



Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
H 27° C L 14° C	H 30° C L 19° C	H 26° C L 21° C

CM Naidu Inaugurates International Temples Convention and Expo at Tirupati



TPN Correspondent Tirupati, Feb 18

CM Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the International Temples Convention and Expo in Tirupati, addressing the crowd with his vision for India's future. Praising the leadership of the Prime Minister, he expressed that India's technological progress is leaps and bounds ahead, particularly benefiting from the nation's large youth population. He believes that India can reach the top global position by 2047. Chandrababu discussed the integration of technology in temple programs, making religious practices more accessible. He emphasized that serving God is paramount and men-

tioned how Tirumala Balaji symbolizes the trust of millions of devotees. Regarding temple development, he revealed that Rs. 134 crores had been allocated for infrastructure improvements in temples across Andhra Pradesh. Additionally, funds are being directed towards the salaries of priests and the development of Vedic schools. Committees for major temples are being established to organize programs effectively. Highlighting the economic potential of temples, Chandrababu stated that they are not just spiritual centers but also key sources of income, particularly through temple tourism. He noted that large donations from devotees are being used for educa-

tional, medical, and social service programs. The CM also spoke about efforts to improve the experience for devotees by enhancing facilities and increasing greenery in temples. He highlighted that efforts are underway to achieve 75 percent greenery in Tirumala. He stressed the importance of temples in preserving India's cultural heritage. Chandrababu concluded by recalling the Annadanam program initiated by NTR, which now provides Anna Prasadam to lakhs of people daily. He also mentioned the growing number of Lord Venkateswara temples both in India and abroad, with plans to set up a temple circuit in the state.

No Need to Worry About Guillain-Barré Syndrome: Minister Satyakumar



- **No Need to Worry:** Minister reassures the public about GBS.
- **Aarogyasri Coverage:** GBS treatment is provided under Aarogyasri.
- **GBS Cases in State:** 43 cases reported, 17 under treatment.
- **Recovery Rate:** 85% recover naturally, 15% need injections.
- **Injection Availability:** 749 injections available across key hospitals.
- **Cost of Treatment:** Rs. 20,000 per injection for GBS patients.

2 PAGE



Court to Announce Ruling on Vallabhaneni Vamsi Case on Tuesday

- **Court Issues Key Orders in Vallabhaneni Vamsi Case.**
- **Court Orders and Witness Testimonies.**
- **Custody request and bail conditions under review.**
- **Satyavardhan's statement recorded in court.**
- **Court reviews petitions on custody and health concerns.**

TPN Correspondent Vijayawada, Feb 18

Key Developments in Former Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi Case the SC and ST Atrocity Court in Vijayawada is witnessing crucial developments in the case against former MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi, who is currently in custody over his alleged involvement in the Gannavaram TDP office attack and the kidnapping of key witness Satyavardhan.

2 PAGE



NO CENSOR... NO CONTROL... FULL ADULT CONTENT ON MEDIA

- **Lack of Media Censorship**
- **Social Media vs. Traditional Media**
- **Ethical Crisis in Journalism**
- **The Need for Stricter Regulations**
- **Media's Descent into Controversy**
- **Mainstream Media's Obsession with Sensationalism**

TPN | Kishore Katta Central Desk, Feb 18

The increasing spread of explicit and sensational content across social media platforms has sparked concerns over media ethics and censorship. With little to no regulation, digital platforms are becoming breeding grounds for inappropriate content, overshadowing the primary role of journalism.

Traditionally regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy, the media was expected to act as a watchdog and voice public concerns. However, with the rise of digital platforms, mainstream media has shifted its focus from responsible journalism to chasing sensational content. The demand for adult-themed debates and scandalous reports has overshadowed meaningful discourse. Conversations between individuals are being twisted into controversy, leading to explicit videos being uploaded across various channels.

YouTube, once considered an alternative for independent voices, has now become a battleground for sensationalism, bypassing traditional journalism with unchecked content. The increasing competition for views and revenue has resulted in unethical practices, including the invasion of celebrities' personal lives for TRPs.

A recent case involving Lavanya is a prime example of the media's reckless approach. Despite the case being unrelated to Shekhar Basha, several channels dragged him into their reports for the sake of increasing viewership. Lavanya was subjected to repeated interviews, and her call records were exposed on live television.

Similarly, the social media frenzy surrounding Duvvada and Madhuri's relationship highlights the exploitation of personal affairs for online engagement. The controversy, which started with Duvvada's issues with his wife Vani, was amplified by YouTube channels through interviews and exaggerated narratives. The relentless focus on their relationship was aimed purely at boosting channel traffic. Jana Sena leader Kiran Royal's leaked phone call further demonstrates how media outlets fabricate stories without verification. YouTube thumbnails have become more obscene than the content itself, with exaggerated imagery designed to mislead viewers. Despite these alarming trends, state I&PR departments remain passive, failing to take necessary action against misleading and inappropriate media practices.

With thousands of YouTube channels emerging across Telugu states, concerns over media guidelines have intensified. While platform policies exist, enforcement remains weak. Governments have introduced laws regarding social media regulation, but their ineffective implementation has allowed unchecked content to thrive. Experts warn that if this trend continues, the media's role in society could become even more damaging in the future.

The urgent need for stricter guidelines and active enforcement is evident. Without proper regulation, the credibility of journalism will continue to erode, leading to a media landscape dominated by sensationalism and unethical practices.

Janasena Announces Formation Celebrations at Pithapuram

TPN Correspondent
Amaravati, Feb 18

Jana Sena has officially announced that its formation celebrations will take place on March 14 in Pithapuram, marking the first major event after the party's spectacular performance in the recent general elections. The celebrations are particularly significant as Jana Sena achieved a 100 percent strike rate and played a pivotal role in forming the coalition government. This will be the first celebration since the party's grand victory, and substantial preparations are underway



to make the event a success. The decision to hold the celebrations in Pithapuram, the constituency of party leader Pawan Kalyan, follows his proposal, underscoring the event's significance for both the party and its leadership. Jana Sena's victory in the elections has set the stage for a memorable celebration, with large-scale arrangements expected to attract considerable attention from both supporters and the public. The formation celebrations will not only mark the party's success but also highlight its growing influence in the political landscape.

AP to Host Investors' Meet to Boost Handloom and Textiles Sector: Minister Savitha



TPN Correspondent
Andhra Pradesh, Feb 18

Andhra Pradesh's Handloom and Textiles Minister, Savitha, has announced that a meeting with investors will

soon be held in the state to promote the handloom and textiles sector. The meeting aims to attract investments and create opportunities for growth in the industry. The minister emphasized the

state's commitment to developing the handloom and textiles sector, which plays a crucial role in the economy and employment generation. The upcoming investors' meet will focus on strengthening this sector by facilitating investments and fostering partnerships. With the goal of expanding production capabilities and improving the market presence of Andhra Pradesh's handloom and textiles, the event is expected to be a significant step in enhancing the state's economic development and providing new opportunities for local artisans and businesses.



No Need to Worry About GBS Disease, Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy Assures Public
TPN Correspondent
Eluru, Feb 18

State Housing, Information, and Public Relations Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy reassured the public about GBS (Guillain-Barré Syndrome) and emphasized that there is no need for panic. During a meeting with medical officers, he urged them to remove misconceptions about the disease and make emergency medicines and immunoglobulin injections available in all government hospitals across Eluru district. The Minister explained that GBS typically subsides on its own, starting in the legs and progressing to the upper body. He advised the public to maintain proper hygiene and visit a government hospital if they experience symptoms such as cramps or difficulty walking. Minister Parthasarathy also called for insulin injections for diabetes patients, factor injections for hemophilia patients, and a supply of Tenecteplase injections for heart disease patients to be stocked in all hospitals. These life-saving medications, which are often too expensive for the poor, should be made available at government facilities. He also emphasized the importance of creating awareness, as GBS cases are being reported in other districts.



Minister Nara Lokesh and Wife Participate in Holy Dips at Mahakumbh Mela

TPN Correspondent
Prayagraj, Feb 18

AP Minister Nara Lokesh, alongside his wife Brahmini, took part in the Mahakumbh Mela in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, by taking a traditional holy dip at the Triveni Sangam. The couple performed rituals at the sacred site, worshipping Goddess Ganga and offering aarti. They also paid tribute to their ancestral gods by offering clothes to the Brahmins and prayed for the salvation of their ancestors. The Mahakumbh Mela, ongoing since January 13 and concluding on February 26, has seen a massive turnout of devotees. Crores of people, including Prime Minister Modi, VIPs, and common citizens, have participated in the spiritual event. Nara Lokesh and his wife, fully immersed in the spiritual environment of the Kumbh, joined in the kirtans and pujas, reflecting the deep cultural and spiritual significance of the Mela. The event is considered a symbol of India's heritage, where millions believe bathing in the holy rivers and offering devotion leads to salvation. After their visit to the Triveni Sangam, the couple continued their spiritual journey by visiting the Kashi Vishweshwara temple in Varanasi. The Uttar Pradesh government has reported that a record 50 crore devotees have bathed at the Sangam, making this year's Mahakumbh Mela the largest spiritual gathering in history.

No Need to Worry About Guillain-Barré Syndrome: Minister Satyakumar

TPN Correspondent
Amaravati, Feb 18

AP Health Minister Satyakumar Yadav has reassured the public, stating there is no need to worry about Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS). Addressing concerns in a media conference with health department officials, the Minister highlighted the effective treatment measures in place and assured the public of sufficient resources to manage the disease. The Minister confirmed that 43 GBS cases have been registered in the state, with 17 patients currently receiving treatment. He emphasized that the disease often resolves on its own without requiring treatment, with 85% of those infected recovering naturally. Only 15% of cases require immunoglobulin injections. In a bid to reassure the public, Satyakumar announced that the state has a sufficient stock of immunoglobulin injections, which are being distributed across various government hospitals. Currently, 749 injections are available at hospitals in Anantapur, Guntur, Kadapa, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, and Visakhapatnam, with an additional 469 injections in reserve for distribution as needed.

Court to Announce Ruling on Vallabhaneni Vamsi Case on Tuesday

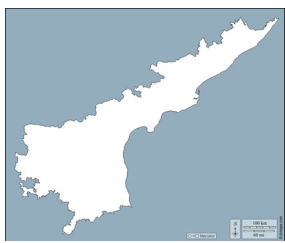
Continued from page 1

On Monday, the court received two separate petitions and ordered that notices be issued to both parties, adjourning the case to February 18. The police filed a petition seeking Vamsi's custody for ten days in connection with the Satyavardhan kidnapping case. Simultaneously, Vamsi's legal team submitted a request for permission to allow him to receive home-cooked food and a bed, citing health concerns. The court is set to hear both matters in its next session, with both sides preparing for what could be a decisive hearing. Meanwhile, a significant development unfolded as Satyavardhan's statement was officially recorded in the Second Junior Civil Judge's court in Vijayawada. The statement, captured on video in the presence of Magistrate Appa Rao, is expected to be a critical piece of evidence. The Patamata police, who had previously interrogated Satyavardhan, revealed serious allegations that Vamsi and his associates had pressured him to withdraw his complaints related to the 2023 attack on the Gannavaram TDP office. According to reports, Satyavardhan's family members were also threatened during this period, raising concerns about witness safety and the extent of intimidation tactics. Following the interrogation, Satyavardhan was brought before the magistrate to officially record his testimony. His detailed statement is likely to influence the course of the investigation, as authorities look into the accusations of coercion and the broader circumstances surrounding the TDP office attack. The court's upcoming session is expected to address both the police's demand for extended custody of Vamsi and the defense's plea for health-related accommodations, setting the stage for a pivotal moment in this high-profile case.

Central Budget Discussions in AP for 9 Days with Key Ministers and MPs

TPN Correspondent
Andhra Pradesh, Feb 18

In light of the central government's recent announcement of the 2025-26 annual budget, discussions with intellectuals have been scheduled across Andhra Pradesh for nine days. The budget, valued at Rs. 50.65 lakh crore, will be the central topic of these discussions, which are aimed at engaging the public and gaining insights from key thought leaders. Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, will kick off the discussions in Guntur today. Further, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, will participate in discussions in Tirupati on February 19. The Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri, will be attending the meeting in Vijayawada on February 21. On February 22, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, will participate in a session in Visakhapatnam. Additionally, BJP MPs Purandeshwari and CM Ramesh will attend meetings in Rajahmundry and Kakinada, respectively. Details of further meetings are yet to be disclosed.



