, including Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Lucknow, Mullanpur, Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati, Dharamsala, and Visakhapatnam. Rajasthan Royals have chosen Guwahati as their second home ground, where they will play two matches on March 26 and 30 against Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings. Punjab Kings will split their home matches between Mullanpur and Dharamsala.

## Playoffs and Final Venues

Hyderabad will host Qualifier 1 and the Eliminator, while Qualifier 2 and the Final will take place in Kolkata. The IPL Governing Council has scheduled 13 double-headers, with afternoon matches starting at 3:30 PM IST and evening matches at 7:30 PM IST.

With the inclusion of new venues and the return of packed stadiums, IPL 2025 is set to bring excitement for cricket fans worldwide. The tournament promises intense competition, as teams battle for the title and fans eagerly anticipate another thrilling season.

# KTR's Sharp Attack on Sitharaman

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17 :** Telangana BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has strongly criticized Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for her remarks on Telangana's financial condition during the BRS regime. In an open letter, KTR accused the BJP-led central government of borrowing excessively while failing to invest in public welfare.

KTR pointed out that from 1947 to 2014, successive Indian governments borrowed ₹56 lakh crore, whereas the BJP government alone has taken ₹125 lakh crore in loans since 2014. He argued that the BJP has no moral right to question Telangana's debt when its own borrowing record is far worse. He also reminded that Telangana was a surplus state before its merger with Andhra Pradesh and re-

mained so even after the formation of the state in 2014.

He defended the BRS government's borrowing, stating that every rupee was invested in infrastructure, irrigation, and power projects that transformed Telangana. He rejected claims that the state was financially mismanaged, emphasizing that debt should be judged by how it is utilized. He challenged the central government to explain where its massive borrowings had been spent.

KTR accused the BJP of neglecting Telangana in budget allocations, railway projects, and financial support. He condemned the Centre's failure to revive the Information Technology Investment Region (ITIR) project and the Cement Corporation of India in Adilabad. He also criticized

the Centre for taking credit for the 38 lakh tap connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission when Telangana had already achieved 100% drinking water coverage through Mission Bhagiratha.

He accused the BJP of step-motherly treatment toward Telangana and reminded Sitharaman that the Centre had snatched away seven mandals and the Lower Sileru power project from the state. He also slammed Union Minister Piyush Goyal for making statements that hurt Telangana's pride instead of addressing its rightful demands.

KTR concluded by warning that the people of Telangana have not forgotten the BJP's broken promises and will not forgive the party for its indifference to the state's development.

# CM Revanth: IAS, IPS Must Step Out of Offices

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17 :** Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has criticized IAS and IPS officers for their reluctance to step out of their offices and engage with the public. Speaking at the launch of a book written by former IAS officer Gopalakrishna at the IAS Officers Institute, the CM emphasized the importance of proactive governance.

He praised Gopalakrishna for compiling six decades of administrative experiences into a book, stating that it would be a valuable resource for aspiring and newly appointed IAS officers. Revanth Reddy noted that many are unaware of the contributions of senior bureaucrats and cited former Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan as an example of an officer who transformed the Election Commission with

his firm leadership.

The Chief Minister lamented the declining role of bureaucrats in guiding politicians, stating that such mentorship existed in the past but is now missing. He expressed concern that newly appointed IAS officers are not following the right approach and that IPS officers are engaging in civil disputes rather than focusing on law enforcement.

Revanth Reddy further criticized officials for preferring to stay in air-conditioned offices instead of actively engaging with people. He stressed that true governance requires a shift in mindset, urging officers to be more committed to public service. He assured that those who demonstrate dedication and efficiency will be given key postings in the administration.

# Kishan Reddy: New Telangana BJP President Soon

by taking loans and selling lands instead of focusing on resource mobilization. He also criticized the lack of a clear roadmap for implementing electoral promises. Kishan Reddy stated that the

people will not tolerate the Congress government's inefficiency for long. He concluded by branding BRS and Congress as two sides of the same coin, predicting their downfall in Telangana politics.

# ACB Alerts Officials on Fraud Calls

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17 :** The Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) issued a clarification on Sunday, February 16, warning government officials about fraudulent calls made by individuals posing as ACB officers. The statement follows an incident where a tehsildar from Bhuvanagiri Yadadri district was scammed out of Rs 3.30 lakh by impostors.



The fraud took place on February 9 when the Rajampet tehsildar received a call from an individual claiming to be an ACB officer. The caller falsely alleged that one of the tehsildar's subordinates had confessed his involvement in a corruption case. The fraudster then threatened immediate arrest and claimed a warrant had been issued. Under pressure, the tehsildar transferred Rs 3.30 lakh in multiple transactions.

After realizing he had been deceived—when he could no longer reach the caller and found that his subordinate had not been apprehended—the tehsildar's family reported the scam to the police.

In response, the Telangana ACB clarified that it does not contact government officials demanding money to avoid legal action. It urged employees not to believe such fraudulent calls or make payments based on threats.

The agency advised anyone receiving such calls to immediately contact the ACB toll-free number or report the incident to the local police. The public was also encouraged to reach out through ACB's official social media channels, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and WhatsApp.

# Phone Tapping Case: Key Arrests Made in Investigation

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17 :** The phone tapping case in Telangana has taken a significant turn with the arrest of a person who previously worked in former minister Harish Rao's office. The police, acting on a complaint filed by Siddipet resident Chakradhar Goud, have arrested T. Vamsi Krishna along with two of his associates, T. Santosh Kumar and B. Parasuramulu.



According to DCP Vijay Kumar, Chakradhar Goud had lodged a complaint with the Panjagutta police on December 3, alleging that his phone was tapped. The police registered a case under Section 66 of the IT Act and launched an investigation, which led to these arrests.

Vamsi Krishna, a resident of Siddipet, had previously worked as the manager of Arogyasri in Nalgonda district but was dismissed due to irregularities. He later joined Harish Rao's office in June 2023 and worked

there until December. Investigations revealed that Santosh Kumar, the manager of Bhavani Communications, along with car driver Parasuramulu, had obtained a SIM card using the identity of a deceased farmer. This number was used to make threatening WhatsApp calls to Chakradhar Goud and demand money.

The police suspect that Arogyasri funds may have been diverted using fake bills through this mobile number. Further investigations are ongoing to gather more evidence. The court has remanded the three accused until the 28th of this month, and they have been sent to jail.

## "Study History," Jagga Reddy Tells Bandi Sanjay

- Calls Out BJP's Silence on Advani
- Defends Gandhi Family's Sacrifices
- Questions BJP's Stand on Rahul's Legacy

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17** : Telangana Congress leader and TPCC Working President Jagga Reddy strongly defended Rahul Gandhi and his family, criticizing BJP leader Bandi Sanjay for questioning their contributions. Speaking at Gandhi Bhavan, Jagga Reddy emphasized the sacrifices made by the Nehru-Gandhi family for India's independence and governance.



He pointed out that during the UPA regime, both Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi prioritized governance over positions of power. "Bandi Sanjay should ask Prime Minister Narendra Modi why BJP sidelined LK Advani, who played a crucial role in the party's growth. Without Advani's Rath Yatra, BJP wouldn't have reached where it is today," he said.

Jagga Reddy also condemned Bandi Sanjay for commenting on the religion and caste of Rahul Gandhi's family. "Rahul Gandhi's family has never used caste or religion for political gain. Rajiv Gandhi was a Brahmin, and Sonia Gandhi, as per Hindu tradition, follows the same," he stated. He questioned BJP's stance on caste, reminding them that according to Hindu customs, a wife takes on her husband's caste after marriage.

Highlighting historical contributions, Jagga Reddy recalled that Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Indira Gandhi played key roles in the freedom movement. He also noted that Indira Gandhi's husband, Feroze Gandhi, was a journalist and an active participant in India's independence struggle.

"After Atal Bihari Vajpayee, LK Advani should have been the Prime Minister. Modi became PM because of Advani, yet BJP leaders don't acknowledge his contributions," he remarked. He further criticized BJP for failing to recognize the Gandhi family's legacy, stating, "From Motilal Nehru to Rahul Gandhi, every generation has made sacrifices for the nation."

Jagga Reddy warned Bandi Sanjay to study history before making remarks about Rahul Gandhi's family and their contributions.

## MP Mallu Ravi Defends CM Revanth, Questions Modi's BC Status

TPN , Correspondent

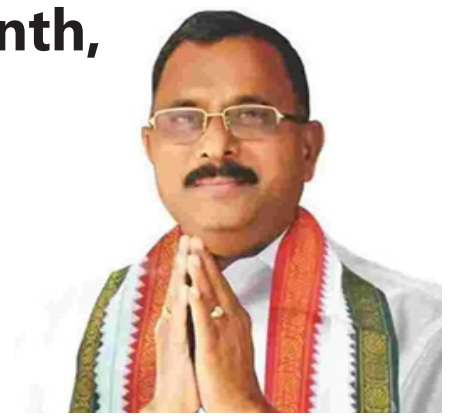
**Hyderabad, Feb 17** : Nagarkurnool MP and senior Congress leader Mallu Ravi has strongly criticized Telangana BJP leaders, defending Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's recent remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's caste background.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Mallu Ravi stated, "CM Revanth Reddy only pointed out that Modi was not a BC by birth. What is wrong with that? He is a converted BC, and there is no insult in stating the fact." He added that since

Modi was not born into a BC community, he does not understand the struggles and discrimination faced by BCs.

Ravi praised Revanth Reddy's commitment to BC welfare, highlighting the caste census initiated by the Congress government. "Revanth Reddy is ensuring BCs get their due share in education, employment, and politics based on their population," he said.

He challenged Modi's claims of representing BC interests, demanding that the BJP conduct a



nationwide caste census. "If Modi truly cares for BCs, let him prove it with action," Ravi asserted. He emphasized that India is a democracy where leaders must earn public support, not rely on identity-based claims.

## Dr. Laxman Criticizes Congress, BRS Ahead of MLC Elections

TPN , Correspondent

**Nizamabad, Feb 17** : BJP OBC Morcha National President Dr. K. Laxman has strongly criticized the Congress and BRS, claiming that both parties are struggling to find candidates for the upcoming MLC elections.

Speaking to the media, Dr. Laxman stated, "This election will be a turning point in Telangana politics. While the BRS was once dominant in the state, BJP's influence is now growing across the country."

Targeting the Congress govern-

ment, he questioned why unemployed youth should vote for a party that has failed to provide jobs. He also criticized the lack of DAS and PRCs for teachers, asking how the government expects support from them.

Dr. Laxman accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of running a "time-pass" government and using caste politics to divide society. "They are manipulating the caste census to benefit BCs selectively, but in reality, it is only aimed at appeasing Muslims," he alleged. He further claimed that the re-sur-



vey on caste census was not being conducted transparently.

