




Weather Forecast

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

MASSIVE TIMBER LOOTING UNDER UDAYAGIRI MLA?



- **Illegal timber cutting rampant in Udayagiri constituency.**
- **Looting under political protection by ruling party leaders.**
- **CPI, Agrigold welfare groups protest against inaction.**
- **Authorities accused of ignoring complaints despite evidence.**
- **Protesters demand strict action to stop timber looting.**



TPN Correspondent
Udayagiri, Feb 21

A large-scale timber looting operation has come to light in Udayagiri constituency, Nellore district, where valuable Jamayal trees are being illegally cut down and transported. Allegations indicate that this deforestation is happening under the protection of influential figures within the Udayagiri TDP MLA followers. Allegations are mounting over whether MLA Kakarla Suresh was aware of this scam or not. Critics argue that such large-scale illegal timber looting could not have taken place without the knowledge of influential leaders. The issue has sparked demands for a thorough investigation into the role of political figures in the ongoing illegal activities.

The lands in question belong to Agrigold, spanning thousands of acres and housing extensive Jamayal and mango plantations. However, reports suggest that certain groups, emboldened by their political connections, have been illegally harvesting timber and selling it for profit. Authorities had intervened in the past to halt these activities, but large-scale deforestation has resumed, particularly in Varikuntapadu Mandal. Logs are reportedly being transported using lorries despite repeated complaints from local residents. Concerned over the authorities' lack of action, CPI leaders and members

of the Agrigold Users and Agents' Welfare Association staged protests in front of the MRO office and police station. They accused officials of turning a blind eye to the ongoing looting and failing to take necessary action. Protesters also alleged that individuals who attempted to stop the illegal logging were attacked by ruling party supporters, raising fears of political interference in the issue. Despite previous alerts to the authorities, the recurrence of such activities has fueled concerns that the looters enjoy protection from political leaders. Protesters are now demanding strict and high-level intervention to put an end to the timber looting and hold those responsible accountable.

TWO WOMEN - CRORES VALUED PROPERTIES @VAMSI

- **Police uncover ties between Ex-MLA Vamsi and air hostess.**
- **Multi-crore transactions, luxury assets revealed in investigation.**
- **Air hostess owns properties, plans to buy chartered flight.**
- **Illegal land deals, shopping complex linked to Vamsi.**
- **175-acre land scam, financial fraud under police probe.**
- **Connections to drug trade, prostitution racket exposed.**
- **Authorities track Vamsi's phone for crucial evidence.**

TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 21

As the investigation into former Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneeni Vamsi's financial irregularities deepens, shocking revelations about his alleged financial dealings with women have emerged. The police have reportedly uncovered crores of rupees in transactions linked to a married air hostess and other women through electronic evidence.

According to sources, a married air hostess from Chintalapudi village in Gannavaram mandal, West Godavari district, is under scrutiny for amassing properties worth crores in a short period. Police investigations reveal that she owns a luxury apartment, villa, and two expensive cars in Hyderabad, and recently negotiated to buy a chartered flight. Further inquiries indicate that 15 acres of prime land were purchased near Chintalapudi and Jangareddygudem, along with a three-acre shopping complex in Eluru.



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CM Naidu, Dy CM Pawan Meets Union Minister CR Patil to Discuss AP Projects



TPN Correspondent
New Delhi, Feb 21

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan met Union Minister for Water Resources CR Patil in Delhi on Thursday to discuss key state development projects. During the meeting, CM Chandrababu emphasized the urgent need for reimbursement of funds spent on the Polavaram left and right canal construction. He also requested Union assistance to expedite the completion of the Polavaram project. CM Chandrababu presented the Po-

lavaram-Banakacharla Link Project, which proposes the transfer of 200 TMC floodwater from the Godavari at Polavaram to Banakacharla. He highlighted the project's benefits, stating that it would help make Andhra Pradesh drought-free, provide drinking water to 80 lakh people, and support agricultural expansion by creating a new ayacut of 3 lakh hectares while stabilizing 9.14 lakh hectares of existing farmland. Additionally, 20 TMC of water would be allocated to industries, boosting economic growth. After the meeting, CM Chandrababu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan attended an oath-taking ceremony in Delhi.



PM Modi Holds Special Meeting with AP CM & Dy CM

- **PM Modi, Amit Shah discuss AP development with CM.**
- **Modi inquires about Amaravati and AP development projects.**
- **Centre assures full support for AP's progress.**
- **Pawan reiterates commitment to fulfilling election promises.**

After the swearing-in ceremony of Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, a meeting of NDA Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers took place in Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and BJP National President JP Nadda attended the meeting. During the session, PM Modi held a special discussion with Andhra Pradesh CM Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan. He inquired about the ongoing development works in Andhra Pradesh, including the status of Amaravati's construction. Modi assured that the central government will provide all necessary support for the state's progress. In response, Chandrababu and Pawan expressed their gratitude for the Centre's commitment to Andhra Pradesh.

After the NDA meeting, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan addressed the national media, explaining that his absence in previous NDA meetings was due to health issues, including persistent back pain. He reaffirmed the state government's dedication to fulfilling promises made to the people.

AP Fibernet in Crisis: Chairman GV Reddy Raises Concerns



- **Fibernet Chairman GV Reddy removes senior officials.**
- **Chairman Sacks AP Fibernet senior Officials Over Mismanagement.**
- **GV Reddy says Fibernet hasn't received a single rupee in 9 months.**
- **GST officials failed to inform about the ₹377 crore fine.**

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CM Naidu Urges Central Govt for Support on Chilli Price Drop

- CM discusses chilli price drop with Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- Seeks central support for farmers and intervention in pricing.
- Polavaram project progress, Jal Jeevan Mission, and river interlinking also discussed.

TPN Correspondent
New Delhi, Feb 21

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu assured chilli farmers that the state government is actively addressing the sharp decline in chilli prices. Speaking at a media conference in Delhi, CM Chandrababu revealed that he had discussed the issue with Union Minister for Agriculture Shivraj Singh Chouhan and requested central intervention to stabilize prices.

CM Chandrababu attributed the fall in chilli prices to declining international demand and stated that this year's drop was unprecedented. With 12 lakh metric tons of chilli require-

ing procurement, 4 lakh metric tons have already entered the market. He urged the Centre to support farmers through market intervention measures and emphasized the need for pricing based on cultivation costs. The Chief Minister noted that he had written to the Centre three times regarding the issue and state officials had engaged with the central government for solutions. He assured farmers that he would meet traders and market representatives on Saturday to assess price fluctuations and work towards a resolution.

CM Chandrababu also met Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil to review the Polavaram project, Jal Jeevan Mission, and river interlinking. He reiterated

that Polavaram is on track for completion by 2027 and sought central assistance to transport its waters to Banakacharla.