High Court Directs DGP and DG of Prisons on CCTV Installation in Police Stations and Jails

TPN Correspondent
Andhra Pradesh, Feb 18

The Andhra Pradesh High Court has issued significant orders regarding the installation of CCTV cameras in police stations and prisons across the state. A petition was filed earlier regarding the issue, prompting the court to question the government about the installation and functionality of CCTV cameras. The High Court inquired whether CCTV cameras have been installed in all police stations and prisons, with a particular focus on ensuring comprehensive coverage of the premises. During the proceedings, the court revealed that, out of 1,392 police stations in the state, only 1,001 have CCTV cameras installed, while 81 prisons have 1,226 cameras, of which only 785 are operational. In response to the concerns raised, the court directed the state government to examine these issues and submit a report to the senior IT officer in charge. Additionally, the court highlighted the need for footage backup systems, in line with Supreme Court guidelines requiring the preservation of CCTV footage for at least 12 months. The High Court has now mandated that the DGP and DG of Prisons file separate affidavits with complete details regarding the installation, maintenance, and backup of CCTV footage.

AP JAC Amaravati Urges Govt to Address Village Secretariat Employee Concerns

TPN Correspondent
Amaravati, Feb 18

A key meeting was held with village ward secretariat employee associations to discuss pressing issues regarding their service matters. The meeting, chaired by the concerned departmental secretary, focused on resolving the challenges faced by secretariat employees, particularly in the wake of recent changes to the system. APJAC Amaravati State Chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu, along with leaders of various associations, submitted a letter to the government highlighting the difficulties faced by employees. They requested clear categorization of employees under the Multi-Purpose Functionaries, Technical, and Aspirational Functionaries as detailed in the rationalization pro-



cess. One of the major requests was for additional secretariat staff in areas with populations exceeding 3501. The leaders recommended appointing one additional employee for every 500-1000 people above this threshold to ensure manage-

able workloads. They also sought clarity on the status of the newly introduced Aspiration Functionaries and their alignment with the Aspiration Blocks and Districts program. The meeting also addressed concerns regarding the Junior Assistant pay scale, which the employees felt would not impose an additional financial burden on the government. They appealed for all employees to be considered for this scale, highlighting the need for fairness. Furthermore, leaders raised concerns about the discrepancy in salary allowances based on the 11th PRC and called for adjustments in the upcoming 12th PRC. The employees also stressed the need for promotions, as many had been waiting for career advancement since their initial appointments.

High Court Stays Traditional Dress Ban at Kattemadhu Mahamrityunjaya Temple



Jana Sena leaders show strong support for MLC candidate Alapati Raja. Minister Nadella Manohar and Kandula Durgesh speak on the importance of unity. Alapati Raja emphasizes the need for real development under the alliance government.
TPN Correspondent Vijayawada, Feb 18

An intimate meeting of Jana Sena leaders was held in support of MLC candidate Alapati Raja at the Famous Convention on Bandar Road. The event saw participation from Kota Mee MLC candidate Alapati Raja, Ministers Nadella Manohar and Kandula Durgesh, MLAs, corporation chairmen, and various alliance leaders. Civil Supplies Minister Nadella Manohar addressed the gathering, highlighting the hard work of alliance leaders and activists in securing the future of Andhra Pradesh. He noted that Jana Sena leaders had fought on numerous issues during Jagan's rule and emphasized that party president Pawan Kalyan had given clear instructions to work diligently for Alapati Raja's victory. Manohar stressed the importance of loyalty among MLC voters and the need for

unity within the alliance, urging workers not to get distracted by attempts to create discord. Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh also spoke, praising Jana Sena workers for playing a key role in the formation of the coalition government. He reiterated the party's commitment to fighting against the corruption of the previous government and supporting Alapati Raja as the coalition's candidate. Durgesh expressed confidence that the real development of the state could only be achieved under the leadership of the alliance government. He also mentioned the coalition's promise of providing 20 lakh jobs and criticized Jagan's rule for neglecting the state's employees and unemployed. Alapati Raja thanked the alliance leaders for nominating him as the MLC candidate for Krishna district. He stressed that real development could only happen with the alliance government and called out the YSRCP for suppressing dissent over the past five years. He expressed confidence that the united efforts of TDP, Jana Sena, and BJP would bring about positive change for the state.

Kesineni Nani Reaffirms Political Retirement, Vows Continued Public Service

TPN Correspondent Vijayawada, Feb 18

Former MP Kesineni Nani has put an end to speculations about his political comeback, reaffirming that his decision to retire remains unchanged. Addressing the media in Vijayawada on Monday, he stated that he had officially stepped away from politics on June 10 last year and has no intention of reversing that decision. Kesineni emphasized that

true public service is not confined to politics but is a lifelong commitment to society. He asserted that his dedication to the people of the Vijayawada Parliament constituency continues, regardless of holding a political role. He made it clear that his service is not tied to any political party or position but stems from a deep-rooted desire to work for the well-being of the people. Dismissing recent reports

suggesting his return to active politics, Kesineni urged people not to believe baseless rumors. He assured that his focus remains solely on contributing to the progress of Vijayawada and thanked those who had supported him throughout his journey. He expressed his determination to continue serving the community with the same passion and commitment.



TDP Leaders Condemn YSRCP's Alleged Undemocratic Actions



TDP leaders question YCP's actions regarding the vice chairman election. Allegations of council members being detained at the chairperson's house. Leaders vow to resist YCP's tactics and ensure victory.
TPN Correspondent

Tuni, Feb 18
Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders have strongly condemned the alleged actions of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), accusing them of using undemocratic means during the vice chairman election. Addressing the media on Monday, TDP leaders ques-

tioned why YSRCP detained council members at the chairperson's residence if they were confident in their majority. TDP leader Inuganti Satyanarayana expressed confidence that the opposition would overcome what he described as YSRCP's oppressive tactics and emerge victorious. He accused the ruling party of attempting to manipulate the election process by restricting the movement of council members. Jana Sena leader Bonam Chinababu also criticized YSRCP leaders, arguing that they lacked the moral authority to question the coalition's leadership while engaging in what he called unethical political practices. He stated that the opposition alliance was committed to upholding democratic values and ensuring a fair electoral process. Meanwhile, YSRCP district president Dadiseti Raja refuted these claims, dismissing TDP's allegations as baseless. He asserted that

YSRCP had the necessary numbers to win fairly and accused the opposition of creating unnecessary controversies. Chintamneedi Abbayi clarified that family members had visited the chairperson's residence only to ensure the safety of the detained council members. He dismissed opposition claims that YSRCP had forcibly confined anyone. Surla Loveraju, another TDP leader, alleged that YSRCP members acted out of fear of losing the election, despite assurances from the police and election officials regarding security and fair voting procedures. TDP leaders have made it clear that they will not tolerate any undemocratic actions and are prepared to fight back against what they see as attempts to undermine the electoral process. They vowed to stand firm in protecting democratic principles and ensuring a transparent election.

Dadiseti Raja Urges Calm, Warns Against Political Intimidation



YSRCP district president Dadiseti Raja urges party leaders and activists to remain calm. Alleges ruling party leaders are using police support to intimidate council members. Chairperson Eluri Sudabalu requests district officials to ensure

a fair election.
TPN | NV Surya
Tuni, Feb 18
YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) Kakinada district president Dadiseti Raja has urged party leaders and activists to remain calm in the

face of growing political tensions. Addressing the media, he asserted that YSRCP enjoys the backing of 17 members behind the Municipal Vice Chairman and accused the ruling party of resorting to intimidation tactics with police support to manipulate the election process. Raja strongly condemned what he described as oppressive measures against YSRCP leaders and council members, warning that those engaging in such actions would ultimately face isolation. He stressed the need for party workers to exercise patience and avoid unnecessary confrontations, reaffirming YSRCP's commitment to a democratic political battle. Meanwhile, senior YSRCP leader Yanamala Krishnadu issued a strong warning to ruling party leaders, stating that any misuse

of power to suppress opposition voices would have severe repercussions once YSRCP returns to power. He criticized the alleged use of force against opposition leaders, emphasizing that such actions erode democratic principles. In light of the ongoing political tensions, Municipal Chairperson Eluri Sudabalu has appealed to the district collector and SPs to ensure the safety of council members. He requested that law enforcement agencies provide adequate protection and uphold a fair and transparent election process. YSRCP leaders have vowed to continue their fight through democratic means while demanding an impartial and just political atmosphere in Kakinada.

Dadiseti Raja Urges Calm, Warns Against Political Intimidation



TPN Correspondent Palnadu Dist, Feb 18
Gurazala Former MLA Kasu Mahesh Reddy has launched a scathing attack on TDP chief and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, accusing him of disregarding political values and engaging in undemocratic practices. Speaking at a media conference, he criticized Naidu for preaching political ideologies in press meetings while allegedly resorting to lawless tactics in practice. Mahesh Reddy claimed that under the coalition government, politics had taken a turn for the worse, with leaders resorting to attacks and kidnappings even for minor political positions. Despite some leaders switching sides and the loss of MLCs, he asserted that YSRCP remains unshaken and will prove its strength democratically in the public arena.

The former MLA also issued a stern warning regarding alleged police harassment of YSRCP leaders through false cases. He stated that all such incidents were being documented and that special investigation teams would register FIRs against officers who misused their authority. Reassuring party workers, Mahesh Reddy declared that YSRCP would not tolerate any form of injustice and vowed to take all necessary steps to protect democratic values. He urged the party cadre to stay strong and continue their political battle through legal and democratic means.

gained new attention after the coalition government came to power. Suresh had previously been incarcerated for 145 days in a separate case involving a woman named Mariamma from Velagapudi. He was recently released on bail due to health reasons. Following his surrender, Suresh's lawyers filed for anticipatory bail, seeking protection against potential arrest in this new case. The ongoing legal proceedings continue to draw attention, particularly as they are tied to his past controversies.

Former MP Nandigam Suresh Surrenders in Court Over Misbehaving Allegations

TPN Correspondent Sattenapalli, Feb 18

Former YSR Congress Party (YCP) MP Nandigam Suresh has surrendered in the Sattenapalli court in connection with a case related to misbehaving with women during the Amaravati movement in 2020. The case was filed after a complaint was lodged by a woman named Mahalakshmi, who accused Suresh of inappropriate conduct. The police had registered a case against Suresh, along with Lella Appireddy and several others, but no arrests were made at the time. The case

gained new attention after the coalition government came to power. Suresh had previously been incarcerated for 145 days in a separate case involving a woman named Mariamma from Velagapudi. He was recently released on bail due to health reasons. Following his surrender, Suresh's lawyers filed for anticipatory bail, seeking protection against potential arrest in this new case. The ongoing legal proceedings continue to draw attention, particularly as they are tied to his past controversies.



Corruption Allegations Rock Vijayawada Municipal Corporation

VMC Corruption Scandal: Illegal Exhibition and Fire Safety Violations Exposed.

Fire Tragedy Averted: VMC Officials Accused of Bribery in Exhibition Scam.

VMC Under Scrutiny: Illegal Permissions and Corruption Allegations Surface.

Bribery and Negligence: VMC Faces Backlash Over Exhibition Fire Incident.

Commissioner's Silence Questioned: VMC Officials Caught in Corruption Row.

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 18**

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has once again come under scrutiny over serious corruption allegations. Following accusations against Biologist Suryakumar in the Malaria Department, fresh claims have emerged against CMHO officials and supervisors, raising concerns over their alleged involvement in illegal activities. The recent fire accident at the Kashmir Jalakanya exhibition has further exposed the extent of the corruption within the municipal body.

On Wednesday at noon, a massive fire broke out at the Kashmir Jalakanya exhibition, reportedly caused by a short circuit that ignited gas cylinders. While initial discussions centered on the cause of the fire, the real issue—the exhibition's lack of proper permissions—came to light later. Despite applying for a trade license, the exhibition organizers failed to secure official approval. Allegations suggest that the event was allowed to operate under the influence of corrupt VMC officials.

The Kashmir Jalakanya exhibition is managed by three individuals—Raja Reddy, Adapa Prabhakar, and Vijay. It is alleged that Adapa Prabhakar, responsible for securing permissions, colluded with VMC officials and fire safety personnel to run the event



without proper clearance. Reports indicate that CMHO Supervisor Shivaram Prasad and Worker Shankar played a key role in this corruption, allegedly collecting a bribe of ₹5 lakh from the exhibition organizers to overlook the lack of permissions. Fortunately, the fire accident resulted in no major casualties as it occurred during the daytime when foot traffic was low. However, had it happened in the evening, the consequences could have been disastrous.

Despite clear evidence of corruption, the VMC Commissioner has only is-



sued show cause notices to the Fire Department, rather than taking strict action against CMHO officials. This raises serious concerns about the administration's accountability. Additionally, the fire incident has exposed a larger issue—how many other businesses in Vijayawada are operating without valid trade licenses? With mounting allegations and public outcry, demands for a thorough investigation into VMC's operations are growing. The lack of transparency and regulatory oversight in the municipal administration has once again put the safety and trust of the citizens at risk.