With political tensions rising, BJP leaders continue to challenge the ruling Congress and opposition BRS ahead of the crucial elections.

## KTR: Congress Failing Education

- Over 50 Student Deaths Due to Negligence?
- Drop in Admissions Raises Concerns
- Revanth Govt Ignoring Student Welfare?
- Education System in Telangana Deteriorating

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17** : Former Minister and BRS leader K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has lashed out at the Congress government, alleging that Telangana's Gurukul educational system has deteriorated under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's rule.

KTR stated that the Gurukuls, which flourished during the ten years of KCR's administration, are now in chaos due to Congress's mismanagement. "Under KCR's rule, students pursued higher education and as-



pired to become doctors and engineers. Today, due to a lack of proper direction, the situation has worsened," he remarked.

Highlighting the declining trust in Gurukul schools, KTR pointed out a sharp drop in applications. "Pre-

viously, 1.68 lakh students applied for just 41,000 seats in the common entrance examination. Now, only 80,000 applications have been received for 51,000 seats," he said, attributing the decline to poor administration.

KTR also made a shocking claim that more than 50 students have died due to food poisoning and other reasons in the past year. "Despite these tragic deaths, the Congress government remains indifferent. They are not even allowing opposition leaders to visit the grieving families," he alleged.

Accusing the Congress government of negligence, KTR warned that such failures would have a lasting negative impact on Telangana's future. "This government's inefficiency is a curse on the state," he declared.

## MP Arvind Targets Congress, Challenges Revanth Reddy

TPN , Correspondent

**Nizamabad, Feb 17** : BJP MP Dharmapuri Arvind launched a scathing attack on the Congress and BRS, asserting that his goal is to make India saffron. He urged people to take voting for BJP candidates in the upcoming MLC elections as a responsibility.

Arvind criticized the Congress government for failing to fulfill its promises and mocked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's remarks on caste. "Revanth's caste-based politics is ridiculous. He does not have the stature to criticize Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Instead of delivering on his promises, he makes baseless statements," he said.



He also claimed that BJP's influence is growing, citing the recent electoral outcomes in Delhi. "Voters have given a historic verdict. BRS has been completely wiped out, and KCR's era is over," Arvind declared.

Challenging Revanth Reddy, he questioned whether the Chief Minister had the courage to enter Hyderabad's

Old City and implement the HYDRA initiative there. He also controversially asked, "Who among Hindus and Muslims earns more income?"

With the political climate heating up ahead of the elections, Arvind's remarks reflect the BJP's aggressive stance against the ruling Congress and former BRS leadership.

## Congress is a Disaster for Telangana: RS Praveen Kumar

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17** : BRS leader RS Praveen Kumar has strongly criticized the Congress government, calling it a disaster for Telangana. He stated that under the previous administration, thousands of students competed for admissions in Gurukuls, receiving quality education without spending lakhs on private institutions. However, he alleged that the current Congress government has failed to maintain the same standards.

Praveen Kumar expressed concern over the deteriorating conditions in Gurukuls, citing frequent incidents



of food poisoning, student suicides, snake bites, and rat infestations. He pointed out that despite multiple extensions of the application deadline, the number of applications for Class 5 admissions has failed to cross 80,000.

He accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the Education Minister of neglecting the education sector, conducting only superficial reviews. He alleged that the Congress government is deliberately trying to dismantle the Gurukul system established by KCR.

Warning of a strong public backlash, Praveen Kumar vowed to fight under KCR's leadership until what he called an "anti-poor regime" is removed. He asserted that the people of Telangana will not forget the government's failures and will take a stand to protect their future.

## Etela Rajender Urges Support for BJP in MLC Elections

TPN , Correspondent

**Gajwel, Feb 17** : Malkajgiri MP Etela Rajender campaigned in Gajwel for the upcoming MLC elections, urging graduates and teachers to support Anji Reddy and Malka Komariah, the BJP candidates.



Speaking at a press meet, Rajender criticized both the Congress and BRS, stating that people have lost trust in them and now look to the BJP for solutions. He highlighted BJP's commitment to unemployment relief, noting that ₹4 lakh crore was allocated in the 2024-25 budget to support start-ups and small businesses.

Rajender attacked KCR, stating that while it took nine years to understand his leadership, CM Revanth Reddy's true nature was exposed in just one year. He accused BRS of being a family-run party that sidelined BC leaders and failed to work for marginalized

communities.

He also emphasized Modi's leadership, stating that under him, India's global reputation has grown. He pointed out that the BJP was the only party that stood with teachers when BRS implemented GO 317, which affected their job security.

Rajender urged teachers and graduates to make an informed decision and vote for BJP, which he said is committed to development and social justice.

## Congress Needs Youth Power: Mahesh Goud

TPN , Correspondent

**Hyderabad, Feb 17** : Telangana PCC Chief and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud inaugurated a Youth Congress training camp in Gattupalli, Maheshwaram mandal. Addressing the gathering, he emphasized that the future of India belongs to Rahul Gandhi and predicted his victory in the upcoming elections.



Goud highlighted that the Youth Congress is the largest organization of its kind and plays a crucial role in the party. He assured that despite the presence of senior leaders, Youth Congress workers will be recognized and rewarded. Citing examples like Himachal Pradesh CM and former Arunachal CM, he pointed out that many key AICC leaders emerged from the Youth Congress and NSUI.

He stressed that political success requires patience, commitment, and discipline. He advised young leaders to adapt to situations, maintain public relations, and work tirelessly for the

party's growth.

Goud revealed that both CM Revanth Reddy and he believe in including young leaders in the PCC working committee. He urged Youth Congress members to actively promote government welfare programs, especially through social media, and act as a protective shield for the Congress government.

Sports Corporation Chairman Shivseena Reddy, Telangana Youth Congress in-charge Surabhi, and President Shiva Charan Reddy also participated in the event.

# No Aadhaar, No Treatment: Woman Left Helpless

TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17 : A woman was reportedly denied treatment at Osmania Hospital because she did not have an Aadhaar card. The incident has drawn widespread attention, as heart-wrenching images of the woman lying outside the hospital have gone viral. Pramila, a resident of Maredupalli in Mahabubnagar district, has faced immense personal tragedies in recent months. Her husband, Suresh, passed away due to illness six months ago, and just a month later, her son died in a road accident. Struggling with serious health issues, Pramila traveled to Hyderabad with her six-year-old daughter, Anusha, in search of medical help. Upon reaching Osmania Hospital in a critical condition, she was allegedly denied treatment by the hospital staff for not having an Aadhaar card. Left with no options, Pramila was seen lying helplessly outside the hospital while her daughter, unaware of what to do, waited beside her. The incident has



sparked outrage, with many questioning the hospital's refusal to provide emergency medical care. Authorities are being urged to take immediate action and en-



## Grand Celebrations Planned for KCR's Birthday: Talasani

TPN , Correspondent /Hyderabad, Feb 17 : The birthday celebrations of former Telangana Chief Minister and BRS leader K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) will be held in a grand manner, announced former minister and party MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav. The main event will take place on February 17 at Telangana Bhavan, organized under his leadership. Former Home Minister Mahmood Ali joined him in overseeing the preparations. Talasani stated that arrangements have been made for celebrations across all constituencies, towns, and villages in the state. Special prayers will be conducted at temples, churches, mosques, and gurudwaras, along with various cultural programs. A massive 71 kg cake will be cut to mark KCR's 71st birthday. Several prominent leaders, including BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), former minister Harish Rao, MLC Kavitha, party MLAs, MLCs, and other public representatives, will participate in the celebrations. Additionally, as per KTR's initiative, a large-scale tree-planting program, 'Vriksharchana,' will be conducted statewide, where each participant will plant three saplings. The party has urged its members and supporters to take part in the celebrations and honor KCR's contributions to the state.



## Bird Flu Fear Hits Chicken Sales, Prices Remain Steady

Hyderabad: The fear of bird flu has significantly impacted chicken sales in Telangana. Chicken centers, which usually see heavy crowds on Sundays, are witnessing a sharp decline in customers. Despite the drop in sales, chicken prices have not decreased. Traders report that the situation has been the same for the past week, as people hesitate to consume chicken. Instead, many are opting for mutton and fish, leading to increased demand for these alternatives. Currently, a kilogram of chicken is being sold for ₹220 in Hyderabad and Vijayawada, while in Chittoor, it is priced at ₹160. Last week, prices ranged from ₹220 to ₹240 per kg. Meanwhile, fish traders are taking advantage of the increased demand by raising their prices. Chicken sellers express concern over the prolonged impact of bird flu fears, which continue to affect their

## Goshamahal Nala Collapses Again, Major Accident Averted

TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17 : The Chaknawadi Nala in Goshamahal has collapsed once again, marking the sixth such incident in the last three years. The collapse occurred on Saturday night after construction workers had left the site, preventing a major accident. The roof of the Nala at the Chaknawadi turn was already under construction when the incident took place. Locals expressed concerns, stating that if the collapse had happened during work hours, it could



have led to serious casualties. Residents are alarmed as the Nala continues to sag despite ongoing repairs. They attribute the frequent collapses to the old structure and criticize authorities for carrying out temporary fixes instead of a complete reconstruction. With growing fear in the community, locals are urging the administration to

## Former Minister Mallareddy Sells Milk Again, Video Goes Viral

TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17 : Former Minister Chamakura Mallareddy, known for his famous dialogue about his journey from selling milk to becoming a businessman and politician, was once again seen selling milk on a scooter. A video of the incident has now gone viral on social media. Mallareddy attended a program in Boduppal, Medchal district, on Sunday. During the event, he noticed a scooter carrying milk cartons and was reminded of his past struggles. Without hesitation, he got on the scooter, recalling his early days of selling milk. After reliving his memories, Mallareddy greeted the milk vendor warmly, honored him with



a shawl, and expressed his appreciation for hard work. The entire moment was captured on video by onlookers and quickly spread across social media platforms. The video has sparked reactions from netizens, with many praising Mallareddy's humility and his journey from humble beginnings to political success.