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the Centre had sanctioned ₹27,000 crore for Andhra Pradesh, but CM Chandrababu criticized the previous government for underutilizing the funds. He highlighted that an additional ₹54,000 crore would be required to ensure tap water supply across the state and vowed to seek further central support.

CM Chandrababu emphasized that Andhra Pradesh must utilize the water flowing into the sea and said the NDA government is committed to ensuring optimal water usage for the state's development.



Minister Narayana, CRDA Commissioner Kannababu meet Mumbai's MMRDA, CIDCO Officials

TPN Correspondent
Amaravati, Feb 21

In a significant step towards strengthening urban development in Andhra Pradesh, Minister P. Narayana and CRDA Commissioner Kannababu visited Mumbai, where they held discussions with Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) and CIDCO officials.

The Andhra Pradesh delegation engaged with MMRDA Planning Director Shankar Deshpande and other senior officials to understand Mumbai's road network expansion, metro rail planning, public transport policies, housing initiatives, and regional development strategies. Focus on Infrastructure and Foreign Investment

Mumbai officials provided insights into how MMRDA is executing large-scale projects, including metro rail and urban housing, while also leveraging foreign investment for infrastructure development. Minister Narayana took keen interest in the fund mobilization strategies adopted by MMRDA for government projects and explored their feasibility for Andhra Pradesh. The discussions also covered policy frameworks, financial models, and sustainable urban planning that could be implemented for the development of Amaravati and other cities in Andhra Pradesh.



Alumni Should Be School Mentors: Nara Lokesh

TPN Correspondent
Amaravati, Feb 21

Andhra Pradesh Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh has instructed officials to create a system for utilizing alumni, alumni associations, and development aspirants as school mentors to contribute to government school improvement. He conducted a review meeting on school education and comprehensive education at his residence in Undavalli.

He emphasized that donors supporting school and college development should have access to comprehensive information about infrastructure needs. He directed officials to establish a transparent system where donations reach schools directly. He also ordered the timely distribution of Student Friend Kits before the start of the next academic year, inspired by the vision of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. The meeting reviewed the implementation of centrally sponsored schemes, fund utilization, and budget planning for the upcoming financial year. Minister Lokesh stressed the importance of basic infrastructure, including computer labs, STEM labs, and school libraries, in all government schools.



New ADEETIE Scheme to Enhance Energy Efficiency in MSMEs

- Centre Launches ADEETIE Scheme to Boost MSME Energy Efficiency
- 8,000 MSMEs nationwide to benefit, including in Andhra Pradesh.
- ₹9,000 crore investment expected in energy-efficient technologies.

TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 21

The Ministry of Power, Government of India, through the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), has launched the Assistance for Development of Energy Efficient Technologies in Industrial Establishments (ADEETIE) scheme to promote energy efficiency in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The scheme, announced at the BEE-Indo-German Energy Partnership National Summit in Vijayawada, aims to support MSMEs through investment-grade energy audits, technology implementation assistance, and financial incentives such as interest subvention on loans. This initiative will reduce financial stress and enable MSMEs to adopt advanced energy-efficient technologies.

Key Features of ADEETIE:

Financial Incentives: 5% interest subvention for Micro & Small enterprises, 3% for Medium enterprises.

Sector Focus: Foundry, Pharmaceuticals, Textiles, Paper, Fisheries, and other energy-intensive industries.

Dedicated Support: From initial audits to technology implementation.

BEE Secretary Milind Deora highlighted that ADEETIE is a major step towards sustainability, helping MSMEs compete globally while contributing to India's climate goals. The scheme will be implemented in phases, starting with Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

Energy Efficiency Impact (2024 Data):

Annual electrical savings: 321.39 billion units.

CO₂ emission reduction: 321.06 million tonnes.

Total annual cost savings: ₹2,00,212 crore.

During the summit, Milind Deora praised states like Andhra Pradesh for their leadership in energy efficiency. BEE officials, power sector executives, and state representatives participated in discussions on expanding energy efficiency initiatives across the country.

TWO WOMEN - CRORES VALUED...

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The police believe these assets were funded through illegal financial transactions involving Vamsi, his aide Ranga, and the air hostess.

Additionally, the police identified another woman from Hanuman Junction who allegedly operates a boutique near the bus stand. Authorities are also investigating two women residing in a prominent Vijayawada apartment who allegedly use the space for illegal businesses and have lured young women into these activities.

The investigation has widened to include a massive 175-acre land scam in Malavalli, where Vamsi, his younger brother, and a politician from Ampapuram are accused of involvement. Evidence also points to Vamsi's acquisition of 300 acres of land in Odisha, raising further concerns about illicit dealings.

Central to the probe is Erramsetty Ramanjaneyulu alias Potti Ramu, a close associate of Vamsi. Police allege that Ramu has been involved in illegal mining, prostitution, and drug trafficking since aligning with Vamsi in 2014. Reports suggest he trapped young men into the marijuana trade and manipulated girls for personal and financial gain.

Authorities are intensifying efforts to locate Vamsi's phone, which they believe holds critical evidence to fully expose the illegal transactions between Vamsi, Ranga, and other associates. The investigation continues to unravel the depth of the network, with further disclosures expected in the coming days.

AP Fibernet in Crisis: Chairman...

TPN Correspondent
Amaravati, Feb 21

AP Fibernet Chairman GV Reddy has raised serious concerns regarding the ongoing troubles within the AP Fibernet network, highlighting severe operational and financial challenges. Speaking at a press conference, he revealed that despite managing a vast 78,000 km optical cable network, Fibernet has been facing daily disruptions that have not been addressed.

Reddy criticized the inaction of Dinesh Kumar IAS, who took charge in August but has not focused on Fibernet's issues even for a single day. He expressed suspicion over possible collusion between previous officials, stating that Fibernet has not received a single rupee since the new government came to power. Additionally, the service has not provided a single new connection under the current administration.

The Chairman also announced that three key officials Chief Technology Officer Satyarama Bharadwaj, Business Head Suresh, and Procurement Officer Shashank Haider Khan should be relieved from their duties, as their services are no longer required. He questioned why previously removed officials had not been formally terminated and criticized the delay in implementing committee decisions.

Arunachal Pradesh & Mizoram Statehood Day Celebrated at Raj Bhavan

TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 21

Andhra Pradesh Governor Sri S. Abdul Nazeer attended the Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram Statehood Day celebrations as the Chief Guest at

Durbar Hall, Raj Bhavan. The event was held under the 'Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat' program, which promotes cultural unity across states.

In his address, Governor Abdul Nazeer praised Arunachal Pradesh, calling it the "land of the rising sun," known

for its misty mountains, monasteries, and rich tribal heritage. He highlighted Mizoram's journey to statehood in 1987, noting the Mizo people's dedication to preserving their cultural identity and traditional values.