Panchayat Champions Should Focus on Village Development: MP Kesineni Shivnath

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 18**

MP Kesineni Shivnath (Chinni) emphasized the crucial role of Panchayat Champions in transforming villages through comprehensive development. Speaking to 33 Panchayat Champions who had completed their training at Hyderabad NIRD, he expressed his vision for a self-sufficient and developed India. He urged the champions to focus on the goal of making every family an entrepreneur, a target set by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

The training, conducted in collaboration with the NIRDPR and the Kesineni Foundation, equipped the youth with knowledge and skills required for integrated village development. During the meeting, the champions shared their village development plans with MP Kesineni and NIRD officials.

MP Kesineni emphasized the importance of spreading awareness about government schemes that provide employment opportunities to youth, promoting cottage industries, and ensuring that every village receives benefits from these schemes. He stressed the need to focus on areas like education, women empowerment, health,



agriculture, and the formulation of a Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

Highlighting the development of 295 villages in the Vijayawada constituency, he envisioned them as a model for the nation. He also shared plans to set up sanitary napkin manufacturing units in four constituencies with NGO partnerships. MP Kesineni further revealed efforts to develop Primary Health Centers (PHCs) in the district using CSR funds, aiming for long-term growth in infrastructure. The event was attended by NIRDPR Director General G. Narendra Kumar, along with several other experts and officials from the NIRDPR.

Chintamohan Criticizes BJP and Andhra Pradesh Governance

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 18**

In a press conference, Chintamohan, former Union Minister and senior Congress Party leader, sharply criticized several issues plaguing both the national and state government. He first condemned the BJP for using temples and religious events for financial gains, specifically targeting the involvement of BJP Chief Ministers in conferences organized around world temples. He expressed concerns over attempts to grant sanitation contracts to a Bombay-based company in the name of temple events, calling it unethical.

Further, Chintamohan voiced strong objections to Prime Minister Modi's recent visit to the United States, alleging that the trip was primarily to help Adani's case in America. He claimed that the government's efforts were aimed at tampering with legal proceedings, which, according

to him, could damage India's integrity on the international stage.

The former minister also commented on the state of governance in Andhra Pradesh, criticizing the lack of security for female students in Anantapur, where students were forced to use ladders to go to bathrooms. He also highlighted the dire conditions for farmers in the state, including the unfair prices for Guntur chili, Rayalaseema tomatoes, and rice, accusing the government of failing to fulfill promises made to farmers. Chintamohan concluded by criticizing the coalition government in Andhra Pradesh for neglecting backward areas and failing to provide adequate funds to improve conditions in rural districts. He also expressed disappointment with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's failure to set up an inquiry commission regarding the alleged misuse of funds in Polavaram.



Strict Biosecurity Measures and Surveillance Enforced in Bird Flu Buffer Zone – Dist Collector

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 18**

In light of confirmed bird flu cases following the deaths of chickens in Anumallanka, Gampalagudem mandal, District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmi Sha has emphasized the need for continued alertness and rigorous control measures in 35 villages within a 10-kilometer radius. In a meeting held at the Collectorate, Dr. Lakshmi Sha reviewed ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of avian influenza, confirmed by the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) on February 14.

The Collector stressed the importance of biosecurity protocols, directing officials to ensure that chicken and egg shops in the buffer zone remain closed until further notice. Extensive sanitation programs, including the use of sprayers and foggers, are being carried



out. Dr. Lakshmi Sha also instructed continuous 24x7 monitoring at all 116 poultry farms in the district to ensure compliance with biosecurity measures.

Revenue staff and panchayat secretaries have been urged to stay alert at the field level, while fever surveys and testing of samples in the buffer zone are being conducted to track any health impacts. The Collector reassured the public that there is no im-

mediate cause for concern but emphasized the importance of vigilance and proper procedures.

The meeting was attended by key officials, including District Animal Husbandry Officer Dr. M. Hanumantha Rao and DMHO Dr. M. Suhasini, who are actively involved in the coordinated response. Forest officials were also instructed to report any unnatural bird deaths immediately.

Alleged Medical Negligence at Vijayawada Govt Hospital Leads to Patient's Death



she fell unconscious and died within minutes. The relatives of the deceased are now protesting at the hospital, alleging medical malpractice and negligence by government doctors. They claim that Sunitha, a woman under 30 years of age, died due to improper

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 18**

In a shocking incident at Vijayawada Government Hospital, a young woman, Sunitha, from Kandurlapadu, G Konduru mandal, tragically passed away after receiving a series of injections to control her sugar levels. Sunitha had been rushed to the hospital due to elevated sugar levels, and doctors administered an injection at 12 noon to regulate her condition. However, shortly after another injection was given later in the evening,

treatment. The family is demanding accountability and justice for her untimely death, questioning the medical procedures followed at the hospital. This tragic incident has raised serious concerns about the quality of healthcare and the protocols followed in government hospitals. The family's grief is compounded by their belief that the doctors' actions directly contributed to their loved one's death, sparking protests and calls for action against those responsible.

Sardar Jani and Kalam surrender at Gannavaram PS TDP Office Burning Case

**TPN Correspondent
Gannavaram, Feb 18**

In a significant development in the Gannavaram TDP office burning case, two of the accused, Sardar Jani and Kalam, surrendered at the Gannavaram Police Station on Monday. Their surrender follows the recent arrest of former MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi in connection with the case. Both accused turned themselves in after the former MLA's arrest, marking a key moment in the ongoing investigation. The police are continuing their efforts to gather further details about the incident and the involvement of other individuals.

The surrender of Jani and Kalam is expected to aid in the resolution of the case, with authorities pursuing additional leads related to the burning of the TDP office.



Anganwadi Workers Protest for Unfulfilled Demands



**TPN Correspondent
Eluru, Feb 18**

Anganwadi workers, under the banner of the AP Anganwadi Workers & Helpers Union (CITU), staged a dharna at the ICDS CDPO office in Eluru on Monday. The protestors demanded the implementation of agreements made during their previous strike, increased wages, and the conversion of mini centers into full-fledged main centers. The dharna was chaired by Union Project President Rajani, with CITU District General Secretary DNVD Prasad addressing the crowd. Prasad expressed strong criticism of the state government for failing to fulfill promises made after the 42-day state-wide strike last year. The workers also urged the government to stop using state debt as an excuse for not honoring the agreements.

Among their key demands were a minimum wage of Rs. 26,000 to match rising costs of living and the enforcement of welfare schemes for the workers. They warned of phased struggles if their demands remain unmet. Union District Honorary Presidents, including K. Vijayalakshmi, P. Haimavati, and others, participated in the demonstration.

Sand Mining Without Permits: NGT Orders ₹25 Crore Fine on Telangana Mining & Irrigation Departments



- Sand mining without environmental permits was severely criticized.
- Fine to be paid to the Godavari River Management Board within three months.

TPN | T.V. Govindharao, Advocate Mandapeta

East Godavari, Feb 18
The National Green Tribunal (NGT) in Chennai has delivered a landmark verdict, imposing a fine of Rs 25 crore each on Telangana's Mining and Irrigation departments for conducting sand mining without environmental permits in the Maneru River. This ruling, made by the NGT South Bench, has drawn significant attention as it underscores the importance of environmental clearance for sand mining activities.

The case pertains to illegal sand mining in the Maneru River, flowing through Peddapalli, Karimnagar, and Jayashankar districts. Environmental groups, including the Maneru Conservation Committee, filed multiple petitions in the NGT, arguing that mining activities were causing severe ecological damage and depleting groundwater resources. Despite interim orders to halt mining, the authorities continued operations, prompting the tribunal's stringent order. The NGT's verdict has raised concerns

about the increasing environmental damage from illegal sand mining. Excessive mining with heavy machinery is not only damaging the riverbed but also disrupting local communities, causing road destruction, health issues, and major accidents. The tribunal's decision emphasizes the need for stringent environmental regulations to protect natural resources.

The ruling serves as a stern reminder for the Telangana government, which has been under scrutiny for its role in sanctioning sand mining projects across various rivers in the state. As the mining activities intensify, the government faces growing opposition from environmental groups and locals urging for the cessation of these harmful practices. The coalition government's actions, along with the disregard for proper permits, have raised questions about the future of sand mining in the region.

Collector Vetriselvi Orders Measures to Prevent Stampedes During Mahashivratri Celebrations



- Collector reviews Mahashivratri arrangements at Pattiseema Temple.
- Special measures to prevent stampedes and manage traffic.
- Emergency services, including medical centers and motorboats, prepared.

TPN Correspondent Eluru, Feb 18

District Collector K. Vetriselvi has directed officials to implement safety measures to prevent inconvenience or stampedes during the upcoming Mahashivratri celebrations in Pattiseema. The celebrations at the Sri Bhadrakali Sametha Veereshwara Swamy Temple will be held from February 25 to 27.

In a review meeting with officials at the Pattisam River Inn on Monday, Collector Vetriselvi emphasized the need for strong arrangements to manage the crowd effectively. She instructed officials to organize queues for a smooth darshan and to appoint special staff to prevent stampedes. The Collector further ordered the installation of barricades

at the temple and on the main roads to ensure both safety and traffic management. Given the expected influx of devotees from various districts, buses will be arranged based on the number of visitors. In addition, 108 vehicles, medical centers, motorboats, and swimmers will be stationed along the Godavari River to provide emergency assistance if needed.

Collector Vetriselvi, along with Joint Collector P. Dhatri Reddy, conducted an on-site inspection of the queue lines and other arrangements at the Pattiseema temple. They were accompanied by several senior officials, including Jangaredy-gudem RDO Venkataramana, DSP Venkateswara Rao, and others from various departments.

Mumbai Devotee Donates ₹11 Crore to TTD SV Annaprasadam Trust

TPN | C.Sekhar Tirumala, Feb 18

A significant donation of Rs. 11 crore was made to the TTD SV Annaprasadam Trust by Mumbai-based devotee, Tushar Kumar, on Monday. The generous contribution was handed over to Additional Executive Officer (EO) CH Venkaiah Chowdary at the Additional EO Chamber in Tirumala.

The TTD SV Annaprasadam Trust, known for providing free meals to lakhs of devotees visiting the Tirumala temple, will benefit greatly from this donation. Tushar Kumar's devotion has made a lasting impact on the trust's mission to serve pilgrims with high-quality meals.

In a brief interaction, Additional EO Venkaiah Chowdary appreciated the generous donation, emphasizing that it



would enhance the services provided at the Annaprasadam. He acknowledged the role such contributions play in meeting the growing demands of devotees.

Tushar Kumar, a long-time devotee of Lord Venkateswara, expressed his happiness in contributing to the temple's initiatives. The TTD SV Annaprasadam Trust plays a key role in the spiritual journey of many pilgrims by offering free meals, and this donation will help strengthen the services provided.

Major Fire Accident at Diwan Cheruvu Fruit Market



TPN | Sk Gani Rajanagaram, Feb 18

A major fire broke out at the Diwan Cheruvu Fruit Market, located on the main road of Rajanagaram constituency, in East Godavari District. The fire completely gutted a cold storage unit, and two nearby two-wheelers were also damaged in the blaze.

The fire caused significant damage, but fortunately, the fire brigade responded promptly and brought the fire under control. The full details of the incident, including the exact cause of the fire, are yet to be determined.

Local public representatives, along with former officials, arrived at the scene to assess the damage. They inspected the area and inquired about the cause of the fire, promising to raise the matter with the government to ensure the necessary support for the affected individuals.

Food Safety Officials Raid Athreyapuram Putharekulu Manufacturing Centers

TPN | Sunil Kumar Kothapeta, Feb 18

Food safety officials conducted raids at multiple Athreyapuram Putharekulu manufacturing centers in the district on Monday, following allegations that fake ghee was being used in the production of the traditional sweet. During the raids, officials seized 160 kg of counterfeit ghee.

The raids were prompted by reports that fake ghee had been a part of the production process for some time. Upon hearing of the inspections,



several other Putharekulu shop owners reportedly closed their businesses. Authorities have confirmed that the investigation is ongoing to determine the full extent of the use of fake ghee in the area.

Senior Civil Judge Inspects Rajahmundry Special Women's Jail

TPN | Sri Ch Rajahmundry, Feb 18

On Monday, N. Sri Lakshmi, Secretary of the East Godavari District Legal Services Authority and Senior Civil Judge, conducted a visit to the Rajahmundry Central Jail and Special Women's Jail. During the visit, she personally inspected the food standards and various other facilities provided to the prisoners.

She also engaged with the inmates, offering information about the legal support available to them. Sri Lakshmi assured the prisoners that the

District Legal Services Authority would assist them in accessing legal representation for free, including filing bail petitions, appeals in higher courts, and other legal matters.