## Falcon Invoice Discounting Scam Uncovered



TPN , Correspondent /Hyderabad, Feb 17 : A large-scale financial fraud has been exposed in Hyderabad involving the Falcon Invoice Discounting scheme. The scam, orchestrated by Musani, involved collecting small investments and has resulted in a loss of ₹850 crore in Hyderabad alone. Authorities have arrested Falcon Vice President Pawan Kumar Odell and Falcon Capital Protection Force Director Kavya Nalluri in connection with the fraudulent operations. Investigations have revealed that Falcon collected ₹1,700 crore from 6,979 victims across the country by falsely promising returns on investments in reputed companies such as Britannia, Amazon, and Godrej. To carry out the scheme, Falcon established 14 affiliated companies, using them to lure unsuspecting investors with the promise of high returns. However, these investments were misused, leading to massive financial losses. Law enforcement agencies are now conducting a thorough investigation to uncover the full extent of the scam and track down other individuals involved. DCP Prasad, overseeing the case, assured that authorities are making efforts to recover funds and provide justice to the victims. Officials have urged those affected to come forward and report their losses. Further arrests are expected as the investigation progresses. This case highlights the dangers of fraudulent investment schemes and the importance of verifying financial opportunities before committing funds. Authorities have advised investors to exercise caution and conduct due diligence before investing in such schemes.

## Man Stabbed to Death in Broad Daylight in Medchal

TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17 : A 25-year-old man, identified as Umesh, was brutally stabbed to death by two unidentified assailants on a busy street in Medchal on Sunday. Disturbing CCTV footage shows the attackers repeatedly stabbing the victim before fleeing the scene, leaving him in a pool of blood. Upon receiving information, local police rushed to the crime scene and launched an investigation. Authorities are currently analyzing CCTV footage to identify the suspects involved in the attack. The motive behind the murder remains unclear, and officials are gathering evidence to ascertain the reason behind the crime. The victim's family, who arrived at the scene, was in deep distress. The police have assured that efforts are being made to track down and apprehend the culprits at the earliest. Further details on the case are awaited.

## Flyover & Junction Works: Ilambarthi Reviews Plans

TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17 : Baldia Commissioner Ilambarthi has emphasized the need for coordination among various departments to ensure the smooth execution of intersection development and beautification works. He directed officials to complete necessary preparations in advance, as the work is set to begin soon. On Friday, Commissioner Ilambarthi, along with officials from HMDA and other departments, inspected key intersections in the Serilingampalli zone as part of the Hyderabad City Traffic (HCT) im-

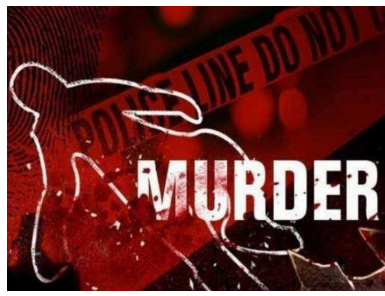


provement works. The sites inspected included Gachibowli IIIT, DLF, Khajaguda, Chandanagar, Lingampalli, and Alvin Cross Roads. During the inspection, he stated that the tender process for the project is ongoing. To facilitate timely execution, he instructed officials to expedite site acquisition, relocate electricity poles, remove cables, and clear any other obstructions. He emphasized that the intersections should be developed aesthetically to enhance the city's appeal. Additionally, dis-

cussions were held regarding land acquisition and related procedures for the construction of a flyover at the IIIT Junction. Commissioner Ilambarthi stressed the importance of expediting the process without hindering ongoing development. The inspection was attended by HMDA Commissioner Sarfaraz, Municipal Administration Deputy Secretary Priyanka, Water Works MD Ashok Reddy, Joint CP Davis, Chief Engineer Bhaskar Reddy, TSPDCL officials Shekhar and Pandian, Zonal Commissioner Upendar Reddy, and other senior officials.

## Sensation in Sangareddy Honor Killing Case

Daughter's Call Used to Trap Victim



**TPN , Correspondent Sangareddy, Feb 17** : Shocking details have emerged in the Sangareddy honor killing case, revealing that the victim, Dasharath, was allegedly trapped by his girlfriend's father, Modi Gopal. Reports suggest that Gopal lured Dasharath by making

his daughter call him. When Dasharath arrived, Gopal confronted him, accusing him of ruining his daughter's life.

In a fit of rage, Gopal killed Dasharath by striking him with a stone. He then attempted to burn the body by pouring petrol over it. However, when the body did not burn completely, he allegedly dismembered it and disposed of the remains in nearby bushes.

After committing the crime, Gopal reportedly returned home. The police are still investigating and are expected to reveal more details soon.

## Traffic Restrictions Imposed for Peddagattu Jatara



**TPN , Correspondent Suryapet, Feb 17** : The Suryapet police have announced traffic restrictions for motorists traveling from Hyderabad to Vijayawada and Khammam due to the Peddagattu Jatara, Telangana's second-largest fair after the Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara. The restrictions will remain in effect until the congestion subsides.

The Jatara, which lasts for five

days, attracts thousands of devotees from Telangana and neighboring states. Given the heavy influx of visitors, police from multiple districts have been deployed to ensure security and smooth traffic management.

Authorities have advised commuters to plan their travel accordingly and use alternative routes to avoid delays.

## 1,500 Chickens Die in Choutuppal Mandal, No Signs of Bird Flu

**TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17** : In a concerning incident, around 1,500 broiler chickens died on Saturday in poultry farms belonging to Kammari Shankaraiah of Nelapatla village and Sappidi Krishna Reddy of Singaraya Chervu village in Choutuppal mandal. The deceased chickens were buried nearby to prevent any potential spread of disease.



Worried about the sudden deaths, the farmers informed local veterinary officer

Prithviraj, who conducted an inspection. He confirmed that there were no symptoms of bird flu, attributing the deaths to a respiratory disease similar to snoring. Samples from the affected poultry have been sent to a Hyderabad lab for further analysis.

The official reassured the public that there is currently no outbreak of bird flu in Telangana, and the situation is being closely monitored.

## Bodhan CI Brutally Thrashes Woman Who Came to File Complaint



**TPN , Correspondent Bodhana, Feb 17** : In a shocking incident, Bodhan Rural CI Vijay Kumar allegedly thrashed a woman with a lathi when she approached him to file a complaint about her lost purse. Instead of assisting her, the officer verbally abused and assaulted her, leaving her with severe bruises on her thighs and buttocks.

The victim, Boya Bhagya from Dhupalli village, Renjal mandal, had visited the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Brahmotsavam in Janakampet, Edapalli mandal with her son. While buying toys, she real-

ized that her purse containing Rs. 300 and house keys was missing. Despite reporting it to the on-duty constables, the purse could not be found.

Seeking further assistance, Bhagya approached CI Vijay Kumar, who was on Brahmotsavam duty at the outpost. However, instead of registering her complaint, the officer reportedly verbally abused her and accused her of causing trouble. In a shocking act of brutality, he then beat her mercilessly with a lathi.

Allegations have also surfaced that CI Vijay Kumar is acting with political backing from Bodhan Congress MLA Sudarshan Reddy, leading to concerns over police misconduct and abuse of power. The incident has sparked outrage, with demands for strict action against the officer.

## AICC Highlights Telangana's Container Schools; Post Goes Viral

**TPN , Correspondent Mulugu, Feb 17** : The All India Congress Committee (AICC) has recognized and shared a success story about the container schools established in Telangana under the leadership of Minister Seethakka. These schools, set up in forest areas and remote villages of Mulugu constituency, aim to provide education and healthcare to underserved communities.

Minister Seethakka has already made two

schools and one primary medical center operational. AICC, in its viral post on the 'X' platform, emphasized the Congress government's commitment to overcoming barriers and ensuring education for every child under the Right to Education Act.

The post featured a video of Rahul Gandhi, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and Minister Seethakka, highlighting the initiative's impact. Minister Seethakka also tweeted,



stating that the Mulugu container school will serve as a role model for the nation.

## Mastan Sai Murder Case: Key Letter Sent to AP Governor



**TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17** : The controversial Raj Tarun - Lavanya case is taking new turns every day, with Lavanya now filing a complaint with Narsingi police making serious allegations against Mastan Sai. Amid the ongoing investigation, police have arrested Mastan Sai, and shocking revelations have emerged, including the discovery of nude videos and call recordings during the probe.

Lavanya has alleged that Mastan Sai was responsible for ruining her life, claiming that he misled her, leading to conflicts with actor Raj Tarun. In a dramatic turn, Lavanya publicly apologized to Raj Tarun, stating that she had been manipulated.

In light of these developments, Lavanya's advocate has written a key letter to Andhra Pradesh Governor Justice Abdul Nazeer, demanding action against Mastan Sai's family, who are trustees of the Mastan Dargah in Guntur. The letter argues that those involved in such crimes should not be allowed to serve as trustees, as it would tarnish the sanctity of the dargah. The advocate insists that individuals who bring disrepute to religious institutions must be removed immediately.

A part from the Governor, similar letters have been sent to AP Chief Secretary, Guntur Collector, and other officials, urging action against Mastan Sai's family. The case continues to unfold, and further legal proceedings are expected.

## Brother-in-Law Kills for Insurance Money in Sangareddy



**TPN , Correspondent Sangareddy, Feb 17** : A shocking incident in Ameenpur, Sangareddy district, a man murdered his mentally unstable brother-in-law to claim ₹25 lakh insurance money and waive off a JCB loan.

According to the police, Naresh Naik had purchased a JCB in the name of his brother-in-law, Gopal Naik (42), and also took out an LIC policy worth ₹25 lakh in his name three months ago. He conspired with a friend to strangle Gopal Naik to death at a crematorium and attempted to pass it off as a natural death.

The crime came to light when Gopal Naik's son, Sudhir, filed a missing complaint. Upon investigation, police grew suspicious of Naresh, who later confessed to the crime. A case has been registered, and efforts are underway to apprehend the absconding accused.

## Masthan Sai's Parents Defend Son Amidst Scandal



**TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17** : The Lavanya-Masthan Sai case is taking fresh twists daily. In a shocking turn, Masthan Sai's parents have come forward with sensational allegations against Lavanya.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Masthan Sai's parents claimed that Lavanya pressured their son to marry her, despite him already being married. They alleged that she demanded ₹12 crore from him and denied accusations that Masthan Sai possessed hundreds of explicit videos.

"The only nude videos on his phone are of his wife, no one else," they asserted, defending their son's innocence. Additionally, they accused La-

vanya of introducing Masthan Sai to drugs, claiming that she herself is a user.

They further challenged, "If Lavanya tests negative for drugs, we will write her nose on the ground."

Currently, Masthan Sai is in Narsingi police custody following Lavanya's complaint. She has alleged that Masthan Sai was responsible for her breakup with actor Raj Tarun and accused him of secretly recording private videos of multiple women.

Police investigations have reportedly uncovered over 200 explicit videos stored on Masthan Sai's hard disk. Additionally, he was previously arrested in a drug-related case, raising further suspicions about his activities.

The case continues to unfold, with both sides making serious allegations, while the police probe the truth behind the scandal.