The celebrations began with video

messages from Lt. General Kaiwalya Trivikrama Parnaik (Retd.), Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, and General (Dr.) Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd.), Governor of Mizoram. Students from Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram, studying in Vijayawada, showcased

their cultural heritage through melodious songs and folk dance performances.

The event was attended by Dr. M. Hari Jawaharlal, Secretary to the Governor, along with Raj Bhavan officials and staff members.

Discontent in NDA Alliance Grows in Mummdivaram

- TDP-Jana Sena tensions over election credit
- Disputes on development work allocations persist.
- Clashes over nominated posts and privileges.
- Jana Sena demands key leadership positions.
- Activists voice concerns on social media.
- Fears of YSRCP gaining from alliance rift.



TPN Correspondent Mummdivaram, Feb 21

Discontent among NDA alliance leaders and activists in the Mummdivaram constituency appears to be simmering beneath the surface. Despite the landslide victory of alliance candidate Datla Buchibabu, who secured a majority of over 40,000 votes, a growing divide between Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP) leaders is becoming evi-

dent. TDP leaders assert that their party played a crucial role in the victory, downplaying the contribution of Jana Sena. This claim has led to friction between the two allies, with Jana Sena leaders openly criticizing TDP representatives over the allocation of development works, sand ramp permits, liquor trade, and nominated positions. However, TDP leaders counter that several key Jana Sena figures have al-

ready been granted sand ramps and other privileges. Adding to the tensions, some Jana Sena activists have taken to social media, demanding that the post of Mummdivaram Marketing Committee Chairman be allocated to a woman from their party. Meanwhile, neutral voices within the alliance warn that unilateral decisions within the constituency could harm both parties in the long run, potentially strengthening

the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) in the region. Jana Sena leaders and activists are expected to raise these concerns at the upcoming plenary in Pithapuram, where they plan to highlight what they perceive as TDP's unilateral decision-making. A recent social media post from an anonymous Jana Sena leader in the constituency has further exposed the growing dissatisfaction within the alliance ranks. Political observers believe that if the differences between the two parties are not resolved soon, the internal discord could create opportunities for the opposition. The coming days will be crucial in determining whether the NDA alliance in Mummdivaram can overcome its internal conflicts and maintain its political strength in the region.

Minister Vasamsetty Says Jagan's Remarks on Men's Beauty are Worrying



TPN Correspondent Amaravati, Feb 21

Labour Minister Vasamsetty Subhash strongly countered the statements made by YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders regarding the security of former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. Speaking on the matter, he asserted that Jagan is merely an MLA and not the opposition leader. Criticizing Jagan's recent public remarks, Minister Vasamsetty claimed that Jagan has gained a following among prisoners and their families due to

his past jail visits. He further alleged that Jagan's comments have become increasingly concerning, stating that his words about men's beauty and stripping are worrisome. The minister went on to suggest that Jagan's behavior might have been distorted by "London drugs," implying that his statements lack seriousness. With the ongoing political tensions between the ruling alliance and the opposition, these remarks have further intensified the war of words between TDP and YSRCP leaders.

Jagan is Acting Crazy, Creating Drama - Minister Savita



TPN Correspondent Amaravati, Feb 21

State Minister S. Savita strongly criticized former Chief Minister and YSRCP President YS Jaganmohan Reddy, alleging that he is creating unnecessary drama to maintain the existence of his party. Speaking at a press con-

ference in her office on Thursday, she accused Jagan of deliberately inciting unrest and making baseless allegations against the government. Minister Savita stated that Jagan has no moral right to speak on farmers' issues, as his government had failed to protect their interests. She accused him of visiting Andhra Pradesh for just two days, causing political disturbances, and then returning to Bengaluru to play PUBG. She further alleged that Jagan was misleading the public instead of addressing real concerns. Referring to Jagan's visit to the Guntur Mirchi Yard, Savita

questioned his understanding of election rules. She pointed out that, as an MLA from Pulivendula, Jagan should be well aware of the electoral regulations and security protocols. She criticized him for spreading misinformation about his security cover and for trying to politicize governance issues. Savita also defended the government's stance on security arrangements, stating that Jagan's accusations were an attempt to mislead the public. She emphasized that the coalition government is committed to upholding law and order and ensuring public safety without bias.

Botsa Alleges Malicious Intent Behind Jagan's Security Removal



YSRCP leaders meet Governor over Jagan's security concerns.

Botsa alleges the government deliberately removed Z+ security.

Questions why Election Code was cited selectively.

TPN Correspondent Vijayawada, Feb 21

The Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, Botsa Satyanarayana, along with several YSRCP leaders, met Governor Justice Abdul Na-

zeer at Raj Bhavan to complain about the removal of former Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's Z+ security during his visit to Guntur Mirchi Yard. Botsa accused the coalition government of acting with malicious intent and demanded immediate intervention. Speaking to the media after the meeting, Botsa revealed that even the Governor was shocked by the security lapse. He assured the YSRCP delega-

tion that he would look into the matter and conduct an inquiry. Botsa criticized the government for putting Jagan at risk and claimed that police officials were instructed not to provide security. Botsa dismissed the government's justification that security was removed due to the Election Code. He questioned why the same code was not applied to the Sangeetha Vibhavari event in Vijayawada, implying that security decisions were being made selectively to target Jagan. Botsa warned that if anything happened to Jagan, top officials, including the IG and SP, would be held responsible. He accused the government of deliberately creating an embarrassing situation for Jagan while he was addressing farmers' concerns about falling chili prices. Botsa also criticized the coalition government for neglecting farmers, alleging that under YSRCP, support was provided through RBKs from seed to sale, but now middlemen were exploiting them. He blamed the current administration for weakening farmer support systems and failing to regulate fertilizer and seed prices. YSRCP leaders are demanding that Jagan's security be restored immediately, holding the government accountable for its actions.

YS Sharmila criticizes Botsa, likens his words to 'demons describing the Vedas'



TPN Correspondent Andhra Pradesh, Feb 21

Andhra Pradesh Congress President YS Sharmila launched a scathing attack on YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader Botsa Satyanarayana, dismissing his statements as "demons describing the Vedas." She accused YSRCP leaders of deceiving the people and looting the state's wealth like "porcupines

without working." Sharmila criticized former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, claiming he "slept like Kumbhakarna for five years" and did nothing for the people while enjoying power. She further alleged that Jagan betrayed his party's principles and his father's legacy by aligning with the BJP. Referring to YSRCP's dramatic seat reduction from 151 to 11 in the elections, Sharmila stated that the public had punished the party for its inaction. "People saw through your empty rule and ensured you couldn't return to power," she asserted. Sharmila concluded by pointing out that Jagan's governance failures had left his party without even an opposition status, marking a sharp downfall for YSRCP.