She encouraged prisoners to submit their applications through para-legal volunteers appointed by the District Legal Services Authority, highlighting the availability of the Legal Aid Defense Council for their use. The visit underscored the commitment to ensuring proper legal aid and support for inmates.



TTD EO Pays Courtesy Call on Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis



TPN | C.Sekhar Tirumala, Feb 18

TTD Executive Officer (EO) J. Shyamala Rao paid a courtesy call on Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at the Padmavati Guest House in Tirumala on Monday. The meeting took place during CM Fadnavis's visit to Tirumala, where he had come to pay homage to Lord Shiva.

During the visit, the TTD EO and CM Fadnavis discussed

the progress of the Lord Shiva temple being constructed in Navi Mumbai. The CM expressed a positive outlook regarding the ongoing project. TTD Board members Sri Bhanu Prakash Reddy, Saurabh H. Bora, and other senior officials were present during the meeting. The interaction reflected the growing ties between the two states and the shared commitment to promoting spiritual development.

GM ECoR Parmeshwar Funkwal Conducts Safety Inspection of Rayagada-Vizianagaram Section

TPN | Narasimhulu Vizianagaram, Feb 18

General Manager of East Coast Railway (ECoR), Shri Parmeshwar Funkwal, conducted a comprehensive safety inspection of the Rayagada-Vizianagaram section on Monday. Accompanied by Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs) of Waltair, Shri Manoj Kumar Sahoo, and Rayagada, Shri Amitabh Singhal, along with senior officers from both the Zonal Headquarters and the Division, the inspection focused on various safety measures and station developments.

A speed trial was conducted between Jimidipeta and Parvathipuram to assess the operational speed and safety of the track. Upon reaching Parvathipuram, the team reviewed station development activities, including the construction of waiting halls, railway offices, retiring rooms, and the relay room. They also visited the Railway colony, where GM Funkwal interacted with residents, listening to their grievances and assessing their overall well-being. The newly constructed park within the colony was also inspected.



Shri Funkwal conducted a safety inspection with the gang at Parvathipuram station, ensuring that all safety protocols were followed and that the workers were equipped with the necessary tools and training. He emphasized the importance of alertness and adherence to safety standards in daily operations. During the inspection, MLA Parvathipuram, Shri Bone-la Vijayachandra, met with GM Funkwal and submitted a memorandum requesting various developmental activities and additional train stoppages in the region. The GM also inspected curve No.168 between Sitanagaram and Bobbili, where he listened to concerns raised by passenger associations and local representatives. He assured that the necessary actions would be taken to address these issues.

Chinna Palavedu Village Organizes Sapling Planting Drive for a Cleaner Environment



Tirupati Dist, Feb 18

In a bid to promote a cleaner and greener environment, the residents of Chinna Palavedu village in the Buchinaidu Kandriga mandal organized a sapling planting event along the main road. The initiative was part of their broader campaign for environmental awareness, with the slogan "Greenery is Cleanliness" underscoring the importance of maintaining a clean and green village.

The program saw active participation from village resi-

plant saplings on both sides of the main road, symbolizing their commitment to environmental protection. Mandal Tahsildar I Subrahmanyam, MPDO Trivikrama Rao, and RI Nallaiah were present at the event, showing their support for the village's efforts towards sustainability and cleanliness. This event is a step towards instilling environmental consciousness in the community and creating a cleaner living space for the residents of Chinna Palavedu.

President's Rule in Manipur: A Political Move, Not a Solution to the Crisis



The imposition of President's Rule in Manipur by the Union Government has sparked debate over its true motivations. While some see it as a necessary step to restore peace and constitutional order, others view it as a political maneuver aimed at protecting the BJP's interests, rather than addressing the root causes of the ongoing crisis. The violence in Manipur, which erupted on May 3, 2023, has led to significant loss of lives and property. Despite the deployment of over 60,000 central troops and law enforcement agencies, the situation has remained volatile. Yet, the Prime Minister has downplayed the severity of the violence, even claiming that the situation is "normal," and the state is functioning as usual. This contrasts sharply with the experiences on the

ground, where residents continue to endure suffering and uncertainty. BJP's internal divisions have also played a role in this political crisis. Chief Minister N Biren Singh, once seen as a loyal ally to the Union government, faced mounting criticism from his party members due to his handling of the lawlessness in the state. While the Union government claimed to work closely with Singh, it became apparent that Delhi was taking control of key decisions, including the appointment of the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, without consulting the state leadership. Singh himself admitted that central agencies were often bypassing his authority, indicating a breakdown in governance at the state level.

Amid growing resentment, the BJP leadership in Delhi pushed for Singh's resignation, fearing a possible loss in the upcoming elections if the current situation continued. However, the party could not agree on a suitable replacement, leading to the imposition of President's Rule. Critics argue that this move is an attempt to divert attention from the BJP's failures in handling the crisis and the suffering of the people of Manipur. For true accountability and a resolution to the crisis, a Joint Parliamentary Committee should be formed to thoroughly examine the multiple dimensions of the Manipur tragedy. Only through this process, rather than the political expediency of President's Rule, can justice be delivered to the people of Manipur.

Qatar Emir's India Visit: A Strategic Imperative Beyond Diplomatic Pleasantries



The state visit of Qatar's Emir, Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, to India, beginning February 17, 2025, marks a significant diplomatic moment, but beyond the formalities and pleasantries, it highlights deeper strategic interests that shape this important bilateral relationship. With India's increasing geopolitical influence in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, the relationship with Qatar is becoming more pivotal, not just in terms of energy but also regional stability and economic cooperation. India-Qatar ties are underpinned by deep historical and economic roots. A significant part of Qatar's workforce—around 830,000—comprises Indians, playing a vital role in driving the country's economy. These expatriates contribute across various sectors, from construction and healthcare to technology, making them indispensable to Qatar's growth. Their expertise, along with their substantial remittances—approximately \$4.143 billion annually—shows the significance of this demographic to both countries. In addition to people-to-people ties, Qatar is a reliable supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India. This energy partnership has been central to the relationship, providing India with affordable and stable energy. However, with India diversifying its energy sources, especially increasing imports from the United States, questions arise about Qatar's future role in India's energy landscape. While the

country remains an important partner, India must navigate this evolving energy dynamic cautiously, mindful of not taking Qatar's generosity for granted. Furthermore, India's engagement with Qatar goes beyond trade and energy. The resolution of the diplomatic crisis involving eight former Indian Navy officials, sentenced to death in Qatar, demonstrated India's strategic leverage. Prime Minister Modi's personal intervention underscored the importance of high-level diplomatic relations with Qatar, which also signed long-term LNG deals with India despite the European gas scramble. As India strengthens its ties with the broader GCC region, Qatar's strategic importance remains paramount. With the focus shifting to emerging sectors like renewable energy, fintech, and infrastructure, India's relationship with Qatar will likely continue to evolve beyond traditional energy partnerships. However, challenges such as regional instability, labor rights issues, and tensions in the Israel-Hamas conflict require ongoing, nuanced dialogue. In conclusion, India-Qatar relations are increasingly complex, intertwined with energy security, regional geopolitics, and economic collaboration. As India's influence in the Gulf grows, it must continue to nurture this critical relationship with Qatar, ensuring mutual benefits while addressing regional and global challenges.

New Delhi Station Stampede Highlights Urgent Need for Railway Modernization

On February 15, 2025, a tragic stampede at New Delhi Railway Station claimed the lives of at least 18 people and injured many others. This incident has once again brought attention to the perennial problem of overcrowding at the station, which, despite being the busiest in India, continues to operate at outdated capacity levels. While the standard rituals—condolences from the government, compensation for the victims, and the announcement of a high-level inquiry—have been swiftly completed, the underlying issue remains unaddressed: the lack of modern infrastructure at one of the most critical transport hubs in the country.

The Growing Traffic Surge and Its Risks

New Delhi station is not just the busiest station in India; it generates the highest passenger revenue, accounting for over Rs 3,337 crore in 2023-24. However, the station's infrastructure, which opened in 1955, has not been upgraded to handle the ever-growing number of passengers. Officially, the station's capacity reached its limit by 2000, with daily traffic hovering around 500,000 passengers. This is in stark contrast to the current numbers, where the station regularly handles between 7 to 8 lakh passengers during peak seasons, causing congestion that can turn hazardous in a heartbeat.

Despite the seasonal surge in passenger traffic being predictable, Indian Railways (IR) continues to rely on rudimentary measures to manage this influx. As the recent stampede tragically demonstrated, the lack of adequate infrastructure to handle surges leaves passengers vulnerable, and this vulnerability will only increase as the number of rail users continues to rise.

A Long Delayed Modernization Plan

The need for New Delhi station's modernization has been apparent for over two decades. The first attempt to modernize the station was conceived in the early 2000s, around the same time as the modernization of Delhi's international airport. In 2007, a design was finalized by the renowned architecture firm Farrells, with the plan to increase station capacity, improve amenities, and create a new urban space above the railway tracks. Despite this ambitious plan, it never came to fruition due to delays, opposition from local authorities, and failed tenders. The first failed attempt came in 2008, with confusion surrounding tender clauses, followed by another cancellation in 2009 due to bureaucratic



hurdles. A third attempt in 2022 saw a scaled-back version of the original plan, but that, too, failed when the winning bidder, L&T, quoted over Rs 8,000 crore, exceeding the government's estimate of Rs 5,000 crore.

In 2023, Indian Railways reduced the scope of work further and attempted to launch the project on a smaller scale, yet the tender was withdrawn in early 2024. The Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) has since fragmented the project into smaller tenders in hopes of attracting more bidders, but as of now, the modernization effort remains stalled.

Effective Measures to Prevent Future Accidents

While the tragic stampede at New Delhi Station highlights the urgency of modernization, it is also a reminder that such incidents can be prevented with the right measures. Here are some strategies that can be adopted to manage the surge in passenger traffic:

- **Optimizing Platform Capacity:** This involves increasing the number of platforms and utilizing space more efficiently to accommodate more trains and passengers.

- **Technology-Based Solutions:** Implementing smart ticketing systems, AI-based crowd management tools, and real-time passenger flow tracking can help manage congestion.
- **Improved Signage and Barriers:** Clear and visible signage to direct passenger movement can reduce chaos, especially during peak hours. Barriers can be used to separate different streams of passenger flow.
- **Adequate Staffing:** Adequate staff presence at critical locations, including ticket counters, platforms, and gates, is essential for maintaining order and directing passengers effectively.
- **Coordination with Train Schedules:** Well-coordinated train schedules during peak times can reduce overcrowding on platforms and in trains.
- **Crowd Control Measures:** Barriers, ropes, and entry/exit points should be designed to channel passengers in a way that prevents overcrowding, especially at entry and exit points.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Stations should have well-established emergency re-

- **Emergency Preparedness:** Stations should have well-established emergency response protocols, with staff trained to handle crises efficiently.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Finally, upgrading station infrastructure to handle the increased traffic and to provide adequate facilities for passengers is key to preventing such accidents.

New Delhi Railway Station stands as a symbol of India's growth in terms of rail passenger traffic, but its outdated infrastructure is a stark reminder of how critical modernization efforts can be in preventing avoidable tragedies. As the busiest station in the country, it is inconceivable that New Delhi Railway Station is still grappling with capacity issues, especially when its modernization plan has been on the table for over 20 years. The failure of successive efforts to upgrade the station is a reflection of the inefficiencies within Indian Railways, and the recent stampede should serve as a wake-up call for both the government and the railway authorities. If such accidents are to be avoided in the future, New Delhi Station's modernization needs to move beyond planning stages into actionable, urgent steps—before another tragedy strikes.

India Can Turn "Fast Fashion" Waste Into Opportunity: PM Modi At Bharat Tex 2025

- Modi urges textile industry to upcycle waste.
- India's recycling market may hit \$400M.
- Bharat Tex 2025 hosts 120+ countries.



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the gathering at Bharat Tex 2025 on Sunday evening, emphasizing the need for India's textile industry to turn the challenge of "fast fashion waste" into an opportunity. He highlighted the importance of maximizing resource use and minimizing waste generation in the sector. The Prime Minister pointed out that millions of garments are discarded each month due to changing fashion trends, creating significant environmental concerns. He also noted that by 2030, fashion waste could reach 148 million tons, with less than a quarter currently being recycled.

PM Modi suggested that India's rich traditional skills in textile

recycling and upcycling could address this issue. He cited examples from Maharashtra, where old fabrics are transformed into mats, rugs, and quilts. The Prime Minister encouraged innovation in these practices, which could help tap into global market opportunities. He announced that the Textile Ministry had signed a MoU with the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises and e-Marketplace to promote upcycling, with several up-cyclers already registered.