## Four More Arrested in Attack on Chilkur Balaji Head Priest

**TPN , Correspondent Hyderabad, Feb 17** : In a significant development, four more individuals were arrested on Saturday, February 15, for their involvement in the attack on Chilkur Balaji head priest Dr. CS Rangarajan. This brings the total number of arrests in the case to 18.

The latest accused have been identified as G. Ramadevi, A. Rajyalaxmi, and B. Mukambika from Khammam district, Telangana, and C. Jagadish from Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. According to the Moinabad police, these individuals were lured by the prime accused, Veera Raghava Reddy, who promised them financial support and food in exchange for joining the controversial 'Rama Rajyam Society'.



The prime accused, Raghava Reddy, was arrested on February 9, following a complaint by Dr. Rangarajan, who alleged that he was attacked at his residence and forced to join the society.

Nearly a week ago, the Chilkur Balaji temple head priest was allegedly manhandled and physically assaulted by a group claiming to be working towards establishing 'Rama Rajya'. The Moinabad police continue their investigation into the motives and operations of the 'Rama Rajyam Society', as more details emerge about the group's activities.

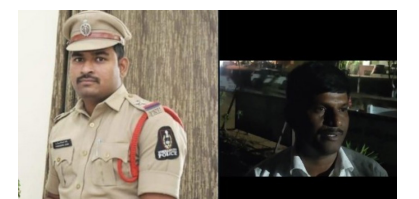
## Dharur SI Caught Taking Bribe, Suspended by IG

**TPN , Correspondent Vikarabad, Feb 17** : Dharur Sub-Inspector Venugopal Goud has been suspended after being caught red-handed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) while accepting a bribe.

According to reports, SI Venugopal Goud demanded ₹70,000 to help a person escape legal trouble in Dharur mandal, Vikarabad district. Acting on a tip-off, ACB officials laid a trap and caught him accepting ₹30,000 in the evening.

Following the investigation, IG Satyanarayana issued suspension orders, citing strong evidence provided by the ACB.

Venugopal Goud had previously served as the Tandur town



SI before being transferred to Dharur. However, his involvement in corruption has now led to his suspension.

This incident has raised concerns among the public about corruption in law enforcement. Meanwhile, the ACB has intensified its efforts to crack down on corrupt officials and urged citizens to report bribery cases.

Further investigations are underway to determine if more officials were involved in the bribery scheme.

# For Manipur to Have a Real Shot at Peace, BJP Must Let President's Rule Stay

The imposition of President's Rule in Manipur has been met with mixed reactions, signaling a critical juncture for the state's future. While the Kuki-Zo-Hmar community welcomed the declaration, viewing it as a much-needed reprieve, the Meitei community, through civil society group COCOMI, has strongly opposed it, calling it "undemocratic" and "unjustified."

The ongoing conflict between the Meitei and Kuki communities has left Manipur in turmoil since May 2023, resulting in over 250 deaths and 60,000 displacements. Violent clashes, along with shocking images of brutality, have scarred the state. The resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, triggered by a no-confidence vote, led to the imposition of President's Rule, which has temporarily suspended the state assembly.

For Manipur to heal, President's Rule must remain in place long enough for neutral governance. The central paramilitary forces, alongside a politically neutral administration, can restore stability free from interference. However, the BJP's challenge lies in determining whether this is a genuine effort to address the violence or merely a political stopgap. The decision to prolong President's Rule will have a significant impact on the state's



peace prospects.

The Kuki community, which has faced severe displacement, demands a separate administration, and the creation of buffer zones between the hills and valley for protection. They remain concerned about the growing threat of Meitei youth militia groups, such as the Arambai Tenggol, who have looted weapons during the conflict. On the other hand, some Meitei residents privately welcome President's Rule, as it could curb extortion by underground el-

ements. Despite this, the Meitei community feels that the imposition aligns with the agenda of Kuki separatists, adding to their suspicions of a military-driven governance plan. The window for dialogue between the warring communities is now open. With massive security forces in place, President's Rule offers a chance for talks. However, the true success depends on how the BJP in Delhi handles this delicate situation, balancing the region's needs with its political priorities.



## In AAP's Provenance Lies the Reason for Its Defeat

The Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) defeat in the Delhi assembly elections is being seen by many as a setback for the dream of alternative politics. However, what exactly was this "alternative politics" that AAP promised? A closer look at the party's origins and actions reveals that its defeat may not be surprising.

AAP emerged from the India Against Corruption (IAC) movement, which, despite its anti-corruption rhetoric, often used Hindu nationalist symbols and sentiments to gather support. Arvind Kejriwal's leadership in the movement, alongside figures like Baba Ramdev and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, already hinted at the party's soft Hindutva leanings. This communal undertone was overlooked at the time, but it became evident as AAP made questionable moves, such as supporting the abrogation of Article 370 and making statements against Muslims during the pandemic.

AAP's governance in Delhi faced significant challenges, especially with the BJP-led central government blocking the state government's initiatives through the office of the lieutenant governor (LG). This stalemate led some voters to shift support towards the BJP, believing that it was the only party capable of breaking the deadlock. AAP's promise of good governance and public services like education, water, and electricity was overshadowed by the inability to address larger issues.

Furthermore, AAP's engagement with "strategic communalism" became apparent during the election campaigns. The party adopted policies against Muslims, such as refusing admission to Rohingya and Bangladeshi children in Delhi schools. These actions blurred the line between AAP and BJP's tactics of using communal politics to garner Hindu votes.

AAP's promise of an alternative to traditional politics was undermined by its gradual shift towards the same divisive rhetoric and politics that it had once opposed. Though the party continued to promote "clean governance," its embrace of communal issues and lack of clarity on its ideological stance suggested that it was not the true alternative it claimed to be.

# Government Response to Delhi Stampede: LG's U-Turn and Vaishnav's Delay in Acknowledging Deaths



The official response to the deadly stampede at New Delhi railway station, which resulted in at least 18 deaths and numerous injuries, has been marred by confusion, lack of clarity, and deflection. The tragedy, which unfolded on the night of February 15, prompted a series of conflicting statements from Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, Delhi's Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena, and the Northern Railways.

### Chronology of Events

Initial reports of the stampede began circulating around 11:30 pm, with Vaishnav calling it a "sudden rush" in his first post on X (formerly Twitter). In this early communication, he downplayed the situation, claiming that the rush had been controlled with special trains to manage the crowd. Within minutes, Vaishnav posted again to state that four special trains had been deployed, and the situation was under control.

Shortly after Vaishnav's posts, the Delhi LG was the first official to acknowledge the deaths, initially confirming that lives had been lost in a stampede. However, just 30 minutes later, the LG edited his post to remove any mention of the stampede or casualties, offering a vague statement about an "unfortunate incident." This editing raised concerns of a potential cover-up.

It wasn't until around 1:00 am, after a condolence message from Prime Minis-

ter Modi, that Vaishnav issued a more formal acknowledgment of the stampede and the loss of lives, expressing condolences for the tragedy.

### Railway's Mismanagement and Contradictory Statements

The Northern Railways' response further compounded the confusion. On the night of the incident, the Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of Northern Railways dismissed reports of a stampede, claiming it was a "rumour." However, the next day, the CPRO released another statement attributing the tragedy to a passenger slipping on the stairs of the foot-over bridge, causing a chain reaction that led to the stampede. The confusion surrounding the stampede's cause, coupled with the delayed and inconsistent responses, triggered strong criticism from opposition parties. Congress demanded Vaishnav's resignation, accusing him of failing to take responsibility for the incident and of minimizing the tragedy by calling it a "minor incident." The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) also criticized the government for attempting to whitewash the incident and hide its severity.

### Opposition's Outcry

Opposition leaders, including Supriya Shrinete from Congress and Sanjay Singh from AAP, condemned the Union government's response, demanding account-

ability for the deaths. The response of the railway ministry, especially the denial and the delay in acknowledging the scale of the tragedy, led to accusations of a cover-up, with critics arguing that the government's first instinct was to protect itself rather than show empathy for the victims.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav expressed outrage at the repeated mismanagement, pointing out that the poor continue to suffer the most from the failures of the system. He called for accountability, questioning who would be held responsible for the deaths.

### Broader Context of Stampede Tragedies

This tragic incident comes just weeks after another deadly stampede during the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, which claimed at least 30 lives. The recurrence of such tragedies raises questions about the government's preparedness and its failure to manage large crowds safely.

In summary, the official response to the Delhi stampede has been marked by indecision, conflicting statements, and deflection of responsibility. The initial efforts to downplay the scale of the disaster, followed by contradictory explanations, have left the public and opposition parties accusing the government of attempting to cover up the truth rather than addressing the tragedy with transparency and accountability.



## 'Inaccessible' After BJP Complaints Over Modi-Trump Cartoon

The Tamil media group Vikatan has reportedly faced issues with its website becoming inaccessible, just hours after a cartoon published in its digital magazine sparked controversy within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The cartoon, which was published on February 10, depicted Prime Minister Narendra Modi shackled next to former US President Donald Trump, a visual commentary on the mistreatment of Indian deportees by US authorities.

### The Controversial Cartoon

The cartoon quickly became a point of contention after being criticized by BJP supporters, particularly Tamil Nadu BJP president K. Annamalai. The cartoon's portrayal of Modi in shackles alongside Trump appeared to upset BJP members, prompting Annamalai to lodge a formal complaint with the central government. The Tamil Nadu BJP's strong objections led to widespread discussion, and the digital publication faced backlash on social media. As a result, several users on the platform X (formerly Twitter) reported being unable to access the Vikatan website, leading to suspicions that the site may have been blocked.

### Vikatan's Response

Vikatan denied receiving any official communication from the Union government regarding the website's alleged blockage. In an official statement, the media group acknowledged the widespread reports from users stating they couldn't access the site, but emphasized that no formal notice had been issued by the central government. The group also reassured that it would continue to uphold the principles of free speech and freedom of expression, values that have been central to its operation for nearly a century. "We are still trying to ascertain the reasons behind the blocking of our website and are in the process of taking up this matter with the ministry," said Vikatan in their statement.

### Political Reactions

The situation drew immediate political reactions, with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin condemning the alleged blocking of the website. In a post on X, Stalin described the action as an example of the "fascist nature" of the BJP and expressed his concerns over the impact on democracy. He called for the immediate restoration of access to the website, stressing that blocking media outlets for expressing opinions was harmful to democratic values.

### Free Speech Concerns

The issue has reignited concerns about the state of free speech and media freedom in India, especially in light of previous instances where media outlets and content critical of the government faced repercussions. The blocking of Vikatan's website, whether government-directed or otherwise, has raised questions about the government's response to dissenting voices and the implications of such actions on the broader media landscape.