Jagan is the Brand Ambassador of Lies, Says Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu

TPN Correspondent Amaravati, Feb 21

Irrigation Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu criticized former Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, accusing him of failing to complete the Veligonda project, which is crucial for the backward regions of Andhra Pradesh. Speaking to the media, he stated that Jagan has become the brand ambassador for lies, as his government had claimed credit for a project that was never completed. Minister Nimmala reminded that the foundation stone for the Veligonda project was laid in 1996. By 2014, nearly 38% of the work was completed. However, instead of completing the remaining work during his tenure from 2019 to 2024, Jagan allegedly misled the people by falsely claiming its completion. The Minister further remarked that Jagan repeat-



edly promised to finish the project but ultimately failed to do so. He ridiculed Jagan for inaugurating an incomplete project and misleading the public. "Jagan, who once toured the state in helicopters while in power, is now traveling on the very roads built by our government after losing power," Nimmala

added. Assuring the public, the Minister stated that the Chandrababu-led government is committed to completing the Veligonda project. He emphasized that with Rs. 4,000 crore allocated for the project, it will be completed within two years through dedicated efforts.

German Pegasus Representatives Visit Eluru to Study Natural Farming



TPN Correspondent
Eluru, Feb 21

A delegation from Germany's Pegasus Capital visited Eluru district as part of their state-wide tour to study and strengthen natural farming practices. The visit was led by T. Vijay Kumar, Executive Vice Chairman of Rythu Sadhikaran Sanstha, and included inspections of farms across Ungutur Mandal's A. Gokavaram, Bhimadolu Mandal's Vadlapatla, and Kodurupadu villages. The team began their field study at the "Surabhi" Goshala in A. Gokavaram, where they directly observed the nine universal principles of natural farming. They examined key practices such as seed pellet preparation, solid bio-liquid application, and agnastra techniques used in chemical-free agriculture. In ATM (Any Time Money) model rice fields, an experiment was conducted under the guidance of Kaithu T. Mallesh, assessing water utilization and productivity differences across farming methods. The delegation also studied an A-grade natural

farming model developed by APCNF Mentor Intern K. Kalyan Kumar, comparing it to a nearby chemically farmed field owned by N. Rambabu to observe the differences in crop health and sustainability. Later, they visited U. Ramachandra Rao's coconut plantation, where banana, yam, and vegetable intercrops were being cultivated under natural farming techniques. The team also toured the Krishna Raghava Natural Resources Center, appreciating its role in supplying multi-crop seed kits and essential pre-monsoon dry sowing materials to local farmers. During their final stop at Bhimadolu Mandal's Vadlapatla village, the representatives interacted with Self-Help Group members and local farmers, discussing the impact of natural farming on livelihoods. The visit was attended by senior officials from the Farmers Empowerment Organization, including Aruna, Prabhakar, and Vishi, along with APCNF District Manager Tatarau and other key stakeholders.

AP Police Shine at 68th All India Police Duty Meet

TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 21

The Andhra Pradesh Police delivered an exceptional performance at the 68th All India Police Duty Meet, held in Ranchi, Jharkhand, over six days. Competing against top police forces from across the country, the AP team demonstrated their expertise and secured multiple medals in various categories. SI K. Krishnamurthy set a new benchmark by winning three gold medals in Forensic Science, Criminal Law, and Medico-Legal categories in the individual competition. His achievement was instrumen-

tal in boosting Andhra Pradesh's overall ranking in the event. The AP Police team collectively secured 4 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze medals across different disciplines. Their outstanding performance ensured top-three finishes in multiple team events, ultimately placing second in the overall medal tally. Director General of Police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta congratulated the team for their remarkable success, appreciating their hard work and dedication in upholding the state police's reputation at the national level.



Traffic Discipline: A Reflection of City's Order

TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 21

District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmi Sha and Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu emphasized the need for a disciplined traffic system in Vijayawada, describing it as a symbol of city order. The officials chaired the Road Safety Committee (DRSC) meeting at Sri Pingali Venkayya Conference Hall in the Collectorate on Thursday, where strategies to enhance road safety were discussed. The meeting covered: Current accident statistics - A total of 1,343 road accidents occurred in 2024, resulting in 431 deaths, with 212 on national highways, 79 on state highways, and 140 on other roads. Action at black spots - Authorities identified 139 accident-prone areas across NH-16, NH-30, NH-65, SH-192, SH-236, SH-32, and other roads, with directives issued for immediate safety measures. Implementation of technology - The AS-Tram (Actionable Intelligence for Sustainable Traffic Management) app was discussed for improving real-time traffic monitoring. Infrastructure improvements - Installa-



tion of speed breakers, signboards, warning boards, and speed limit indicators, along with proposals for footover bridges and underpasses. Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu stated that real-time traffic data is being analyzed to implement effective solutions. He noted that 84% of two-wheeler riders at Benz Circle were wearing helmets, reflecting a positive shift in traffic discipline. Key measures undertaken include: Drone-based traffic monitoring to study congestion and road usage patterns. Pedestrian safety initiatives, ensuring proper road crossings and minimizing jaywalking.

Signage improvements for better navigation and accident prevention. Space utilization behind roads to avoid encroachments and improve vehicle movement. Systematic parking solutions to streamline urban mobility. The meeting concluded with a commitment to conduct monthly road safety committee meetings to assess progress and address new challenges. DCPs Gautamishaali, KM Maheshwararaju, KGV Saritha, M. Krishnamurthy Naidu, DTC A. Mohan, R&B SE T. Satyanarayana, and officials from VMC, Police, Traffic, and Transport departments participated in the session.

State Agricultural University Urged to Boost Millet Cultivation

TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 21

The State Agricultural University should work towards increasing millet cultivation and production across Andhra Pradesh, said S. Dilli Rao, IAS, Director of Agriculture. Addressing a state-level workshop on the National Food and Nutrition Security Mission 2024-25, organized by the Agriculture Department in Vijayawada on Thursday, he emphasized the nutritional benefits of millets, which are high in protein and low in cholesterol. He directed the university to develop new high-yielding millet varieties to make cultivation more profitable and ensure these are provided to farmers at the field level. The workshop brought together agricultural officers from seven millet-growing districts, millet farmers, farmer producer associations, millet mill owners, Markfed officials, AP Seeds representatives, and scientists from N.G. Ranga Agricultural University. During the session, Deputy Director of Agriculture Balu Nayak presented international, national, and state-level statistics on millet cultivation, production, and yield. Scientists from N.G. Ranga Agricultural University-LAM shared best practices for weed, water, pest, and disease management to enhance millet yields. They also discussed harvest and post-harvest techniques and emerging trends in millet farming. Prominent attendees included Research Director Dr. P. Satyanarayana, Chief Scientist Dr. Mohana Reddy, Agriculture Joint Director (Commissioner's Office) Kripadas, AP Seeds officials, and Markfed representatives.