PM Modi projected that India's textile recycling market could grow to USD 400 million in the next few years, while the global recycled textile market is expected to reach USD 7.5 billion. He expressed confidence that India could capture a larger share of this market.

Reflecting on India's prosperous past, where the textile industry played a crucial role, the Prime Minister reiterated that as the country strives towards becoming a Viksit Bharat, the textile sector would again be pivotal. He lauded Bharat Tex as a strong platform for global engagement, collaboration, and partnership, with over 120 countries participating in the event.

He also urged the banking sector to support textile entrepreneurs, fostering business growth and job creation. Bharat Tex 2025, held at Bharat Mandapam from February 14-17, is one of the largest events of its kind, showcasing the entire textile ecosystem and providing a platform for innovation and collaboration.

Gyanesh Kumar Likely to Become India's Next Chief Election Commissioner

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Gyanesh Kumar, who was appointed as an Election Commissioner in March of last year, is set to replace Rajiv Kumar as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, sources told NDTV on Monday evening. If confirmed, Mr. Kumar will oversee the conduct of several crucial elections, including the Bihar Assembly election later this year, as well as elections in Bengal, Assam, and Tamil Nadu next year.



Mr. Kumar, a 1988-batch IAS officer from the Kerala cadre, is currently the senior-most commissioner on the three-member Election Commission panel, which was previously led by Rajiv Kumar. The other commissioner on the panel is Sukhbir Singh Sandhu from the Uttarakhand cadre. However, Mr. Kumar's appointment has yet to be formally ratified.

The Congress party has raised objections to the swift move to appoint a new CEC, pointing out that the Supreme Court is set to hear a challenge to the 2023 law that governs the selection process. Critics of the law argue that it allows the ruling BJP to have control over the CEC appointment, with the process being decided by a three-member panel consisting of the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Kumar, 61, has held several key positions in the Indian civil services. Prior to his appointment as Election Commissioner, he was part of the Union Home Ministry, where he played a crucial role in drafting the bill that scrapped Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019. He was also responsible for handling key documents related to the Supreme Court case on the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Additionally, he is known to have a close relationship with Home Minister Amit Shah.

Before retiring in January last year, Mr. Kumar served as the Secretary of the Ministry of Cooperation, a position also overseen by Amit Shah. He has previously held roles in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and the Defence Ministry during the Congress-led UPA government. Mr. Kumar holds a B.Tech in Civil Engineering from the Indian Institute of Engineering in Kanpur, along with degrees in Business Finance and Environmental Economics from the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India and Harvard University, respectively.

Rajiv Kumar, the outgoing Chief Election Commissioner, stepped down this morning after a tenure marked by efforts to modernize the election process. In his farewell speech, Mr. Kumar emphasized the importance of innovations such as remote voting for NRIs and migrant workers, biometric voting systems, and safeguarding against post-poll violence by ensuring the non-disclosure of votes. He also highlighted the need for greater financial transparency in election campaign expenses and the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in the future of elections.



To Ban or Not to Ban: Alcohol Divides J&K's Political Landscape

TPN Correspondent | Assam

The ruling National Conference (NC) in Jammu and Kashmir is facing significant criticism for its change of stance on the issue of liquor sales in the region. The NC's volte-face has sparked a backlash, especially from political and religious figures, as well as civil society groups. The controversy revolves around the Bills to be introduced in the upcoming assembly session, which seek to ban the sale and consumption of liquor in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the chairman of the Moderate Hurriyat, condemned NC leader Tanvir Sadiq's defense of liquor sales, which he justified under the pretext of boosting tourism. Mirwaiz, speaking at an interfaith event in Budgam district on February 16, questioned the morality of such a move in a Muslim-majority region, emphasizing the harm caused to society by drug abuse. He criticized the NC for ignoring the example of other Indian states, such as Gujarat, where alcohol is banned and tourism continues to thrive.

Sadiq had earlier argued that liquor sales should be allowed to support tourism, noting that several countries in the Arab world permit alcohol for tourists. He insisted that the local stakeholders, including travel agents, should be consulted before taking any drastic steps.

However, Mirwaiz dismissed this argument, pointing out that no consultation had been held with the stakeholders of Jammu and Kashmir regarding the issue. Opposition parties, including the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), also expressed their disapproval, arguing that linking tourism to alcohol sales is flawed. PDP leader Waheed Parra pointed to Gujarat's success as a dry state, where tourism has flourished without the need for liquor sales.

In the upcoming legislative session, at least three private member Bills will be introduced, seeking a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir. These Bills have garnered support from various quarters, including BJP leader Darakhshan Andrabi, who welcomed the move as a step toward protecting the youth from drug abuse.

The ongoing debate reflects the deepening divide over the future of alcohol sales in Jammu and Kashmir, with strong opinions from both sides of the political spectrum.

CM Stalin Slam Pradhan For Forcing Tamil Nadu to Adopt Three-Language Formula

TPN Correspondent | Tamilnadu

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has accused Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan of "blackmail" after the latter stated that Tamil Nadu would not receive funds under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan unless it accepts the National Education Policy (NEP) and the controversial three-language formula. Stalin expressed his displeasure over Pradhan's comments, asserting that Tamil Nadu's rightful due for educational funds should not be contingent on political conditions.

Stalin posted a video of Pradhan speaking on social media, stating that the Union Minister's remarks were disrespectful and threatening, warning that Tamil Nadu might show Delhi the "real trait" of its people in response. The Chief Minister's comment resonated with opposition parties across Tamil Nadu, who strongly criticized the Union government's stance on this issue.

Edappadi K. Palaniswami, General Secretary of AIADMK and Leader of the Opposition in Tamil Nadu, also condemned the central government's decision. He remarked that the Centre's refusal to release funds based on Tamil Nadu's rejection of the three-language policy was unjust. Palaniswami emphasized that Tamil Nadu had been a pioneer in the field of education and that the Centre should focus on the welfare of the people, not the political leaders in power.

The stance was echoed by Seeman, the chief of the Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK), who criticized the NEP's push to make Hindi mandatory. He argued that while the people of Tamil Nadu could choose to learn Hindi, the Centre should not impose the language on them. Seeman expressed that India's unity lies in its linguistic diversity and that Tamil Nadu's opposition to the NEP should not result in withholding educational funds.

The controversy highlights the growing tensions between the state and central governments over educational policies, with Tamil Nadu leaders continuing to reject the imposition of Hindi and the three-language policy.



Assam CM Orders Probe into Alleged Pakistani Links of Gaurav Gogoi's Wife

TPN Correspondent | Guwahati



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has ordered a case against a Pakistani national, Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, for allegedly attempting to interfere in domestic matters in Assam and India. Sarma also revealed that Elizabeth Colburn, the wife of Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi, will be investigated for her alleged ties to Pakistan and its intelligence agency, ISI.

Sarma's decision came after a cabinet meeting on Sunday, where he cited reports of Sheikh's online activities and his connections with Colburn. According to Sarma, Sheikh, who founded LEAD Pakistan, a non-profit organization focused on climate change, has had direct contact with Colburn, who was involved with the organization during her time in Islamabad. Both Sheikh and Colburn were part of the global climate action group, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), which operates in both India and Pakistan.

Sarma raised concerns over the national security implications of the situation, particularly given Assam's historical vulnerabilities to destabilization by Pakistani actors. The Chief Minister also pointed out that Colburn, a British citizen, allegedly campaigned for Gogoi during two Lok Sabha elections, which would be a violation of visa norms. Sarma questioned the appropriateness of a foreign national participating in Indian elections, especially given her potential involvement in sensitive issues raised by her husband in Parliament, including nuclear radars and uranium mines.

Gaurav Gogoi, in response, dismissed the accusations as "dirty and baseless" politics and rejected the charges as "laughable and entertaining." He stated that his focus remains on improving Assam's economy, education, and healthcare policies, and expressed frustration with the ongoing political drama.

Sarma has called for a thorough investigation, involving central agencies, into the allegations against Colburn and Sheikh, stressing the importance of national security. He plans to share all relevant documents with Congress leaders to verify the facts.

UK willing to 'put own troops on ground' in Ukraine if needed: PM Starmer

- UK PM Starmer open to deploying troops to Ukraine.
- Trump-Putin talks raise concerns in Europe.
- Zelenskyy calls for a European army.



TPN Correspondent | UK

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer expressed on Monday that he was prepared to send British troops to Ukraine "if necessary," highlighting a shift in European security discussions following the changing stance of the United States under President Donald Trump. Starmer's comments come in the context of Trump's recent talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, which have raised concerns about Europe's security and Ukraine's future.

While Trump prepares for a meeting with Putin, reportedly to discuss peace negoti-

ations, European leaders, including Starmer, have been intensifying efforts to address the continent's security needs. Starmer described the situation as a "once-in-a-generation moment," emphasizing that any role in supporting Ukraine's security directly contributes to the security of Europe and the UK. "Helping to guarantee Ukraine's security is helping to guarantee the security of our continent, and the security of this country," Starmer remarked, underlining the urgency of collective European defense.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also called for the establishment of a Europe-

an army, believing that such an institution could reduce Europe's dependence on US security guarantees. Zelenskyy's plea came amid growing concerns about the US pivoting its focus away from Europe, as indicated by Trump's stance on NATO and his previous comments about Russia's desire to end the war in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, a key meeting in Paris, scheduled ahead of the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, will gather leaders from several European nations including the UK, Germany, and Poland, as well as EU officials like Ursula von der Leyen and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

The meeting will focus on Ukraine's situation and broader European security issues.

The ongoing diplomatic tension has also been exacerbated by the Kremlin's push for negotiations between the US and Russia, which could shape the future of Europe's defense strategy. EU nations remain concerned that Russia might demand a return to pre-2022 positions, including limiting NATO's presence in Eastern Europe. As Europe grapples with these uncertainties, Starmer's willingness to deploy UK troops signals the UK's commitment to the security of Ukraine and the broader continent.

Myanmar frees 1,000 scam center workers as crackdown widens



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

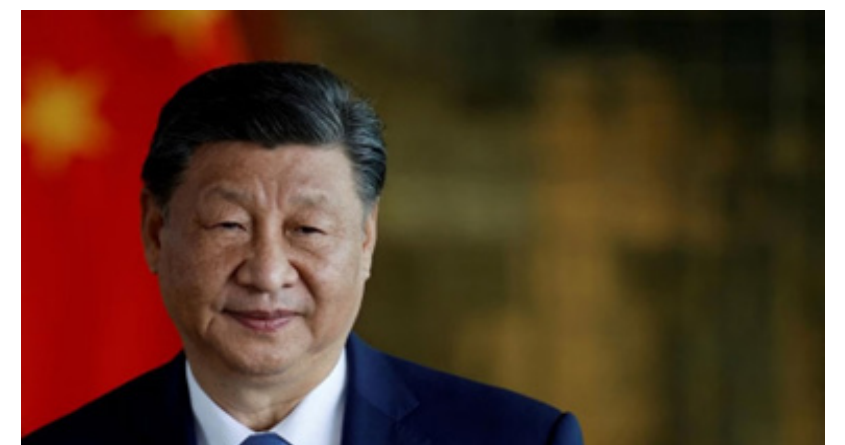
Myanmar's military government announced it is ready to hand over around 1,000 foreign nationals who were rescued from cyber scam centers near the Thai border. The victims, mostly from Asia and East Africa, were trafficked or tricked into working at these illicit centers. Myanmar authorities have vowed to intensify efforts to combat transnational criminal groups responsible for the operations.

Over the past three weeks, approximately 1,030 foreign nationals have been rescued from these scam centers, which are believed to be involved in online fraud. The Myanmar government has already repatriated 61 of the victims to their home countries, while the remaining individuals are set to be returned in the coming days, according to a statement from the State Administration Council, Myanmar's ruling military body.

The majority of the victims come from Asian countries, including China and India, although some are from East Africa. The victims were reportedly coerced or deceived into participating in online scams, where they were forced to defraud people across the globe. Many of the centers were located near the border with Thailand, a region notorious for transnational human trafficking and cybercrime activities.

The military junta launched a large-scale operation to combat online scams and human trafficking following mounting pressure from neighboring countries like Thailand and China. The high-profile trafficking of a Chinese actor, which highlighted the scale of criminal activities in the region, spurred Myanmar to take action.

The recent operation is part of a broader effort to dismantle criminal networks operating across Myanmar's borders. The government has promised to continue its crackdown on these illegal operations, although human rights organizations have raised concerns about the safety and treatment of the victims during the rescue and repatriation process. Myanmar's actions come amid growing regional concerns over the rise of cybercrime and human trafficking in Southeast Asia.