# PM Modi Meets President Murmu After 'Productive' US and France Visit

- Talks focus on diplomacy, governance.
- Govt formation in Delhi underway.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday evening at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, following his return from a "productive visit" to the United States and France. The meeting comes ahead of the anticipated government formation in Delhi.

The President's office shared pictures of the meeting between the two leaders on the social media platform X. A post from the President House's official handle stated, "Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan."

Modi's visit to the US and France was hailed as success-

ful by the Indian government, with discussions focusing on strengthening bilateral relations, economic ties, and various global challenges. The visit was seen as a significant diplomatic step for India, enhancing its strategic partnerships with two key Western nations.

This meeting between the Prime Minister and the President holds particular importance as the Indian government is set to undergo a transition, with the formation of the new administration in Delhi expected soon. While specifics of the discussion have not been made public, such meetings are often routine, focusing on matters of national and international importance.



The photos shared by Rashtrapati Bhavan depicted a cordial exchange, with both leaders seen engaged in conversation. Prime Minister Modi's return and the subsequent meeting with the President underscore the importance of continued governance as the country prepares for new develop-

ments on the political front. This interaction between Modi and Murmu continues a series of regular engagements between the country's top political leaders, underscoring the collaborative nature of India's political system as it works to address both domestic and international concerns.

## Prashant Kishor's Meeting with Vijay Sparks Speculation of Political Alliance



TPN Correspondent | Tamilnadu

A recent meeting between political strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor and actor-turned-politician Vijay in Chennai has set Tamil Nadu's political circles abuzz, leading to speculation about a potential collaboration. With assembly elections approaching in 2026, questions are now being raised about whether this was a casual meeting or the beginning of a strategic alliance between Kishor and Vijay's party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK).

Kishor, who has advised multiple political parties through his Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC), recently launched his own party, Jan Suraaj Party (JSP). However, JSP faced a setback in the 2024 Bihar bypolls, with three out of four candidates losing their deposits. This has raised doubts about Kishor's political future, prompting speculation that he may return to his consultancy roots after his party's underwhelming performance. The meeting with Vijay, who has a massive fanbase in Tamil Nadu, adds fuel to the idea that Kishor could be preparing to work with the TVK to reshape the state's political dynamics.

Vijay, having launched TVK, is positioning himself as a serious political figure, mirroring the political journeys of cinema icons like M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) and N.T. Rama Rao (NTR). His mass appeal could make the TVK a significant force in Tamil Nadu's politics, traditionally dominated by the DMK and AIADMK. However, whether Vijay's popularity can be translated into electoral success remains uncertain.

There is also speculation about a potential alliance between the TVK and the AIADMK, which has been struggling since the death of its leader J. Jayalalithaa. An alliance could potentially challenge the ruling DMK, with the BJP possibly joining as a third ally. However, for such a coalition to succeed, the AIADMK would need to offer the TVK substantial space within the partnership, which could be a point of contention.

As Tamil Nadu prepares for the next election, the Kishor-Vijay meeting marks a significant moment in the state's shifting political landscape.

## India pledges collective action at Indian Ocean Conference in Oman



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar called on countries across the Indian Ocean to collaborate and coordinate policies to ensure regional security and stability, particularly amid ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Speaking at the 8th Indian Ocean Conference in Muscat, Jaishankar emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation to navigate the region's challenges and uncertainties.

Jaishankar highlighted India's pivotal role in addressing var-

ious regional issues, including stabilizing economies under stress, responding to emergencies, and fostering connectivity across the Indian Ocean. His keynote address underscored the need for a united approach among nations in the region to secure stability and overcome economic and political challenges. "We seek stability and security as the baseline... They will be easier reached when we look out for each other, supplement our strengths and coordinate our policies," Jaishankar said, describing the cooperation as a "coordinated flotilla" for navigating the future. He stressed that, in to-

day's volatile era, nations must come together to achieve their collective goals.

The conference, which is supported by the foreign ministries of India and Oman, was attended by foreign ministers from several countries, including Iran, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and the Maldives. Representatives from China and the UK also participated. The event is occurring amid significant geopolitical shifts, spurred by the policies of the Donald Trump administration in the US and the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Jaishankar also discussed the region's resource constraints and the challenges countries face in meeting their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He alluded to the impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its assertive policies in the South China Sea, which have contributed to financial pressures and regional instability. Highlighting the importance of transparency and collaboration in tackling these challenges, Jaishankar reinforced that a coordinated effort will be key to overcoming the obstacles facing the Indian Ocean countries in the coming years.

## Nitish Announces Ex Gratia For Delhi Station Stampede, Lalu Says Faltu Hai Kumbh



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed deep sorrow over the tragic stampede that occurred at the New Delhi Railway Station on Saturday night, which claimed 18 lives, including 14 women and four minors, and left many others injured. In a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Nitish Kumar announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the families of the deceased who hailed from Bihar. The injured will receive compensation of Rs 50,000 for minor injuries and Rs 2.5 lakh for those seriously hurt.

The stampede occurred at a crowded New Delhi railway station, with several individuals still unaccounted for. Bihar officials are awaiting confirmation of the exact number of people from the state affected by the tragedy. Earlier, the Indian Railways had also announced compensation for the victims' families, with Rs 10 lakh for the deceased, and varying amounts for the injured.

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary also expressed his condolences, criticizing the central government's handling of the situation. He pointed out the "inadequate arrangements" by the railway authorities, which he believed contributed to the disaster. Choudhary suggested that Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw should take responsibility and resign for the incident. RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav, who served as the Union Railway Minister, also blamed the railway's mismanagement for the stampede. He described the incident as "unfortunate" and demanded that the railway minister be held accountable. "The Railway Minister should take responsibility for this," he stated, adding that the mismanagement led to unnecessary loss of life.

## Agreement reached on 38 of 54 recommendations: Himanta on Assam Accord

TPN Correspondent | Assam

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Sunday that the state government, in collaboration with the All Assam Students Union (AASU), has reached an agreement to implement 38 out of the 54 recommendations made by the high-level committee on Clause 6 of the Assam Accord. The Clause 6 provisions aim to provide greater protection to the indigenous people of Assam.

Sarma, speaking in Guwahati following a meeting with AASU representatives, explained that 52 of the committee's 54 recommendations fall under the purview of the Assam government. Of these, 38 recommendations will be implemented on a time-bound basis, as part



of the upcoming state budget and through future legislations and ordinances. He expressed hope that discussions in March and April will lead to an agreement on the remaining 14 recommendations.

Among the key recommendations being implemented is the mandatory inclusion of the As-

samese language as a subject in all schools in the Brahmaputra Valley. Similarly, Assamese and Bodo will be taught in all schools in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Additionally, all schools will be required to teach Assam's history and geography up to Class 8. These steps are seen as crucial to preserving the state's culture

and heritage. In another significant move, the state government will identify blocks in Assam where only individuals who have lived there for at least three generations or since 1951 will be allowed to purchase land. However, this restriction will not apply to urban areas, ensuring flexibility in land transactions in cities.

The Chief Minister also revealed that the state government has requested the central government to hold tripartite talks to address recommendations that fall outside the state's jurisdiction. This development marks a significant step towards fulfilling the promises made under the Assam Accord and ensuring greater protection and rights for the indigenous people of the state.



## Trump Team To Meet Russian, Ukrainian Negotiators, Hold Talks On Ending War

- US team heads to Saudi for Ukraine talks.
- Trump, Putin agree to ceasefire talks.
- Kyiv, EU wary of sudden negotiations.

TPN Correspondent | Washington

A senior delegation from US President Donald Trump's administration will soon begin discussions in Saudi Arabia with Russian and Ukrainian negotiators to seek an end to the ongoing war in Ukraine, US officials confirmed on Saturday. The team will include Secretary of State Marco Rubio, White House National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, and Trump's Middle East negotiator Steve Witkoff.

This diplomatic move follows Trump's recent announcement that he had held his first conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin since returning to office. The two leaders agreed to initiate talks aimed at negotiating a ceasefire in Ukraine. While details re-

garding the timing of the talks remain scarce, Rubio's planned visit to Saudi Arabia as part of his Middle East tour is expected to play a pivotal role in these discussions.

Rubio had a telephone conversation earlier with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, during which he reiterated President Trump's commitment to resolving the conflict in Ukraine. Rubio's trip to Israel, which marked the start of his Middle East tour, was part of broader efforts to engage with regional leaders on the Ukraine situation.

Steve Witkoff, a former property developer with a history of involvement in international negotiations, has been deeply involved in efforts to negotiate prisoner

exchanges, including the recent deal that facilitated a phone call between Trump and Putin. Witkoff's role underscores the Trump administration's focused approach to seeking resolution through direct negotiations.

In a social media post earlier this week, Trump emphasized that Rubio, Waltz, Witkoff, and CIA Director John Ratcliffe had been assigned to work swiftly on a deal with Russia to halt the war. However, this sudden shift in diplomatic strategy has taken Kyiv and its European allies by surprise. Both Ukraine and its Western supporters fear being sidelined in the discussions concerning the future of Ukraine after what has been the most significant land invasion in Europe since World War II.

## Amid 'Deep State' Charges, US Cuts Bangladesh "Political Landscape" Funds



TPN Correspondent | Washington

In a bid to reduce US taxpayer spending, the Donald Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has cancelled several overseas funding projects, including a controversial \$29 million initiative aimed at "strengthening the political landscape" in Bangladesh. The funding, which had been allocated to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), was intended to support political party capacity-building and foster better relationships between political parties and their constituents in Bangladesh.

The program, known as the Strengthening Political Landscape (SPL) project, also worked to reduce political violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution. According to Democracy International (DI), the program aimed to support political activists, citizens, and students in developing leadership skills and advocating for inclusive policies.

This funding cancellation comes just days after President Trump dismissed claims of US involvement in the political turmoil that led to the ousting of Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Speaking alongside Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Trump denied any role of the US in the 2024 regime change in Bangladesh, stating that the issue had long been managed by India.

Trump's remarks come amid growing tensions between Bangladesh and the US, following Hasina's ouster in August after massive protests, and the subsequent rise of an interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. The interim government has faced criticism for failing to protect religious minorities, especially Hindus, from attacks by radical Islamist elements. In addition to the cancellation of the SPL project, DOGE also slashed other foreign aid funding, including \$22 million intended for "voter turnout" initiatives in India and \$39 million allocated for "fiscal federalism" and "biodiversity conservation" programs in Nepal. These cuts are part of DOGE's broader efforts to reduce unnecessary government spending, which the administration says will benefit US taxpayers.