Ward Tours to Solve Problems: MLA Venigandla Ramu

TPN Correspondent
Gudivada, Feb 21

Gudivada MLA Venigandla Ramu has initiated ward-level tours to directly understand public grievances and ensure their quick resolution. On Thursday, he extensively toured the 17th ward of Gudivada town, accompanied by TDP town president Dintyala Rambabu and other leaders. As part of his outreach, MLA Ramu rode a two-wheeler through the ward, engaging directly with residents to hear their concerns. Several issues were brought to his attention, prompting immediate action as he contacted officials from relevant departments to resolve certain problems on the spot. He assured the people that other concerns would also be addressed swiftly. MLA Ramu reiterated his commitment to personally visiting villages and wards to resolve problems at the ground level. He urged people who couldn't meet him during his visits to submit their grievances at the Praja Vedika office, which he assured would work continuously to address public concerns. Leaders of the 17th Ward Coalition, along with ward elders and residents, participated in the tour.



Ensuring Fire Safety: VMC Commissioner Inspects Public Establishments



TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 21

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner Dhyana Chandra conducted fire safety inspections on Thursday, assessing fire prevention measures at Saint Mary Vijay Convent in Carmel Nagar and Metro Wholesale Mart in Chuttugunta. During the visit, the Commissioner emphasized the importance of strict adherence to fire safety protocols and stated that permissions would not be granted if safety measures were inadequate. At Saint Mary Vijay Convent, he personally reviewed the fire exits, fire extinguisher usage, and emergency response measures. Fire department per-

sonnel provided awareness sessions on the immediate steps to take in case of a fire. At Metro Wholesale Mart, the Commissioner checked for sufficient space for fire engines to operate and inspected fire safety equipment, including smoke detectors, sprinklers, hydrants, and alarms. He directed officials to remove an encroachment in the setback area, ensuring compliance with safety regulations. Accompanying officials included Zonal Commissioner Prabhudas, District Fire Officer Malyadri, Regional Fire Officer Venkateswara Rao, Chief City Planner G.V.G.S.V. Prasad, and others.

18 Anganwadi School Students Fall Ill After Consuming Contaminated Food

TPN Correspondent
Mylavaram, Feb 21

Eighteen students of Chimalapadu Peddathanda Anganwadi School in A Kondur Mandal fell ill after consuming contaminated food on Thursday. The affected children began experiencing vomiting and diarrhea shortly after eating, causing panic among parents and school staff. Upon noticing their deteriorating condition, 12 students were rushed to Mylavaram Government Hospital, where they are currently undergoing treatment. Doctors are closely monitoring their health, while others who showed mild symptoms were treated locally. Speaking to the media, Mylavaram Government Hospital Superintendent Dr. Jayaprakash stated that all necessary medical care is

being provided and that the condition of the children is stable. Authorities are investigating the cause of the contamination, and food samples have been collected for testing. Local officials and Anganwadi supervisors have been alerted, and further action is expected based on the test results.



Police Seized 290 Bags of Stolen PDS Rice, Three Arrested in Eluru



TPN Correspondent
Eluru, Feb 21

Eluru Rural Police successfully recovered a lorry loaded with 290 bags of PDS rice, which had gone missing near the Eluru FCI godown on January 29. The incident was brought to light during a media briefing by Eluru DSP D. Shraavan Kumar at the Eluru Rural Police Station on Thursday. Following a complaint by the lorry driver about the missing vehicle, the police launched an investigation. On Thursday morning, a team led by Eluru One Town CI G. Satyanarayana, Rural SI CHK Durga Prasad, and their staff tracked down the stolen lorry at Badampudi Housing Colony, Ungutur Mandal.

Three accused were arrested at the scene:

Janyavula Sudhakar (Eluru)
Dudala Dhanaraju
(Nadilli, Peravali Mandal)
Kollepara Manikanthal
(Undrajavaram)

According to DSP Shraavan Kumar, Sudhakar had orchestrated the theft and, along with his accomplices, planned to sell the rice in Visakhapatnam. The police successfully seized the lorry and the stolen rice before the sale could take place.

DSP Shraavan Kumar commended the Eluru 1 Town CI G. Satyanarayana, Eluru CCS CI CH. Rajasekhar, Eluru Rural SI CHK Durga Prasad, Eluru 1 Town SI K. Nagababu, and their teams for their swift action in solving the case. The accused have been remanded into custody, and further investigations are ongoing.

Collector Tamim Ansaria Stresses Promotion of Natural Farming

TPN Correspondent
Ongole, Feb 21

Prakasam District Collector A. Tamim Ansaria emphasized the need to promote natural farming and reduce chemical usage in agriculture to improve public health. Addressing a special meeting with officials from Agriculture, Horticulture, Natural Farming, and DRDA at the Prakasam Bhavan Grievance Hall on Thursday, she urged officials to create widespread awareness among farmers on this initiative.

The Collector highlighted that lifestyle changes have impacted health, and food should act as medicine to counter these effects. She pointed out that natural farming is a sustainable alternative, aligning with

the Swarna Andhra Vision - 2047, which envisions a prosperous, healthy, and happy state.

She instructed officials to: Encourage organic farming and ensure proper marketing for naturally grown products. Integrate natural farming discussions into self-help group (SHG) meetings.

Promote backyard farming for households with limited space.

Use mobile apps and scientific guidance to educate farmers on best agricultural practices. The meeting focused on preparing an action plan for the upcoming Kharif season, ensuring farmers receive the necessary support and knowledge to transition towards sustainable agricultural methods.



CPM Slams MLA for Ignoring Elite Land Encroachments

TPN Correspondent
Bhimavaram, Feb 21

CPM District Secretary J.N.V. Gopalan criticized MLA Raghuramakrishnam Raju, questioning whether he had the courage to take action against influential landowners encroaching on government lands, instead of evicting poor families who have lived in A.S.R. Nagar, Palakoduru village for over 40 years.

On Thursday, Gopalan, along with CPM District Committee Member Jakkamsetty Satyanarayana, inspected the government land where 130 poor families are facing eviction by local authorities.

Speaking on the occasion, Gopalan stated that:

Notices are only being issued to the poor while landlords and powerful individuals

who have illegally occupied government lands remain untouched.

The MLA should reclaim lands occupied by the elite in the constituency before demolishing poor settlements.

He accused the MLA of practicing "bulldozer politics" similar to BJP-led policies seen elsewhere, causing distress to vulnerable families.

The claim that houses of the poor are polluting local canals is scientifically

Gopalan challenged the MLA to prove his commitment to public welfare by ensuring clean drinking water is provided to all villages through a pipeline from Dhavaleswaram.