Xi Jinping Urges Chinese Entrepreneurs to Boost Confidence Amid Economic Slowdown

TPN Correspondent | Beijing

On Monday, Chinese President Xi Jinping held a rare meeting with top business leaders, including Alibaba founder Jack Ma, Xiaomi's Lei Jun, Tencent's Pony Ma Huateng, and BYD's Wang Chuanfu, to address concerns over China's slowing economy and the challenges facing private enterprises. The meeting, a symposium on private enterprises, aimed to restore business confidence amid uncertainties, both domestically and internationally.

This gathering came at a time of growing concern about the return of Donald Trump to the US presidency, particularly with his plans to raise tariffs on Chinese exports. China's GDP growth has also slowed to around 5 percent in recent years, further intensifying worries among entrepreneurs and business leaders about the future of the economy.

During the symposium, President Xi emphasized that the current moment presents a significant opportunity for private enterprises to unleash their full potential. He urged the business leaders to reach a consensus and strengthen their confidence to contribute to the healthy and high-quality development of China's private sector. Xi reassured the attendees that the government's policies regarding the private economy remain firmly embedded within China's socialist system and would not change.

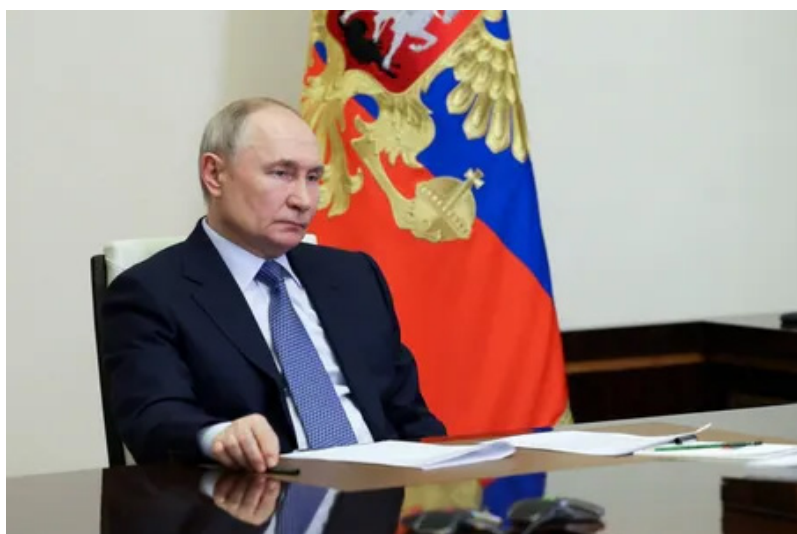
The meeting comes after a period of tension between Jack Ma and the Chinese Communist Party, following Ma's outspoken criticism of China's regulatory system. The fact that Ma was present at this high-profile meeting signals a potential shift in relations between China's government and its private business leaders, especially as the country faces ongoing economic challenges.

Russia, US to hold talks on Feb 18 in Saudi Arabia on restoring ties

TPN Correspondent | Washington

The Kremlin announced on Monday that top Russian officials will meet with their US counterparts in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to discuss restoring relations between the two nations and the ongoing war in Ukraine, which is approaching its third year.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Yuri Ushakov, a senior foreign policy advisor to President Vladimir Putin, are scheduled to participate in the talks with US officials in Riyadh. According to Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, the primary focus of the meeting will be on revitalizing the broader scope of US-Russia relations, which have been severely strained since the onset of the conflict in Ukraine.



Peskov also stated that the talks will address preparations for possible peace negotiations concerning Ukraine, though he did not provide further specifics on potential outcomes. The Kremlin had previously hinted at discussions surrounding a peace settlement, but the details have remained unclear.

Regarding the potential deployment of European troops to Ukraine following a possible peace deal, Peskov referred to the issue as a "complex question," which has not yet been thoroughly discussed. This issue remains a point of contention among international actors as the war continues to

devastate the region.

Lavrov and Ushakov are scheduled to fly to Riyadh on Monday ahead of the high-stakes meeting. The Kremlin's announcement of these talks comes amid growing international pressure for negotiations to end the war, which has caused immense suffering and geopolitical instability since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

As the conflict enters its third year, the meeting in Saudi Arabia represents a crucial moment for diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions and possibly finding a path to peace. The outcome of the discussions could significantly impact the future of US-Russia relations and the broader international response to the war in Ukraine.

Kim Jong Un Visits Father's Mausoleum, Pledges Commitment to 'Sacred Struggle'

TPN Correspondent | North Korea

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a rare visit to the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang on Monday to mark the birthday of his late father, Kim Jong Il. This significant visit, which came on February 16—celebrated annually as the Day of the Shining Star—was the first in four years for Kim Jong Un to pay his respects at the mausoleum, where the embalmed bodies of his father and grandfather, Kim Il Sung, are housed.



scribed as "the humblest reverence." The state news agency KCNA reported that Kim expressed his deep commitment to the country's future, vowing to continue the "sacred struggle" to ensure the prosperity, security, and well-being of the North Korean people.

Kim Jong Il's birthday is con-

sidered one of North Korea's most important holidays, and it is marked by various ceremonies and celebrations. This year's observance coincides with heightened political tensions on the Korean Peninsula, as Kim Jong Un continues to solidify his leadership amid ongoing regional and international challenges.

In his remarks during the visit, Kim Jong Un pledged to honor the legacy of his father and grandfather by working towards North Korea's continued advancement and stability. His statement underscored the importance of maintaining the "sacred struggle" for the eternal prosperity of the nation, as well as the security of its citizens. This rare appearance at the family mausoleum is viewed as a symbolic gesture of continuity in leadership and North Korea's political ideology. The visit highlights Kim Jong Un's role in upholding the Kim family's dynastic rule and his determination to preserve the country's political and military priorities amidst ongoing challenges on the global stage.

Accompanied by his sister, Kim Yo Jong, a senior official in the ruling Workers' Party, and other aides, Kim Jong Un paid homage to his family's legacy in what state media de-

Stock Markets Rebound After Eight-Day Losing Streak, Banking and Pharma Lead Recovery



The eight-session losing streak came to an end. The indices gained today. The indices, which started with heavy losses in the morning, recovered after the afternoon due to mixed signals from global markets. As expected, a counter rally took place. Investors bought fundamentally strong shares. Bank, pharma and healthcare shares also supported this. With this, the Nifty, which traded in a loss of more than 180 points in the morning, finally ended with a gain of 30 points. The

Sensex also followed the same path.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 75,939 in the previous session, started at 75,641 on Monday. It touched an intraday low at 75,294. It reached an intraday high at 76,041. It finally closed at 75,996 with a gain of 57 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 22,809, touched a low of 22,725 and a high of 22,974. It closed at 22,959, up 30 points.



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The Nifty Bank rose 159 points to settle at 49,258.

In the Nifty50, 34 companies gained while 16 lost. Adani Enterprises, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, Adani Ports were the top gainers. Mahindra & Mahindra, Airtel, Infi, TCS, ICI- CI Bank were the top losers. Pharma, healthcare, bank, finance, metal indices rose. Auto, FMCG, IT, media indices were mixed. India VIX rose 4.71% to 15.72.

Market breadth on NSE today was completely in favour of sellers. Out of 2955 shares traded, only 1014 gained. 1871 lost. 22 shares touched 52-week highs. 747 shares touched 52-week lows.

Rupee settled at 86.87 against the dollar. Jefferies has given a buy rating to Samvardhan Motherson with a target price of Rs.165. Singtel is looking to sell Airtel worth billions of dollars. Nomura has given a neutral rating to Glenmark with a target price of Rs.1500. Quality Power Electric IPO received a response of

0.79 times by the afternoon of the second day. LTI Mindtree partners with Eurobank for multi-year banking. Borosil Renewables shares hit 5% lower circuit as losses widen in third quarter. Cyient DLM wins avionics manufacturing award from Thales. Motilal Oswal gives neutral rating to United Breweries with a target price of Rs 2000. Antony Waste EBITA rises 21.5%. Nomura gives buy rating to Mahindra & Mahindra with a target price of Rs 3681. CLSA maintains buy rating on Hindalco Industries with a target price of Rs 815.

Ashok Leyland Limited (ASHOKLEY):



Ashok Leyland is a leading commercial vehicle manufacturer in India, producing trucks, buses, and light vehicles. The company has a strong market presence and has been focusing on expanding its product portfolio and increasing exports.

Aarti Pharmalabs Limited (AARTIPHARM):



Aarti Pharmalabs specializes in the production of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and intermediates. In Q3 FY2024-2025, the company reported a net profit of ₹73.99 crore, a 40.24% increase compared to the same period last year. This growth is attributed to enhanced operational efficiencies and a diversified product portfolio.

Kaveri Seed Company Limited (KSCL):

Kaveri Seed Company is one of India's largest agricultural seed companies, offering a wide range of hybrid seeds for crops like cotton, maize, and paddy. The company has a robust research and development division, focusing on developing high-yielding and disease-resistant seed varieties.



Jubilant Pharmova Limited (JUBLPHARMA):

Jubilant Pharmova operates in the pharmaceutical and life sciences sectors, providing a range of products and services, including APIs, contract manufacturing, and drug discovery solutions. The company em-



phasizes innovation and has a global presence, catering to various markets worldwide.

Castrol India Limited (CASTROLIND):

Castrol India is a prominent player in the lubricants industry, offering a wide array of automotive and industrial lubricant products. The company has a strong distribution network and focuses on continuous product innovation to meet the evolving needs of consumers.



Income tax relief should not be seen as govt shifting focus from capex: Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday clarified that the substantial income tax relief announced in Budget 2025 does not signal a shift in the government's focus from capital expenditure to boosting consumption. This clarification comes after debates emerged over the decision to keep individuals earning up to Rs 12 lakh annually out of the income tax net, particularly following tepid GDP growth figures over two consecutive quarters. During a post-budget interaction with stakeholders in Mumbai, Sitharaman emphasized that the government's commitment to capital expenditure (capex) remains strong. She noted that the allocation for capex in the 2025 Budget is over 10.2% higher than last year, amounting to approximately Rs 16 lakh crore, including Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs). The central government alone has budgeted Rs 11.21 lakh crore for capex in 2025-26. The effective capital expenditure, which includes core capital outlays and grants for



state capital assets, is projected to rise to Rs 15.48 lakh crore from Rs 13.18 lakh crore in 2024-25.

Sitharaman dismissed concerns that the focus had shifted to consumption, stating that the government's emphasis has consistently been on public expenditure to build capital assets, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. She reassured stake-

holders that the increased tax relief, which primarily benefits middle-class taxpayers, is aimed at enhancing disposable income for consumption and investment, not at sidelining the capital expenditure drive.

The income tax relief, which raises the exemption limit from Rs 7 lakh to Rs 12 lakh, was positioned as part of the government's strategy to support economic recovery. Sitharaman also credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for supporting the tax relief proposal, recognizing the need to reward taxpayers while maintaining the focus on infrastructure development.

In conclusion, Sitharaman reiterated that the government's approach remains balanced, with continued investment in capital assets and targeted tax relief to stimulate consumption, creating a strong foundation for future economic growth.

Establishing New World Finance Broader Impact Of Bitcoin On Global Economy



Bitcoin's emergence in 2008, closely following the global economic crisis, marked the beginning of a transformative journey in the world of finance. Although Bitcoin was initially not viewed as a significant player in the global economy, it gradually became a symbol of the future of finance. Over the past decade, Bitcoin has not only revolutionized digital currency but has also influenced key aspects of global finance through blockchain technology and decentralization.

The most profound effect Bitcoin has had on the global economy is through the rise of blockchain technology, which underpins it. Initially met with skepticism, blockchain's decentralized nature has reshaped cross-border transactions, offering greater speed, transparency, and affordability. Bitcoin's market capitalization, which exceeds \$1.9 trillion, is evidence of its growing importance as a tool for value creation. Blockchain has also spurred the rise of Decentralized Finance (DeFi), further accelerating financial innovation. The increased use of Bitcoin and blockchain-based jobs is diversifying conventional finance, offering opportunities for employment and income generation worldwide.

The economic impact of Bitcoin extends beyond technology. The global cryptocurrency industry, valued at \$2.7 trillion in 2024, is projected to grow to \$6.2 trillion by 2033. Bitcoin's rise has led to the creation of new job roles, with salaries in the sector often exceeding 150% of traditional industries. The taxation of Bitcoin-related income, such as in India (30% tax) and the US (up to 37% short-term tax), has also contributed to national and global economies, supporting governments' budgets.

In addition, Bitcoin's role as a hedge against inflation has been especially beneficial in countries with unstable currencies. Nations like Venezuela and Lebanon, suffering from hyperinflation, have turned to Bitcoin as an alternative currency to safeguard economic stability. As Bitcoin's influence continues to grow, its potential to reshape global economic policies remains significant, promising a future where digital finance becomes the backbone of global economies.