## Muhsin Hendricks, World's First Openly Gay Imam, Shot Dead in South Africa



TPN Correspondent | South Africa

Muhsin Hendricks, renowned as the world's first openly gay imam, was tragically shot and killed near the southern city of Gqeberha, South Africa, on Saturday. The imam, who dedicated his life to creating a safe haven for marginalized Muslims, particularly queer individuals, was targeted while in a car with another person. According to South African police, a vehicle suddenly blocked their path, and two assailants with covered faces exited and began firing multiple shots at the vehicle.

Hendricks, who was seated in the back of the car, was fatally shot. The driver managed to escape, and authorities later confirmed the authenticity of a video circulating on social media, which appeared to show the targeted attack. The police have not disclosed a clear motive for the murder, and the investigation is ongoing. They have urged anyone with information to come forward to assist with the case. Hendricks, who was a prominent figure in various LGBTQ advocacy groups, came out as gay in 1996 and later founded the Al-Ghurbaah mosque in Wynberg, near Cape Town. The mosque was known for offering a sanctuary where queer Muslims and marginalized women could practice Islam in a safe and inclusive environment. Hendricks was also featured in the 2022 documentary "The Radical," which chronicled his work and the challenges he faced as an openly gay religious leader.

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) condemned the murder, calling it a possible hate crime. ILGA World's executive director, Julia Ehrh, expressed deep shock over the killing, urging South African authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident. South Africa, despite its progressive stance on LGBTQ rights, continues to grapple with high levels of violence, as evidenced by its staggering murder rate of approximately 28,000 in the past year. Hendricks had previously spoken of the threats he faced but maintained that the need to live authentically outweighed the fear of death. His death marks a tragic loss for the LGBTQ Muslim community and the broader fight for equality and acceptance.

## Ex-Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth Arrested In Money-Laundering Case

TPN Correspondent | Port Louis

Pravind Jugnauth, the former Prime Minister of Mauritius, was arrested on Sunday in connection with a money-laundering investigation, marking a significant development in the ongoing probe into financial crimes on the island. Jugnauth, along with his wife Kobita Jugnauth, was initially detained on Saturday and questioned for several hours before his formal arrest in the early hours of Sunday.

Pravind Jugnauth, 63, who served as Prime Minister from 2017 to 2024, denied the allegations against him. His lawyer, Raouf Gulbul, stated that the ex-leader had provided his version of events and would appear before a judge later on Sunday. Kobita Jugnauth was released after questioning.

As part of the investigation, police conducted raids on the homes of other suspects, including a local leisure company employee and a real estate executive.



In these raids, law enforcement officials seized various items, including luxury watches, stacks of cash, and documents bearing the Jugnauth family's name. These findings have raised suspicions about the scale of the money-laundering operation.

The Financial Crimes Commission had earlier issued a notice to prevent the Jugnauths and two other suspects

from leaving the country, citing their involvement in a money-laundering case.

Pravind Jugnauth is a member of a political dynasty that has dominated Mauritius since its independence from Britain in 1968. His leadership was marked by significant achievements, including a historic deal with Britain over the Chagos Islands, which had been a long-standing territorial dispute. Jugnauth's government oversaw Mauritius regaining sovereignty over the islands, although the UK and US continue to operate a military base there under a lease agreement.

The arrest comes after Jugnauth's party suffered a crushing defeat in the November elections, which saw his rival Navin Ramgoolam return to power as Prime Minister. Ramgoolam's government has reopened negotiations on the Chagos Islands issue, aiming to renegotiate the terms of the UK-US military base lease.

## UAE Expands Visa-On-Arrival Facility For Indians From 6 More Countries

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has expanded its visa-on-arrival program for Indian passport holders by including those with valid visas, residence permits, or Green Cards from six additional countries. This move will allow more Indian nationals to benefit from the visa-on-arrival facilities at UAE entry points, facilitating smoother travel for both tourism and business.

Under the new regulations, Indian nationals holding valid documentation from Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada are now eligible for the visa-on-arrival facility. Previously, this privilege was

limited to Indian citizens with valid visas or residence permits from the United States, European Union member states, and the United Kingdom. The decision aims to streamline travel between India and the UAE, reflecting the strengthening of ties between the two nations.

To qualify for the visa-on-arrival program, Indian nationals must fulfill certain criteria, including holding a valid ordinary passport with at least six months' validity from the date of arrival. In addition, they must possess a valid visa, residence permit, or Green Card from any of the newly eligible countries. Once these conditions are met, travellers will pay the visa fee upon ar-

rival at UAE immigration checkpoints. The UAE has introduced three visa categories under the program, each with a nominal fee. The 4-day visa is priced at Dh100 (approximately Rs 2,270), while a 14-day extension costs Dh250 (approximately Rs 5,670). There is also a 60-day visa, which is also priced at Dh250.

Major General Suhail Saeed Al Khailli, Director General of the UAE's Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs, and Port Security (ICP), stated that this move aligns with the long-term strategic partnership between the UAE and India. The initiative seeks to facilitate travel for Indian citizens, enhancing opportunities for tourism, residency, and employment in the UAE.



## Mcap of 8 of top-10 valued firms tumbles Rs 2 lakh crore; Reliance biggest laggard



The combined market valuation of eight out of the ten most valuable domestic firms saw a significant drop of Rs 2 lakh crore last week, largely due to a bearish trend in the broader stock market. Leading this decline was Reliance Industries, which saw the biggest hit, alongside other major companies such as Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Infosys, State Bank of India (SBI), Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finance, and ITC.

Equity benchmark indices, including Sensex and Nifty, continued their downward trajectory for the eighth consecutive day on Friday. Over the past eight trading days, the BSE Sensex plummeted by 2,644.6 points, or 3.36%, while the Nifty shed 810 points, or 3.41%.

Reliance Industries experienced a sharp drop in its market capitalization (mcap), losing Rs 67,526.54 crore to settle at Rs 16,46,822.12 crore. Similarly, TCS saw a decline of Rs 34,950.72 crore in its valuation, bringing its mcap down to Rs 14,22,903.37 crore. HDFC

Bank also suffered a loss of Rs 28,382.23 crore, reducing its mcap to Rs 12,96,708.35 crore. ITC's valuation shrank by Rs 25,429.75 crore to Rs 5,13,699.85 crore.

In addition, Infosys' mcap fell by Rs 19,287.32 crore to Rs 7,70,786.76 crore, and State Bank of India's valuation dropped by Rs 13,431.55 crore to Rs 6,44,357.57 crore. Hindustan Unilever saw its mcap reduce by Rs 10,714.14 crore, closing at Rs 5,44,647 crore, while Bajaj Finance's mcap dipped by Rs 4,230.4 crore to Rs 5,20,082.42 crore.

On the flip side, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank were among the few gainers. Bharti Airtel's mcap surged by Rs 22,426.2 crore to Rs 9,78,631.54 crore, while ICICI Bank's valuation rose by Rs 1,182.57 crore to Rs 8,88,815.13 crore.

Despite the losses, Reliance Industries retained its position as the most valuable firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, SBI, Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finance, and ITC.



## Depreciating rupee may impact softened inflation in Q4 2024-25

A depreciating rupee could pose a significant risk to India's overall inflation, particularly by increasing the prices of imported goods, according to a report by financial services firm Centrum Broking. The rupee is currently trading near its all-time low, which typically makes imports more expensive and could contribute to higher inflationary pressures.

However, the report notes that steady progress in Rabi sowing and the softening of food prices are expected to help lower inflation in the fourth quarter of 2024-25. India's retail inflation stood at 4.3% in January, marking a five-month low and staying comfortably within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) target range of 2-6%. This decline in inflation is largely attributed to a drop in food prices, particularly fresh produce, which has helped ease inflationary concerns.

The Centrum report highlights that with food inflation in check, the food basket is projected to play a significant role in keeping overall inflation lower in the

near term. The decline in inflation is also seen as a key factor that may give the RBI more room to focus on fostering economic growth. The central bank has maintained a neutral stance on interest rates, with any future rate cuts being dependent on incoming macroeconomic data.

Food inflation had been a major concern in India, particularly due to rising prices of vegetables, fruits, and oils. This trend seems to have eased, providing relief to policymakers who are working toward bringing retail inflation down to a sustainable 4%.

The RBI had kept the repo rate elevated at 6.5% for nearly five years to control inflation but recently reduced it by 25 basis points to support growth and consumption. Looking ahead, Centrum forecasts that inflation will average 4.8% in 2024-25, with the possibility of another 25 basis points rate cut. However, the firm cautions that the depreciating rupee must be monitored closely, as it could offset some of the gains made in controlling inflation.

## Indian Steel Industry at Risk of Dumping Due to US Tariffs: JSPL Chairman



The Indian steel industry must be vigilant as countries exporting steel to the US may redirect shipments to India following the imposition of tariffs by the US, according to Naveen Jindal, Chairman of Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL). Speaking at the Global Business Summit (GBS) on Saturday, Jindal warned that the tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump on steel and aluminum imports could lead to a surge in unfair exports to India due to the country's large domestic demand.

"Countries sending shipments to the US may dump their products in India because of the massive demand in our market," Jindal cautioned, adding that the Indian steel industry would need to be protected from such unfair trade practices.

To address the issue, the Indian Steel Association has already filed an application with the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), which is currently reviewing

the matter. Indian steel producers have long raised concerns over the dumping of steel products from certain countries, which has negatively affected their competitiveness in the domestic market.

Jindal expressed optimism that a positive decision would be reached soon to safeguard the interests of the Indian steel industry. Official data indicates a concerning trend: India's steel exports have fallen by 28.9% to 3.99 million tonnes in the April-January period of FY25, compared to 5.61 million tonnes during the same period last year. Meanwhile, steel imports into India have surged by over 20%, reaching 8.29 million tonnes during the same period.

The steel industry's struggles come amid the US imposing a 25% tariff on all steel and aluminum imports. India, which remains a net importer of steel, faces the risk of foreign steel flooding its market, putting additional pressure on local manufacturers.

## Nifty Smallcap 100 Enters Bear Market Amid US Tariff Concerns

The Indian stock market witnessed significant turbulence on Friday, with the Nifty Smallcap 100 index officially entering a 'bear' market phase after it plunged around 22% from its peak of 19,716.20. The index closed nearly 4% lower, settling at 15,373.70. This decline was part of a broader market sell-off that also affected midcap stocks, as the Nifty Midcap 150 index dropped by almost 2.5%, closing at 18,325.40, according to NSE data.

Pharmaceutical stocks bore the brunt of the market sell-off on Thursday, largely due to growing concerns over potential reciprocal tariffs from the US. Stocks like Natco Pharma and Laurus Labs, which are part of the Nifty Smallcap 100 index, witnessed substantial declines, both falling over 9%. Other stocks within the same index, including IFCI, Glenmark Pharma, Finolex Cables, HFCL, BEML, and Apar Industries, also saw steep declines, losing over 7% on Friday.