He warned that the CPM would launch protests if poor families were forcibly displaced to benefit wealthy landowners.

He questioned whose interests the MLA truly represents—whether he is working for the poor or for the privileged elites.

Gopalan reaffirmed CPM's commitment to real development and stated that forcing people onto the streets in the name of progress is unacceptable.



NDA Leaders Campaign for MLC Candidate Pera Bathula Rajasekhar

TPN | Vamsikrishna
Anaparthi, Feb 21

Anaparthi MLA Nallamilli Ramakrishna Reddy has emphasized that public welfare remains the primary goal of the NDA alliance. In line with his instructions, alliance leaders have intensified their campaign to ensure the victory of Pera Bathula Rajasekhar, the NDA-backed MLC candidate for the joint West-East Godavari districts.

As part of this campaign, Polamuru Telugu Branch president Dwarampudi Eshwar Reddy led efforts in Polamuru, urg-

ing graduate voters to cast their first preference vote for Rajasekhar in the elections scheduled for February 27. The leaders personally visited households, interacting with voters and requesting their support to secure Rajasekhar's victory.

Village leaders Saththi Satyanarayana Reddy, Medapati Venkata Reddy, Neelam Nag-eswara Rao, Yagina Ratna Raju, along with NDA alliance leaders and activists, actively participated in the campaign, reinforcing the importance of Rajasekhar's win for the region's development.



Strict Action Against Illegal Silencers in Vizianagaram

250 illegal silencers seized and destroyed by police

TPN Correspondent
Vizianagaram, Feb 21

Vizianagaram District Police have intensified their crackdown on illegal motorcycle silencers, warning that strict action will be taken against violators. District SP Vakul Jindal, IPS, led a special operation where 250 illegally modified silencers were seized and destroyed using a road roller.

SP Vakul Jindal stated that replacing or modifying a vehicle's silencer is a violation of the law and disrupts public peace, especially affecting pedestrians, children, and heart patients. The police have been conducting special drives for the past six months to identify and remove silencers that do not comply with regulations, including brands like Indore, Punjab, and Rocket silencers.

As part of the Motor Vehicle Act enforcement, vehicles equipped with such silencers will be seized, and owners will face a ₹10,000 fine. So far, fines ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹2,50,000 have been imposed on violators. To ensure the



silencers are not reused, the police crushed them under a road roller.

SP Vakul Jindal further urged motorists to follow road safety rules, avoid speeding and triple riding, and always wear helmets for their safety and the safety of others.

The program was attended by Vizianagaram DSP M. Srinivasa Rao, Transport Commissioner D. Manikumar, Traffic CI Surinayudu, SB CIs A.V. Leela Rao, R.V.R.K. Chowdhury, 1st City CI S. Srinivasa, 2nd City CI T. Srinivasa Rao, MVI Muralikrishna, and several other police officials and personnel. Authorities have assured that special enforcement drives will continue to curb illegal modifications and ensure compliance with vehicle safety norms.

A Plane was Spotted Flying Over Tirumala Hill

TPN | C. Sekhar
Tirumala, Feb 21

Devotees and authorities were once again alarmed as another aircraft was seen flying over the Tirumala hill near the sacred Srivari temple. The incident has raised fresh concerns about the security and sanctity of the temple, which is one of the most revered pilgrimage sites in the country. Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha, who had addressed similar concerns last week, reiterated that any movement of aircraft over the Srivari temple is unacceptable. She emphasized that necessary steps will be taken to prevent further incidents. "The move-

ment of planes over the temple is not good. We will discuss this issue with the relevant departments and take appropriate action," she assured.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has already urged the central government to declare Tirumala a 'No-Fly Zone' to preserve the spiritual sanctity of the temple. However, there has been no official confirmation regarding any violations of aviation regulations. Officials are expected to conduct an inquiry into the matter.

Further updates on the issue will follow as discussions progress.



Widening of ADB Road Begins Amid Protests in Jaggampeta

TPN | V. Ananthkumar
Jaggampeta, Feb 21

The long-awaited widening of the Peddapuram to Rajanagaram ADB road has commenced, marking a significant step towards addressing the road's poor condition. For years, motorists have faced difficulties due to potholes and congestion, prompting the authorities to clear encroachments for the expansion project.

As part of this effort, officials in Gandepalli mandal began removing houses encroaching on the ADB road junction in Rameshwarampet. The operation was overseen by Peddapuram RDO Sri Ramani, local Tahsildar Srinivas, VROs, and revenue staff. To maintain order, Peddapuram DSP Srihari Raju, Jaggampeta CI Vair K Srinivas, Gandepalli SI Shiva Nagababu, and other police officials deployed 70 personnel to ensure a smooth execution of the eviction process.

However, residents losing their homes expressed their grievances, alleging unfair treatment. Some villagers claimed they had approached Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for intervention but received no relief. They accused



officials of acting arbitrarily and demolishing homes without considering their plight.

A major point of contention is the compensation amount.

The affected residents claim that the same compensation of ₹8 lakh is being offered regardless of whether they lost 64 yards or 130 yards of land. The local Tahsildar responded by stating that the compensation had been deposited in the victims' accounts long ago and that multiple notices had been served, urging them to vacate. Authorities further clarified that residents were informed via a public announcement on Wednesday, but since they did not vacate voluntarily, police intervention was required.

R&B department engineers and officials have since moved forward with the widening process, despite the opposition from the affected families. The situation remains tense as the displaced villagers continue to protest the demolition and demand a fair resolution.

Vanamahotsavam Celebrated at Mandapeta Govt Degree College



TPN | Mahesh
Mandapeta, Feb 21

Mandapeta Government Degree College hosted a Vanamahotsavam program on February 20, 2025, with the support of Pradam Educational Foundation, Anaparthi, and Nursing Teacher P. Sirisha. As part of the green initiative, about 30 banana saplings were planted in the recently established Sri Palla Venkanna Botanical Garden within the college premises.

Speaking at the event, College

Principal Dr. T.K.V. Srinivasa Rao appreciated the students' involvement in environmental conservation. Botany faculty Chapala Abhinay highlighted the ecological benefits of tree plantation and expressed his satisfaction in contributing to the greenery of the campus.

College faculty members Ramakrishna, Chandrasekhar, and several others participated in the program, encouraging students to take an active role in afforestation efforts.