Reliance Industries Surpasses Apple to Rank No. 2 in FutureBrand Index 2024

In a significant milestone for Indian corporations, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has been ranked No. 2 in the FutureBrand Index 2024, surpassing tech giant Apple. This marks the first time an Indian company has entered the top three of this prestigious global ranking, reflecting the increasing global influence of Indian businesses.

The FutureBrand Index evaluates companies based on brand perception, not financial performance, and in 2024, Reliance saw a remarkable jump from No. 13 in 2023 to No. 2. This achievement highlights the company's strong brand positioning, consumer trust, and strategic growth across multiple sectors such as energy, telecommunications, and retail.

The FutureBrand Index has evolved over the years, with the global rankings becoming more diversified. In 2014, seven of

the top ten brands were from the United States, but by 2024, only four US brands remain in the top ten. In contrast, the Asia-Pacific (APAC) and Middle Eastern regions now boast five brands in the top ranks, demonstrating their significant investments in brand development, especially in B2B sectors.

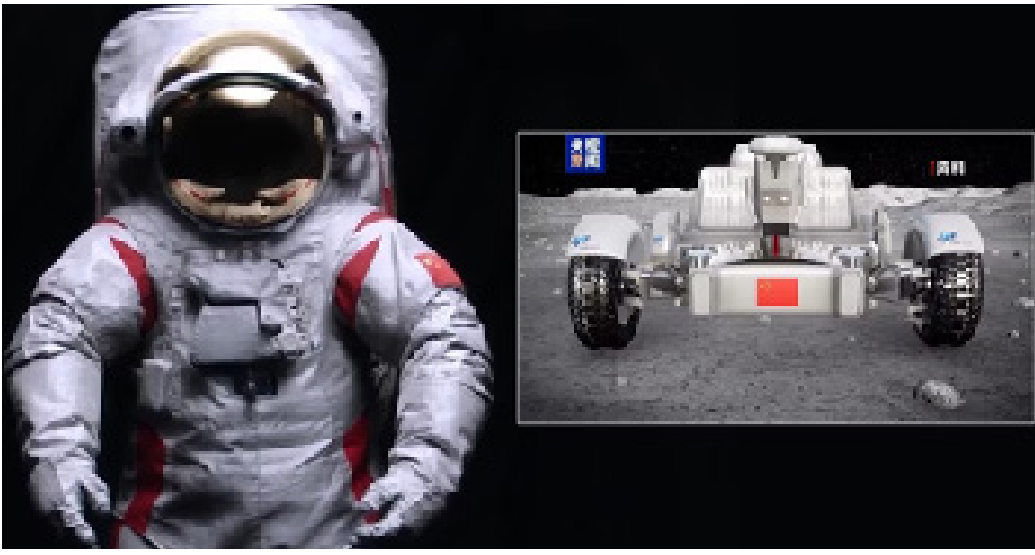
Samsung, which ranked No. 5 in 2023, has risen to the No. 1 position in 2024. The company's focus on innovation, storytelling, and authenticity has driven its success, along with its strong scores in thought leadership and consumer well-being. Apple, while still a top contender, dropped from No. 1 in 2023 to No. 3 this year, maintaining its reputation for brand loyalty and customer experience.

The finance sector emerged as the strongest performer in the 2024 index, with 10 out of 15 brands showing upward mo-



mentum, signaling robust growth and increasing consumer trust. Conversely, the healthcare sector struggled, with 10 out of 15 brands declining, reflecting ongoing challenges in public perception and industry turbulence. Overall, the 2024 FutureBrand Index underscores the shifting dynamics in global brand power, with Reliance's rise marking a notable achievement for Indian businesses on the world stage.

China Names Its Moon Spacesuit and Rover Ahead of Lunar Mission



China has officially unveiled the names for its next-generation lunar spacesuit and crewed moon rover, key components for its planned human moon landing before 2030. The China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) revealed that the spacesuit will be called “Wangyu,” meaning “gazing into the cosmos,” while the rover has been named “Tansuo,” which translates to “explore.” Over 9,000 suggestions were submitted during a public participation process in 2024, culminating in the final selection of these names.

The spacesuit, Wangyu, is designed to withstand the harsh conditions of the moon’s surface, providing astronauts with enhanced mobility and protection. According to Zhang Wanxin, director of the spacesuit engineering office at the China Astronaut Research and Training Center, the prototype has already been developed, and performance assessments are currently underway to ensure it meets the required operational standards. The Tansuo rover, which will facilitate lunar surface exploration, is also pro-

gressing through its development phase. Zhang Chongfeng, a spacecraft designer at CMSA, revealed that the rover prototype has been tested in a simulated lunar surface environment. The rover is undergoing design refinements and engineering assessments to ensure its effectiveness in transporting astronauts across the moon’s challenging terrain. China’s lunar mission framework is taking shape as the nation aims to land astronauts on the moon before 2030. CMSA has made significant progress in the development of ground facilities for production and testing, and construction at the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in Hainan is advancing. Additionally, CMSA announced the names of other mission components, including the crew spacecraft, “Mengzhou” (“Dream Vessel”), and the lunar lander, “Lanyue” (“Embracing the Moon”). This mission is part of China’s broader space exploration goals, which include advancing technology and scientific research beyond low Earth orbit. With an integrated system of heavy-lift launch vehicles, crewed spacecraft, and lunar surface mobility solutions, China is taking significant steps toward its ambitious goal of establishing a human presence on the moon.

Manipur Street Stall Selling Dalgona Candies Looks Straight Out Of Squid Game

The global phenomenon *Squid Game* continues to inspire creative ventures around the world, and now, fans in Manipur have brought the hit show to life with a Squid Game-themed roadside stall. Digital creator Lanchenba Meitei recently shared a video on Instagram, showcasing this innovative tribute to the Korean series. The stall features a variety of Dalgona candies, one of the key elements of the show, shaped like umbrellas, triangles, stars, and circles, just like in the famous “Dalgona candy challenge” from *Squid Game*. The stall’s design pays homage to the iconic aesthetic of the series, with the owners dressed in pink jumpsuits and wearing masks similar to the guards in the show. The stall’s banner prominently displays the words “Dalgona” and “Squid Game,” along with an image of the protagonist, Seong Gi-hun, holding a Dalgona candy. The background features a poster of the infamous doll from the “Red Light, Green Light” game, one of the most memorable scenes from the series. To add to the immersive experience, the background music includes the popular



song “Round and Round” from *Squid Game*’s second season, instantly evoking the show’s atmosphere. The stall not only offers the delicious Dalgona candies but also showcases other *Squid Game*-themed merchandise. Fans can purchase Ddakji cards, a nod to the game played during the selection process in subway stations, as well as coasters featuring images of the show’s

characters. The stall has quickly become a popular stop for fans of the show, combining the thrill of the series with the charm of local creativity in Manipur. This unique pop-up stall is a testament to the global impact of *Squid Game* and how it continues to inspire cultural references and creative displays worldwide.

Chinese Zoo Paints Donkeys To Look Like Zebras, Leaves Netizens Annoyed



A Chinese zoo has come under scrutiny after it allegedly painted donkeys to pass them off as zebras in an attempt to attract more visitors. The stunt, which took place at a zoo in Zibo City, Shandong province, quickly backfired after keen-eyed netizens recognized the creatures

for what they truly were—donkeys, not zebras. The controversy began when a video went viral showing a zoo worker standing next to a donkey with black and white stripes across its body. However, the worker left the donkey’s face un-

touched, which made it even more obvious that it was not a zebra. The attempt to disguise the donkey as a zebra was so poorly executed that online viewers immediately noticed the difference, sparking a wave of jokes and criticism across social media platforms. In response to the growing uproar, representatives from the amusement park told Chinese media that the painted donkeys were part of a “marketing strategy.” However, their explanation did little to quell the backlash, with many criticizing the zoo for trying to deceive visitors. The debacle has raised questions about the ethics of using such deceptive practices in animal exhibits. While the zoo’s marketing attempt may have been intended to draw attention, it ultimately served as a reminder of the power of social media and the sharp eye of internet users. The incident also highlights the importance of authenticity in tourism, with visitors increasingly expecting transparency and honesty from attractions. Despite the failed stunt, the story has given the zoo a fleeting moment of fame—though likely not the kind they had hoped for. Instead of gaining new visitors through their creativity, they have become the subject of ridicule and mockery online.

OpenAI Shifts Focus to GPT-5, Cancels Standalone o3 AI Model



OpenAI CEO Sam Altman recently announced that the company has decided not to release the highly anticipated o3 artificial intelligence (AI) model. Instead of launching the o3 model as planned, OpenAI will now focus on a unified GPT-5 model, which will integrate the capabilities of o3. Altman shared details about the company’s updated AI roadmap, revealing that OpenAI will simplify its product offerings with the release of GPT-4.5 and GPT-5. The goal is to eliminate user confusion when choosing between various models for different tasks. Instead of offering multiple specialized models, GPT-5 will be designed to deliver “unified intelligence,” meaning it will be capable of utilizing all OpenAI tools and know when to apply reasoning without users having to choose the appropriate model for each task. The cancellation of the o3 model’s standalone release marks the end of the o-series of AI models, with the company opting to integrate the features of o3 di-

rectly into GPT-5. Altman also announced changes to OpenAI’s tiered subscription model. When GPT-5 is launched, all ChatGPT users will have access to the AI model, with free-tier users receiving unlimited chat access at the standard intelligence level. To prevent misuse, the company will impose abuse thresholds. Pro subscribers will get access to a higher intelligence level, and the top-tier subscribers will have the most advanced capabilities. GPT-5 will also introduce new features, including Advanced Voice, Canvas, Search, and Deep Research. However, before GPT-5 arrives, OpenAI plans to launch GPT-4.5, its last non-chain-of-thought (non-CoT) model. While the exact release date is still unclear, Altman suggested that GPT-4.5 could arrive in the coming weeks or months. Interestingly, GPT-4.5, internally referred to as “Orion,” was initially rumored to be GPT-5 itself. With these developments, OpenAI is aiming to streamline its AI offerings and deliver a more efficient, user-friendly experience.

Apple Maps may soon include ads to boost services revenue



Apple Maps, which has long maintained an ad-free experience, is set to introduce ads on its platform. According to a Bloomberg report, the decision to integrate advertisements follows Apple’s ongoing effort to enhance its services revenue. Business owners will soon have the opportunity to promote their locations within the app, a move that mirrors the advertising model used by Google Maps. This shift in Apple Maps’ strategy follows an internal all-hands meeting where the company’s board gave the green light to explore the inclusion of ads. Although discussions around adding ads to Apple Maps have been ongoing since 2022, the rollout was initially expected in 2023 but was delayed for unspecified reasons. Apple Maps users, who have enjoyed an ad-free experience up until now, will soon encounter promoted listings for businesses, making it more similar to other mapping platforms like Google

Maps, which has long allowed businesses to pay for visibility in search results and map locations. By introducing ads, Apple aims to diversify its services revenue, which has become an increasingly important part of the company’s financial growth. As Apple continues to expand its advertising initiatives across its ecosystem, including the App Store and other apps, the move to include ads in Apple Maps marks another step in the company’s broader strategy to increase earnings from services. The exact timeline for the launch of ads on Apple Maps has not been confirmed, but business owners will soon be able to begin promoting their locations to potential customers directly through the platform. This change may offer new opportunities for businesses looking to increase their visibility within the app, while also contributing to Apple’s overall revenue growth.

Indian Women's Hockey Team Aims for Victory Against Spain in FIH Pro League



The Indian Women's Hockey Team is eager to return to winning ways as they face Spain in the FIH Pro League 2024-25 on February 18 and 19 at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium. After a 3-2 win over England and a tough 2-2 draw followed by a shootout loss, India sits in eighth place with four points. With a focus on improving penalty corner conversions, the team aims to rectify their previ-

ous mistakes. Vice-captain Navneet Kaur, with a goal in each game, has been in strong form. Spain, currently in fourth place with eight points, comes off back-to-back wins over Germany. India captain Salima Tete expressed confidence, stating the team is ready for the challenge, aiming to build momentum with a solid performance in front of the home crowd.

Rajasthan Kings Set Up Final Showdown with Chhattisgarh Warriors in Legend 90 League



als in Qualifier 2 at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium. Batting first, Delhi Royals posted a competitive 167/5 in 15 overs, with Lendl Simmons (63 off 34) and Sharad Lumba (60 off 24) leading the charge. Despite a strong start, the Kings made a strong comeback, with Sudeep Tyagi's crucial delivery forcing Simmons' retirement. Rajasthan Kings chased the target with ease, thanks to explosive knocks from Phil Mustard (53* off 34) and Rajat Singh (56 off 28). The final will be played against Chhattisgarh Warriors on Monday at 7:15 pm, featuring a special performance by Bollywood star Thamman Bhatia.