The broader market sell-off came amid news of potential changes in US trade policy under President Donald Trump. On Thursday evening, Trump signed an order directing the US Trade Representative and the Commerce Secretary to devise new country-specific tariffs aimed at rebalancing trade relations. According to Howard Lutnick, Trump's nominee for Commerce Secretary, these changes may be implemented by April 1, 2025.

In addition to these country-specific tariffs, Trump also indicated that additional import



taxes could be imposed on goods such as cars, semiconductors, and pharmaceuticals, deepening concerns in the Indian market. The pharmaceutical sector, in particular, could be hit hard by such policies, as the US is a major market for Indian pharmaceutical exports.

In a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Trump noted that India has some of the highest tariffs globally, but reassured that both leaders are committed to strengthening bilateral ties and improving trade policies between the two nations. This potential shift in trade dynamics added to the market's volatility, as investors grew increasingly cautious about the economic impact of rising tariffs.

With the Nifty Smallcap 100 index entering a bear market, and concerns mounting over the impact of US tariff policies, investors are closely monitoring developments for any signs of stabilization in the Indian stock market.

## The “Happiness Factory: Parents In South Korea Are Locking Themselves

In a unique experiment in Gangwon Province, South Korea, parents are voluntarily participating in a confinement experience designed to help them understand the social isolation and anxiety that their children are facing. The experiment, known as the “Happiness Factory,” involves parents being shut into small rooms for three days with no access to TVs, phones, laptops, or even any form of communication. Their only connection to the outside world is a small feeding hole through which their meals are passed.



tense pressure from school or society.

The purpose of this intense and somewhat extreme experience is to give parents a first-hand insight into what their children, many of whom are “reclusive youths,” experience daily. These youths, often referred to as “hikikomori” in Japan and South Korea, spend most of their time alone in their rooms, avoiding social interaction and engagement with the outside world. The isolation is usually due to a range of factors, including anxiety, depression, and in-

Parents who join the program hope to better understand the emotional and psychological toll their children endure when they withdraw from the outside world. The isolation is often a cry for help or a reaction to intense social pressures, yet many parents struggle to relate to their children’s feelings and struggles. By voluntarily experiencing confinement, parents aim to gain empathy and create better strategies for supporting their children in overcoming their social anxiety and withdrawal.

The “Happiness Factory” is not just about the isolation experience itself; it’s also a form of therapy and education for parents, who engage in group discussions afterward. Through these conversations, parents share insights and emotional struggles, learning how to create more open and supportive environments for their children. The ultimate goal of this experiment is to equip parents with the tools to help their reclusive children reintegrate into society in a healthy, supportive way, allowing for better communication and understanding within families.

## Youtuber Gets Stuck On Mobile Tower After Climbing It To Boost Channel Views

A YouTuber from Uttar Pradesh, identified as Nileshwar, found himself stranded and needing rescue after attempting a daring stunt for online fame. Nileshwar, who runs the YouTube channel Nileshwar22, climbed a mobile tower in Tigri village, Greater Noida, in an attempt to attract views. His channel, which has around 8,900 subscribers, aimed to boost its popularity through the risky stunt, which was being recorded by his partner.



As Nileshwar climbed the tower, their activity started to attract attention, and soon, a large crowd gathered beneath the structure. However, when his partner noticed the growing crowd, he fled the scene, leaving Nileshwar stuck at the top of the tower. The situation quickly escalated, and local authorities were called in to help. A five-hour rescue operation ensued, with the police working tirelessly to bring Nileshwar down safely.

The incident highlights the growing trend of YouTubers and online personalities taking dangerous risks for the sake of gaining more views and followers. The police have since issued a warning against engaging in such perilous activities, urging individuals to avoid putting their lives at risk for online fame.

This incident is not isolated. Recently, a similar stunt took place in Pune, where a woman dangled from a tall building, holding onto the hand of a man lying on the roof. Both were arrested after the stunt, with the person filming the video still on the run.

In another case, a YouTuber from Kerala, Sanju Techy, tried a risky stunt inspired by a Malayalam film. He transformed his car into a makeshift swimming pool by lining it with a tarpaulin sheet and filling it with water. The stunt caused a traffic jam when the water seeped into the vehicle’s seats and engine, and authorities were forced to intervene. Sanju and his friends were fined for violating traffic rules, and the car’s registration was suspended, along with the driver’s license. These incidents serve as a stark reminder of the dangers of prioritizing online fame over personal safety.

## Instagram Tests “Dislike” Button for Comments

Instagram, owned by Meta, is currently testing a controversial new feature that allows users to “dislike” comments. Several users have reported seeing a downward arrow next to the usual like heart in the comments section of posts, including Feed posts and Reels. However, Instagram has not officially confirmed the feature’s broader rollout or provided details on when it might become available to all users.



The new “dislike” button gives users the ability to express disagreement with certain comments, functioning similarly to the downvote feature found on platforms like Reddit. This change could allow people to signal whether they agree or disagree with opinions shared in the comment sections, potentially adding a new layer of interaction to Instagram’s platform.

Despite its potential to offer users more ways to interact with content, the feature has faced significant backlash. Many people are concerned that the dislike button could lead to in-

creased negativity, bullying, and toxicity within comment sections. Critics argue that it could open the door to a more hostile environment, as users may misuse the feature to downvote comments in a vindictive or hurtful manner. Some users have even shared screenshots of their comments sections with the newly added down arrow, expressing their discontent with the button’s presence.

its benefits in promoting more nuanced discussions or highlighting comments people strongly disagree with, its potential for encouraging online hostility has many worried. Instagram’s move to test the dislike button has reignited debates about how social media platforms can balance user expression with maintaining a positive and supportive environment. For now, it remains unclear whether the feature will be fully rolled out or scrapped due to user feedback.

While the feature may have

## \*\* Apple Vision Pro Set for New Features, Including Apple Intelligence and Guest Mode\*\*

Apple is preparing to enhance its Vision Pro headset with several new features, including the addition of Apple Intelligence, an updated guest mode, and a spatial content app. These upgrades are expected to be rolled out as part of a software update, with the possibility of a beta version for developers being available as soon as this week, according to a report by Bloomberg News on Saturday.



The Vision Pro, which costs around \$3,500, has already attracted attention for its innovative design and capabilities. The upcoming software update is poised to expand its functionality even further, offering users more personalized experiences and new features to interact with the headset. One of the major additions is the integration of Apple Intelligence, which will likely bring advanced AI-driven features to the device. Apple has been focusing heavily on AI and machine learning in its product lineup, and the Vision Pro headset will now benefit from

this expertise, making the device more intuitive and responsive to users’ needs. Additionally, the update will introduce an updated guest mode, which will allow users to share their Vision Pro headset with others without compromising their personal settings or data. This feature could make the device more accessible to multiple users in households or shared environments. Another exciting feature coming with the update is the spatial content app, which will likely expand the range of immersive experiences available on the Vision Pro. The app

could open new possibilities for entertainment, productivity, and other activities, taking full advantage of the headset’s immersive display and advanced technology. These new features will likely be part of an ongoing effort by Apple to improve the Vision Pro headset and solidify its position in the growing augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) market. With the software update expected soon, developers will have the opportunity to explore these new tools and help refine them ahead of the wider rollout to consumers.

## Chennai Influencer Gives A Tour Of Etihad’s Ultra-Luxurious The Residence

When it comes to luxury in the skies, Etihad Airways is redefining what it means to fly in style. Recently, a Chennai couple with their child shared their lavish experience aboard the airline’s Airbus A380, booking “The Residence” suite, which offers an exclusive, private flying experience. With ticket prices ranging from Rs 3-4 lakh, this service is considered to be one of the most opulent ways to travel.

Content creator Keerthi documented the entire journey on Instagram, providing a rare glimpse into the extravagant services offered by Etihad. According to Keerthi, the luxury experience began even before they boarded the flight. Passengers who book The Residence are granted access to Etihad’s exclusive First Class Lounge at Abu Dhabi International Airport, which is a far cry from your typical airport experience. The lounge

offers a host of premium services, including a la carte gourmet dining, spotless shower suites, a dedicated children’s play area, and private cabins for families.

Once aboard, The Residence delivers an unmatched level of comfort and privacy. With features akin to a private jet, the suite includes a spacious living area, a separate bedroom, and a private bathroom with a shower. Passengers enjoy personalized service from a dedicated butler, ensuring every need is met, from meals to special requests. The cabin’s sophisticated design combines comfort with elegance, allowing families to travel in absolute luxury.

For those seeking the ultimate flying experience, Etihad’s The Residence is the epitome of lavish air travel. Whether you’re enjoying world-class



dining in the lounge or relaxing in your own private suite, the experience offers a level of

exclusivity and comfort that is unparalleled in commercial aviation.

## IPL 2025: KKR vs RCB to Kick Off Tournament on March 22; Full Schedule Released



The highly anticipated IPL 2025 season is set to begin on March 22, with defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) taking on Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) at their home ground, Eden Gardens. This match will mark the opening of a thrilling ten-team tournament that will span 65 days, with 74 matches to be held across 13 venues.

The schedule was officially announced by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) through broadcasters JioHotstar. After a break following the Champions Trophy, which ends on March 9, the IPL action will resume.

The opening weekend includes several exciting fixtures. On March 23, Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), who

were the runners-up in IPL 2024, will host 2008 champions Rajasthan Royals (RR) at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium. The same evening, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) will take on Mumbai Indians (MI) in a much-anticipated clash at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. These two teams, both with five IPL titles each, will also meet in Mumbai on April 20 for the reverse fixture.

Other key matches include Delhi Capitals (DC) facing Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in Visakhapatnam on March 24 and Gujarat Titans (GT) opening their campaign against Punjab Kings (PBKS) in Ahmedabad on March 25.

Notably, KKR is also scheduled to host Qualifier 2 on May 23 and the IPL 2025 final on May 25, while Hyderabad will host Qualifier 1 and the Eliminator on May 20 and 21, respectively.

New captain announcements for several teams have also been made, with RCB naming Rajat Patidar as their new leader, and Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant appointed as captains for PBKS and LSG, respectively. However, KKR and DC are yet to announce their captains.

The full IPL 2025 schedule promises a thrilling cricketing season for fans across the globe.

## Delhi Dribblers End Mumbai Titans' Winning Streak in Thrilling Showdown



In a nail-biting InBL Pro U25 clash at the Thyagraj Indoor Stadium, the Delhi Dribblers handed the Mumbai Titans their first loss in four games, defeating them 88-84 in a thrilling contest. The Dribblers dominated the first half, putting up a staggering 59 points, but the Titans mounted a fierce comeback in the second half, setting up a dramatic finish.