Rajasthan Kings booked their spot in the grand finale of the Legend 90 League with a dominant six-wicket victory over Delhi Roy-

23rd National Para Athletics Championships Kick Off in Chennai

The 23rd National Para Athletics Championships have officially commenced at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai, marking a historic first for the city. The event, running from February 17 to 20, features a massive participation of 1,476 para-athletes across 30 teams, competing in 155 events. Organized under the guidance of Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin and supported by the Tamil Nadu Government, the championship is one of the largest para-athletics gatherings in India.

The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), led by Devendra Jhajharia, and the Tamil Nadu Paralympic Sports Association (TNPSA), headed by Chandrasekar Rajan, are overseeing the successful execution of the



event. With world-class facilities and strong government support, the championship not only celebrates para-athlete talent but also fosters inclusivity and excellence in Indian sports.

23rd National Para Athletics Championships Kick Off in Chennai



With Jasprit Bumrah sidelined due to injury, India's hopes in the 2024 ICC Champions Trophy rest on Mohammed Shami's shoulders. Set to partner Arshdeep Singh, Shami's experience and wrist wizardry are expected to be pivotal in India's campaign. The 34-year-old, returning from injury, faces the challenge of delivering in a high-pressure tournament, especially without Bumrah, his trusted ally for years. Shami's impact with the new ball will be crucial, and former pacer Laxmipathy Balaji believes the bowler can step up and lead India's attack. With his ability to move the ball off the deck and hit the stumps, Shami's leadership and skills are vital for India's Champions Trophy aspirations.

Crispin Chettri Names 23-Member Squad for Pink Ladies Cup in UAE



Indian senior women's football team coach Crispin Chettri has announced a 23-member squad for the upcoming Pink Ladies Cup, a friendly tournament set to take place in Sharjah, UAE, from February 20 to 26. India will face Jordan, Russia, and the Korean Republic in this tournament, providing valuable preparation for the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers. India's matches are scheduled at the Al Hamriya Sports Club Stadium, Sharjah, with the team set to play Jordan on February 20, Russia on February 23, and Korea Republic on February 26. The squad includes goalkeepers Elangbam Panthoi Chanu, Payal Basude, and Shreya Hooda, along with defenders Aruna Bag, Kiran Pisdha, and others. Coach Chettri emphasized the importance of adapting to different playing styles for a well-rounded team performance.

um, Sharjah, with the team set to play Jordan on February 20, Russia on February 23, and Korea Republic on February 26. The squad includes goalkeepers Elangbam Panthoi Chanu, Payal Basude, and Shreya Hooda, along with defenders Aruna Bag, Kiran Pisdha, and others. Coach Chettri emphasized the importance of adapting to different playing styles for a well-rounded team performance.

Indian Men Aim to Continue Winning Momentum Against Germany in FIH Pro League



India's men's hockey team will look to build on their recent victory as they take on Germany in their next FIH Pro League match on Tuesday. After a tough start to their campaign, the team bounced back with a 2-0 win over Spain on Sunday, earning three points from two matches and sitting eighth in the standings. India's victory against Spain was marked by field goals from Mandeep Singh and Dilpreet Singh, but the team continues to face challenges with penalty corner conversions, having failed to score from seven attempts so far. Captain Harmanpreet Singh's return to the lineup is expected to strengthen the set-piece execution. Germany, currently seventh in the standings with four points, will be India's next challenge, with their attack led by Raphael Hartkopf, Gonzalo Peillat, and Thies Prinz. Harmanpreet emphasized the need to stay focused and improve in key areas to secure another win.

MoS Sports Inaugurates Maharashtra Esports Open Championship 2025

Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Raksha Nikhil Khadse, inaugurated the Maharashtra Esports Open Championship 2025 at MIT World Peace University, marking a historic milestone in the state's sports history. This state-backed tournament, organized by the Federation of Electronic Sports Associations India (FEAI) and the Maratha Esports Association (MEA), has attracted 2,100 participants, with 52 finalists advancing to the Grand Finale. Khadse highlighted the growing

significance of esports, which became a medal sport at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games and will feature in the 2027 Olympic Esports Games. The Government of India's recognition of esports as a "multi-sport event" and the recent introduction of cash incentives for outstanding players further cements esports' status. With over 500 million gamers in India, Maharashtra is positioned to be the country's esports hub, poised for explosive growth and future Olympic success.





Kanika Kapoor Unveils 'Gori Hai Kalaiyan 2.0' – A Vibrant Reinterpretation of a Classic



Singer Kanika Kapoor is back with a fresh, energetic take on the iconic track Gori Hai Kalaiyan for the upcoming film Mere Husband Ki Biwi, releasing on February 21. Featuring Badshah, Sharvi Yadav, and IP Singh, the song blends nostalgia with a modern vibe, earning buzz for its upbeat rhythm. Kanika, known for hits like Baby Doll and Chittiyaan Kalaiyaan, calls the track a perfect fit for her playful, high-energy style. She shares her excitement about experimenting with different genres, including Afro and R&B. Despite the pressure of maintaining success, Kanika sees it as motivation, focusing on enjoying the creative journey. With upcoming collaborations, she's eager to share more diverse music soon.

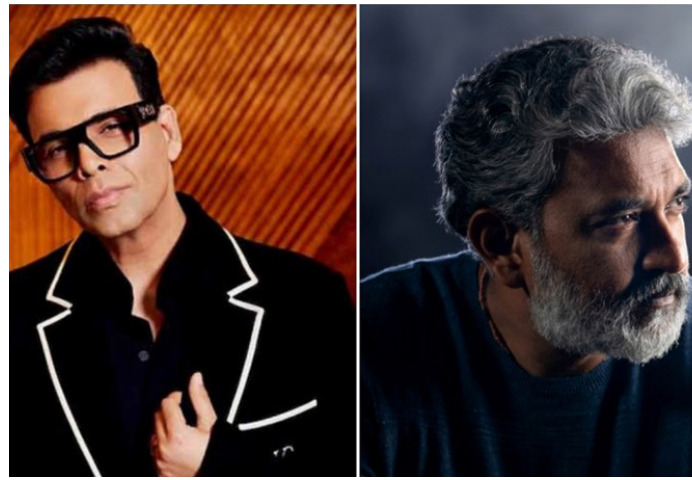
AR Murugadoss Announces Title of Upcoming Sivakarthikeyan Film as Madharasi



The much-anticipated film directed by AR Murugadoss, starring Sivakarthikeyan, has officially been titled Madharasi. The announcement was made on Sivakarthikeyan's birthday, adding excitement to his fans. The film, previously referred to as #SKXARM, promises a high-octane action-packed experience. A teaser featuring intense action sequences was shared by Murugadoss, hinting at a role for actor Biju Menon as a cop.

The movie also stars Rukmini Vasanth, Vidyut Jammwal, Shabeer Kallarakkal, and Vikranth. The film, 90% complete, will wrap up after Murugadoss finishes working on Salman Khan's project. Produced by Sri Lakshmi Movies, Madharasi features music by Anirudh Ravichander and cinematography by Sudeep Elamon. The film's visual effects will be handled by Knack Studios, Phantom FX, and BeastBells.

Karan Johar Praises SS Rajamouli's "Conviction" in Filmmaking



Karan Johar recently discussed the key to creating blockbuster films – conviction in one's craft. In a conversation with Komal Nahata for his YouTube channel Game Changers, Johar highlighted that conviction is more important than logic in filmmaking. He specifically mentioned SS Rajamouli, stating that his films, such as RRR, thrive not on logic but on Rajamouli's unwavering conviction.

Johar explained, "When conviction comes to the forefront, even the audience believes in it," citing examples like RRR, Animal, and Gadar as films driven by this powerful belief. He also noted that the moment filmmakers doubt themselves or overthink logic, it can hinder a film's success. Johar, who has a good rapport with Rajamouli, had previously presented the Hindi version of Baahubali 2.

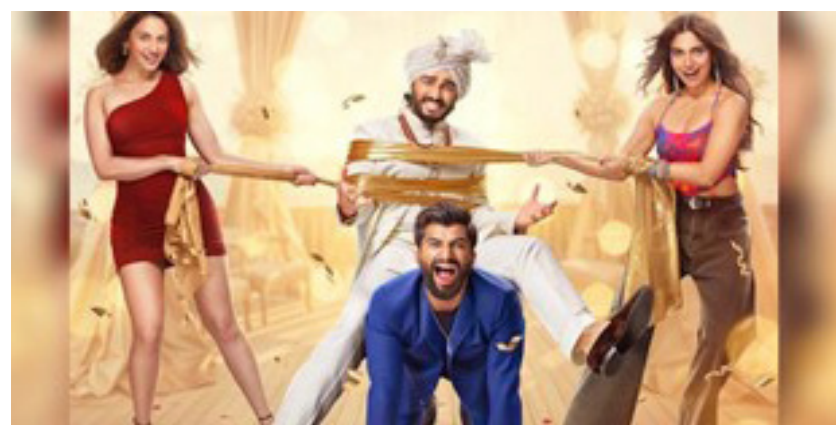
Producer SKN Faces Backlash Over Comments on Telugu Actresses



Producer SKN (Srinivasa Kumar Naidu), who introduced actress Vaishnavi Chaitanya as the heroine in Baby, has sparked controversy with his recent remarks about Telugu actresses. Speaking at the pre-release event of Return of Dragon, SKN mentioned that he and director Sai Rajesh had decided not to promote Telugu actresses anymore. He explained that they had realized the consequences of supporting Telugu girls, leading to their decision. These comments are believed to be aimed at Vaishnavi, who reportedly declined another film offer from SKN's banner after the success of Baby. Many netizens have criticized SKN's remarks, claiming they are inappropriate, especially as Telugu actresses are gaining recognition in the industry.

New Releases This (February 17 & February 21): Must-Watch Movies & Shows

1. Mere Husband Ki Biwi (Feb 21) - Theatres



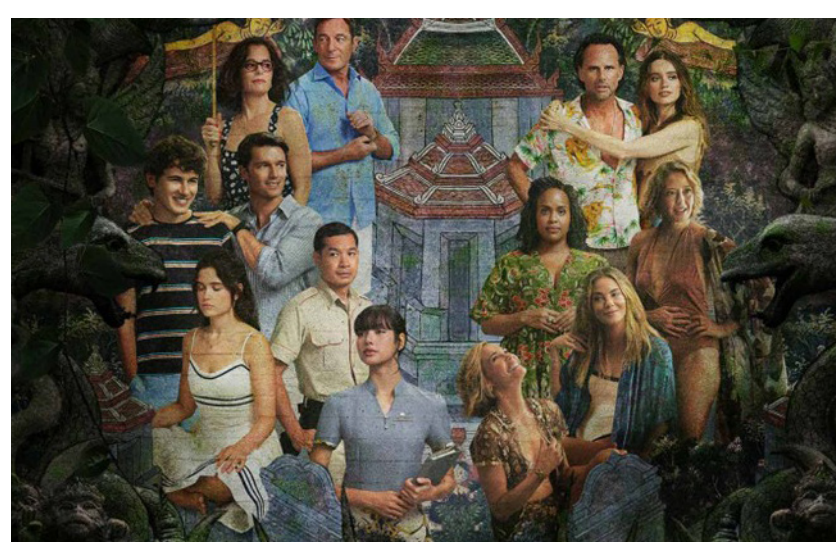
A comedy-drama about a man juggling relationships with his wife and girlfriend, starring Arjun Kapoor, Rakul Preet Singh, and Bhumi Pednekar.

2. Nilavuku En Mel Ennadi Kobam (Feb 21) - Theatres



Dhanush's directorial debut featuring his nephew Pavish, a love story with Anikha Surendran and Priya Prakash Varrier.

3. The White Lotus Season 3 (Feb 17) - JioHotstar



Set in Thailand, the new season follows a group of privileged vacationers at a luxury resort.

BAFTA Awards 2025: 'Conclave' Wins Best Film, Indian Films Earn Recognition



At the 2025 BAFTA Awards, British-Indian filmmaker Sandhya Suri's Santosh, Karan Kandhari's Sister Midnight, and Dev Patel's directorial debut Monkey Man did not secure wins in the Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer category, which went to Irish filmmaker Rich Peppiatt for Kneecap. Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light lost the Best Film Not in the English Language award to Emilia Perez, despite its Cannes victory.

Conclave, a papal thriller starring Ralph Fiennes, took home the coveted Best Film and Best British Film awards. Other notable winners included Brady Corbet (Best Director for The Brutalist), Mikey Madison (Best Actress for Anora), and Kieran Culkin (Best Supporting Actor for A Real Pain).