Lachlan Barker once again led the charge for the Dribblers, scoring 25 points, while Daniel Poelsma played a pivotal role with 23 points, including several crucial three-pointers. Newcomer Piyush Meena made his debut for the Dribblers, adding to the team's depth.

The Dribblers were off to a strong start, with early baskets from Barker and James Montgomery, and an energetic offense that helped them establish an early lead. The Titans, led by Aaron Verghese Blessen's strong drives to the basket, kept pace, but the Dribblers capitalized on turnovers to maintain their edge. Barker hit a clutch four-point play toward the end of the first quarter, extending the lead to eight.

In the second quarter, the Dribblers' offense continued to roll. With the Titans' attack stalling, Poelsma knocked down several three-pointers, pushing the lead to 15 points. By halftime, the Dribblers had an impressive

25-point advantage, heading into the break with a commanding lead.

The Titans came out strong after halftime, intensifying their defense. Lokendra and Dalph Panopio led the charge with fast breaks and perimeter shooting, while Montgomery fought hard in the paint. The Titans exploded for 42 points in the third quarter, trimming the Dribblers' lead to just 11 points heading into the final quarter.

The fourth quarter saw the Titans continue their surge, with Kitto hitting a deep three and Durell McDonald converting a three-point play. The Dribblers struggled offensively, allowing the Titans to close the gap to just two points.

As the game reached its climax, the Titans, led by Judd and McDonald, tied the game. However, Barker and Pratyanshu Tomar responded with key shots to maintain a slim lead. With 18 seconds left, Barker sank crucial free throws to give the Dribblers a four-point lead. Montgomery then sealed the win with a powerful two-handed dunk, ensuring the Dribblers' victory.

The Dribblers' 88-84 win was a dramatic and hard-fought contest, marking a memorable end to the Titans' three-game winning streak.

## Yashasvi Jaiswal Ruled Out of Mumbai's Ranji Trophy Semi-Final Against Vidarbha

Mumbai's preparations for the upcoming Ranji Trophy semi-final against Vidarbha have taken a significant blow with opener Yashasvi Jaiswal being ruled out due to a right ankle injury. Jaiswal sustained the injury during training over the weekend, just days before the semi-final clash, which is set to begin on Monday in Nagpur.

Initially part of India's Champions Trophy 2025 squad, Jaiswal was later replaced by spinner Varun Chakaravathy and was retained as a non-travelling reserve. However, following his injury, Jaiswal is expected to return home, and there will be no replacement named for him in Mumbai's semi-final squad.

Despite Jaiswal's absence, Mumbai's squad still boasts a wealth of experience with players like Ajinkya Rahane, Suryakumar Ya-



shivam Dube, and Shardul Thakur. Among them, Shivam Dube is also a non-travelling reserve for India's Champions Trophy squad and could potentially be called up if required.

Jaiswal, a regular member of India's Test squad, had recently made his ODI debut against England in Nagpur, stepping in for Virat Kohli, who was sidelined due to a knee injury. He scored 15 runs in that match. Jaiswal has only played one Ranji Trophy match this season, where he scored 4 and 26 in Mumbai's group-stage loss to Jammu and Kashmir.

This semi-final clash against Vidarbha is a rematch of last season's final. Vidarbha have been in exceptional form, winning seven out of their eight matches this season. They head into the semi-final on the back of a dominant 198-run victory over Tamil Nadu in the quarter-finals. Mumbai will now look to rely on their experienced squad to carry them through to the final, despite Jaiswal's absence.

## Tejas Dhingra Defends National Championship Title at NEC Show Jumping 2024-25



Tejas Dhingra of Beeya's Riding Facility successfully retained his National Championship title at the National Equestrian Championship (Show Jumping) 2024-25. The prestigious event took place at the Modi Equestrian Academy in Meerut on Sunday.

Dhingra, the reigning champion, triumphed with

an impressive 16 points in the Championship Tour, securing the top spot. He finished ahead of the joint runners-up, Amar Sarin of Tarc Equestrian Centre and Ashray Butta of EGC Stables, who shared second place. This victory marks another significant achievement in Dhingra's show jumping career.

## FIH Hockey Pro League: India Captain Salima Tete Praises Team's Resilience Against England



India women's team captain Salima Tete praised her team's performance against England in the FIH Hockey Pro League, despite their narrow loss in the shootout. The match ended in a tense 2-2 draw, with both teams battling fiercely. India showed great resilience, holding their nerve to force the game into the shootout. However, England kept their composure during the shootout and managed to win the bonus point.

Tete expressed her satisfaction with how her team played, emphasizing their determination and resilience on the field. Although the loss in the shootout was disappointing, the captain acknowledged the positive aspects of her team's performance, highlighting their ability to stay strong under pressure. The match at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium on Sunday was an exciting contest, showcasing the competitive spirit of both teams.



## Movie Review: "MAX" (Streaming on ZEE5)



Released on February 15, 2025, MAX is a Kannada action thriller starring Sudeepa and directed by Vijay Karthikeyaa. The movie, now streaming on ZEE5, revolves around a tough police officer named Max, who confronts political corruption and crime in a troubled region. The film follows Max as he navigates through a complex scenario involving powerful political families and their rebellious children, leading to a murder mystery that challenges the law enforcement system. While Sudeepa delivers a strong performance, the film's character development feels lacking, particularly in the antagonist roles. Varalaxmi Sarathkumar's introduction is intriguing, but her character

loses impact as the story progresses. The film's narrative closely resembles Karthi's Kaithi, which may evoke a sense of familiarity for some viewers. Despite impressive cinematography by Shekhar Chandra and a solid background score by Ajaneesh Loknath, the screenplay fails to fully capitalize on its potential. The film could have been more gripping with stronger villain arcs and sharper pacing. Ultimately, MAX remains an average action thriller, with its shortcomings preventing it from reaching its true potential. Rating: 2.75/5

## Nicole Kidman Talks About Her Motivation to Work with Female Directors



Hollywood icon Nicole Kidman has shared her inspiration behind collaborating with female directors, including Sofia Coppola, Halina Reijn, and Lulu Wang. Reflecting on her career choices, Kidman expressed that she feels deeply connected to women's stories, as a "mother, daughter, wife, producer, and actress." She feels that her personal experiences allow her to understand and portray women's emotions authentically, which makes her gravitate toward working with talented female filmmakers. In an interview, Kidman explained, "I feel in tune with women's stories, obviously, I am a woman, and I can speak as a mother, daughter, wife, producer, actress; in short, I can move in different spaces and use a well of emotions and experiences to express my voice." She spoke highly of her collaborations with renowned directors, praising their unique perspectives, such as Susanne Bier, Lulu Wang, and Mimi Cave, the young director of Holland. Kidman also mentioned her upcoming project, Scarpetta, where she will work with the accomplished Franco-Swedish director Charlotte Brandstrom. While she remains committed to telling stories that resonate with her emotionally, she emphasized that she will not limit herself to only female-led narratives. Her primary focus will always be on the emotional impact and connection she feels with the story. As a fearless actress, she remains dedicated to embracing roles that challenge and inspire her.

## Nandamuri Balakrishna's "Dakko Maharaj" to Stream on Netflix from February 21

Nandamuri Balakrishna's latest blockbuster, Dakko Maharaj, is set to stream on Netflix from February 21. The film, directed by Bobby Kolli and produced by Sitara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, was released in theatres on January 12 and quickly became a major hit. The movie garnered significant box office success with record-breaking collections from the first show itself, marking Balakrishna's fourth consecutive hit. The film features Balakrishna

na alongside Pragya Jaiswal, while Shraddha Srinath, Chandini Chowdary, Urvashi Rautela, and Bobby Deol play key roles. The music for the film was composed by Thaman. Balakrishna, who is currently busy shooting for the highly anticipated Akhanda 2 under Boyapati Srinu's direction, continues to maintain a strong presence in the industry. Fans of the actor and the film can now enjoy Dakko Maharaj on Netflix starting this week.



## Ed Sheeran Ends India Tour with Electrifying Delhi-NCR Concert



British music sensation Ed Sheeran wrapped up his Mathematics Tour to India with an electrifying performance in Delhi-NCR on Saturday, leaving thousands of fans ecstatic. Performing at the Leisure Valley Ground, Sheeran, armed with just his guitar and a loop station, showcased why he's one of the world's most captivating live performers. Opening the evening, Indian singer-actor Lisa Mishra set the stage with her energetic performance,

getting the crowd hyped for the main act. After a short wait, Sheeran appeared wearing a 'Delhi' T-shirt, greeted by loud cheers. He began with 'Castle on the Hill', before addressing the audience, sharing how he wished to perform across various cities in India, unlike his previous tours which were confined to Mumbai. Sheeran's tour, which began in Pune on January 30, took him to Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Shillong before concluding in

Delhi. He shared his joy of exploring Delhi, mentioning his sight-seeing adventures in Old Delhi and expressing his gratitude for the warm welcome. During his performance, he demonstrated his impressive loop station skills, layering beats, harmonies, and guitar riffs in real time. Promising to return soon, Sheeran left his fans eagerly awaiting his next visit to India.

## Kareena Kapoor Requests Paparazzi to Avoid Clicking Pictures of Kids at Randhir Kapoor's Birthday Bash

At Randhir Kapoor's recent birthday celebration, Kareena Kapoor made a special request to the paparazzi to refrain from clicking pictures of her children. The actress, who has always been protective of her family's privacy, reiterated her stance on keeping her kids out of the limelight. This came as she made her appearance at

the event, where she was seen in a stunning ensemble, maintaining her usual grace. Kareena, who was last seen in Singham Again, is a staunch advocate of her children's privacy. Her call for no pictures of her kids further reinforces her commitment to safeguarding their personal space.



## Katrina Kaif Praises Vicky Kaushal's Stellar Performance in Chhaava

As Vicky Kaushal's historical action film Chhaava hit theaters, his wife, Katrina Kaif, took to Instagram to share her admiration for his performance. Posting a poster of the film, she described the experience as "what a cinematic experience" and praised the film's

portrayal of the glory of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, directed by Laxman Utekar. She specifically highlighted the powerful impact of the final 40 minutes, admitting that she spent the morning wanting to re-watch the film. Katrina continued to shower love

on her husband, calling his performance "outstanding." She expressed awe at the intensity and transformation Vicky brings to every character, referring to him as a "chameleon" for his effortless portrayal of different roles. "Every time you come on screen,

every shot, the intensity you bring on screen, you are a chameleon," she wrote, proudly celebrating Vicky's talent. In Chhaava, Vicky Kaushal plays the role of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, while Rashmika Mandanna stars as Maharani Yesubai.