Rekha Gupta: BJP's Chief Minister Choice Reflects a Decade-Long Strategy



By appointing Rekha Gupta, a first-time MLA, as the Chief Minister of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, the BJP leadership has continued a well-established pattern that has been fine-tuned over the last decade by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The BJP has consistently chosen relatively younger leaders, in their 40s or 50s, who are committed to the party's ideology, have proven organizational capabilities, and are seen as capable of managing the state's affairs for the long term. Rekha Gupta, known for her approachable and friendly demeanor, may not have been as widely recog-

nized as some of her colleagues in the party, but her rise to leadership speaks volumes about her dedication and political acumen. She does not exhibit the typical aura that one might expect from a high-profile politician, which sets her apart. However, her extensive background in party work and leadership has earned her respect within the BJP. Her political journey began in student politics, where she first gained prominence as the General Secretary of the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) in 1995, a position she won as a nominee of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the RSS. Despite facing

setbacks, including a loss in the 2015 assembly elections and the Mayor's election to AAP, Rekha Gupta did not back down. She remained persistent and continued her work in various capacities, including as the Chairperson of different municipal committees, Vice President of the BJP's National Mahila Morcha, and General Secretary of the party's Delhi unit. In the 2025 assembly election, she triumphed with a significant margin of nearly 30,000 votes, which is remarkable by Delhi's standards.

Rekha Gupta has been widely praised as an excellent choice to lead Delhi, a rare consensus in today's polarized political climate. With no baggage from the past and a spotless track record, she represents a refreshing change. Her identity as a woman and her roots in the Vaishya community, two key social support bases for the BJP, are additional advantages. In terms of leadership style, Gupta brings a contrast to the aggressive and confrontational politics of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), particularly the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal and his close associate Atishi. Her style is one of poise and conciliation, signaling a potential shift toward a more cooperative approach. For voters seeking change, Rekha Gupta embodies this new direction. Gupta has also assembled a promising cabinet, including key leaders such as Pravesh Sahib Singh Verma, Ashish Sood, Majinder Singh Sirsa, Kapil Mishra, Ravindra Indraj Singh,

and Pankaj Kumar Singh. These individuals represent different regions of Delhi and various social segments, ensuring broad representation within the government.

The broader goals and expectations for the new BJP government in Delhi were outlined by PM Modi during his address to party workers at the national headquarters following the election results. With the BJP now in power both in Delhi and at the Centre, there is hope that the tensions between the Delhi Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister, which had become a daily feature under AAP's rule, will finally subside. The new government is expected to work in harmony with the Centre to deliver effective governance.

Even before Gupta's swearing-in, efforts to clean the Yamuna River had already begun, with images of machines being used to clean the water going viral. Additionally, repair work on damaged roads in certain areas has already started.

In line with her promises, Gupta's first major announcement as Chief Minister was to transfer ₹2,500 as monthly assistance to eligible women's bank accounts by March 8, International Women's Day.

While Gupta faces significant challenges, the resources and support from the Modi government offer her a unique opportunity to transform Delhi into a model city known for its hygiene, infrastructure, and governance.



Congress Reshuffle: Rahul Chooses His Inner Circle, But Can They Deliver?



The Congress party has recently carried out a long-awaited reshuffle in its secretariat, but it appears to be a half-hearted effort, especially coming after three consecutive state poll defeats. The reshuffle includes the appointment of two new general secretaries and a handful of changes to the party's state in-charges. The central question is whether this new team can strengthen Rahul Gandhi, who, after reaching a high point last year with 99 seats in the Lok Sabha, is now facing a challenging period.

Rahul's Inner Circle

It is clear that Rahul Gandhi has carefully chosen his inner circle, promoting trusted allies who have been working behind the scenes. One common criticism of Gandhi has been that he fails to bring the party along with him and often operates independently. However, with his close associates now in prominent positions, that perception could change.

The new appointments are strategic,

with many of them being leaders from marginalized or minority communities. Bhupesh Baghel, former Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, has been appointed as general secretary for Punjab, while Syed Naseer Hussain will handle Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Other key appointments include Ajay Kumar Lallu for Odisha, B.K. Hariprasad for Haryana, and Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka for Manipur, Sikkim, Tripura, and Nagaland. Former MP Meenakshi Natrajan will handle Telangana, and K. Raju will take over Jharkhand.

Can This Reshuffle Change Congress's Fate?

The reshuffle raises the question: Can this team change the Congress's fortunes? That remains uncertain. Although Mallikarjun Kharge holds the position of Congress President, K.C. Venugopal, the General Secretary for Organization, continues to be the true power broker behind the scenes, largely due to his strong ties to the Gandhi family. Priyanka

Gandhi Vadra also holds a significant role, though her exact function in the party remains ambiguous. One notable aspect of the reshuffle is that the "old guard" has been largely sidelined, with many experienced leaders passed over in favor of younger figures. This could be seen as Rahul Gandhi's attempt to reassert control and break away from the legacy of senior leaders whose authority he may find limiting.

Focus on Bihar and Punjab

Two key regions stand out in the reshuffle: Punjab and Bihar. Baghel's appointment to Punjab is curious, given his recent track record of failure in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. With BJP, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), and AAP all vying for influence in Punjab, it remains to be seen if Baghel's leadership will help Congress regain ground.

In Bihar, the Congress continues to play second fiddle to the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The appointment of Krishna Allavaru, a relatively low-profile leader, as the in-charge for Bihar, suggests that the Congress is content with its junior status within the alliance. This aligns with Rahul Gandhi's recent efforts to strengthen ties with Lalu Prasad Yadav and his son, Tejashwi, further signaling Congress's dependence on regional parties in key states like Bihar and Puducherry.

A Deeper Issue: Lack of Soul-Searching

The Congress party's primary issue is that it has not engaged in any serious soul-searching since its near-collapse in the 2014 general elections. The formation of the INDIA bloc—an alliance of opposition parties—is essentially an admission that Congress cannot defeat the BJP alone.



The reshuffle, which includes two new general secretaries and nine new in-charges, is unlikely to energize party workers or address the party's deep-rooted challenges. Although the new appointees are trusted by Rahul Gandhi, their effectiveness remains to be seen, especially as the future of the INDIA bloc is uncertain. Furthermore, Congress continues to face an existential crisis in states like Tamil Nadu and

West Bengal, where it struggles to maintain relevance.

In conclusion, the success of this reshuffle hinges more on Rahul Gandhi's leadership than on the new team itself. It remains to be seen if this team can deliver the much-needed revitalization for Congress, or if it will simply be another chapter in the party's ongoing struggle.



PM Modi, Murmu and Amit Shah greet people of Arunachal, Mizoram on statehood day

- Hails Mizoram's traditions, Arunachal's biodiversity
- Calls both states symbols of India's rich cultural heritage
- Emphasizes unity, development, of the states

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Droupadi Murmu, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah extended their heartfelt greetings to the people of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram as both states marked their Statehood Day.

Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram attained the status of states on February 20, 1987. Prime Minister Modi took to social media to share warm wishes with the people of Mizoram, highlighting the state's breathtaking landscapes, deep-rooted traditions, and the warmth of its people. "Warm greetings to the people of Mizoram on their



Statehood Day! This vibrant state is known for its breathtaking landscapes, deep-rooted traditions and the remarkable warmth of its people," PM Modi wrote. He further lauded the Mizo culture, calling it a beautiful blend of heritage and harmony. The Prime Minister wished for Mizoram to continue to prosper and achieve even greater heights in the future.

In a separate post, PM Modi also greeted the people of Arunachal Pradesh, emphasizing the state's rich traditions and its close connection to nature. He praised the hardworking and dynamic people of the state for their contributions

to India's growth. Modi noted that Arunachal Pradesh's vibrant tribal heritage and stunning biodiversity made the state truly special. "May Arunachal Pradesh continue to flourish, and may its journey of progress and harmony continue to soar in the years to come," he added.

President Droupadi Murmu also conveyed her warm greetings, acknowledging both states as being blessed with abundant natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. In her message, she described Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram as exemplifying the best of India. She expressed her belief that both states represent the diverse and vibrant fabric of the nation.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah joined in the celebrations, recognizing the importance of these states in the national landscape. His greetings echoed the sentiments of unity, development, and progress, highlighting the significant role that Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram play in India's growth and success.

As Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram celebrate their Statehood Day, the leaders' messages reflect a commitment to continued development, harmony, and the celebration of the unique cultural identities of these two states.



Calcutta High Court Chief Justice Recuses Himself from R.G. Kar Rape and Murder PIL Case
TPN Correspondent | J&K

Calcutta High Court Chief Justice T.S. Sivagnanam recused himself on Thursday from hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed in connection with the rape and murder of a junior doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College & Hospital in August last year. The PIL had been filed against former Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Kumar Goyal, alleging that he revealed the victim's identity while interacting with the media, which led to nationwide protests.

As the case came before the division bench of Chief Justice Sivagnanam and Justice Chaitali Chatterjee, the Chief Justice expressed his desire to step down from the case for personal reasons. He directed the court authorities to remove the matter from the cause list, and it will now be referred to another division bench for hearing.

The PIL, filed in November last year during the height of protests following the tragic incident, sought the registration of an FIR against Goyal. The division bench had earlier directed the Union Department of Personnel & Training (DOPT) to be included as a party in the case, as it is the cadre-control authority for all Indian Police Service (IPS) officers like Goyal. The court sought an affidavit from DOPT explaining what action could be taken against any all-India service officer for breaching the law.

The Union government had informed the Calcutta High Court that there were no restrictions preventing the West Bengal government from taking action against Goyal. It also mentioned that the petitioner could make a fresh appeal if the state government failed to act.

Goyal, who is currently the Additional Director General of the West Bengal Police's Special Task Force (STF), faced widespread criticism for his handling of the initial investigation. Junior doctors had demanded his removal, and the Chief Minister eventually replaced him with Manoj Kumar Verma. The investigation was later transferred to the CBI.

Both the Supreme Court and the Calcutta High Court had previously made strong observations about the revelation of the victim's identity. It remains to be seen which division bench will now hear the case.



Maharashtra Minister Manikrao Kokate Gets 2-Year Jail In Cheating Case

TPN Correspondent | Nashik

Maharashtra Agriculture Minister and NCP leader Manikrao Kokate was sentenced to two years in prison by a Nashik court on Thursday in connection with a 1995 case. The case involved charges of submitting fake documents to obtain flats under a government quota meant for the Low Income Group (LIG).

Following the conviction, Kokate told reporters that the court had granted him bail, and he planned to challenge the judgment by filing an appeal in the High Court.

The court also convicted Kokate's brother, Sunil Kokate, in the same case, imposing a fine of Rs 50,000 each on both brothers. However, two other individuals involved in the case were acquitted by the court. The case was originally filed in 1995 based on a complaint by former minister, the late T. S. Dighole, who had political differences with Kokate.

According to the prosecution, the Kokate brothers had been allotted two flats in the Yeolakar Mala area of Nashik under the Chief Minister's 10% discretionary quota, which was meant for LIG citizens. The brothers allegedly misrepresented their eligibility by falsely claiming to belong to the LIG category and denying ownership of any property in the city.

The case was brought to light when Dighole lodged a complaint, prompting a police investigation. The Kokate brothers were charged with cheating, forgery, and other offenses under the Indian Penal Code.

The ruling has sparked political reactions, with the rival NCP (SP) calling for Kokate's resignation following the verdict. Kokate's situation could also lead to his disqualification as an MLA if he does not receive relief from the High Court.

This case adds to the challenges facing the NCP, as Kokate is the second minister in the Ajit Pawar-led NCP faction of the BJP-led state government to face legal troubles. Cabinet Minister Dhananjay Munde is currently under scrutiny following his aide's arrest in an extortion case linked to a village sarpanch's murder in Beed district in December 2024.

Week After President's Rule, Manipur Governor's 7-Day Arms Ultimatum

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla has called on people from all communities in the state to surrender any looted or illegally held weapons and ammunition within the next seven days. In a statement issued today, Governor Bhalla emphasized that no punitive action would be taken against those who comply with this directive before the deadline. However, he warned that strict legal measures would follow for those who fail to return illegal weapons after the seven-day period.

This announcement comes as Manipur continues to grapple with the aftermath of violent ethnic clashes between the Meitei community and the Kuki tribes that have disrupted the region for nearly two years. These tensions, compounded by the state's open border with Myanmar, have led to significant unrest, forcing the government to take drastic measures. Currently, Manipur is under President's rule, following the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh and his council of ministers on February 9. The state assembly is now in suspended animation, with elected members no longer holding power.

Governor Bhalla's call for disarmament is part of an effort to restore peace and normalcy in a region that has endured immense hardship over the past



20 months. The violence, which has deeply affected both the valley and hill areas of the state, has disrupted daily life and led to the loss of numerous lives. In his statement, the Governor urged all communities, whether from the valley or the hills, to actively participate in ceasing hostilities and working towards maintaining peace and order.

The appeal for the voluntary surrender of weapons aims to defuse ongoing tensions and create a more secure environment for the people of Manipur. While the Governor expressed understanding for the suffering endured by the people, he stressed the importance of collective responsibility in ensuring the restoration of harmony. The state's leadership, now under President's rule, is hoping this initiative will help bring an end to the violence and allow residents to return to their normal lives.

UGC draft regulations 2025 aimed at sidelining states from higher education: Kerala CM

TPN Correspondent | Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan strongly criticized the draft University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations of 2025 on Thursday, stating that they significantly diminish and even sideline the role of state governments in higher education. Speaking at a National Convention on the draft UGC regulations, attended by ministers from neighboring states like Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, Vijayan expressed concerns about the implications for state autonomy.

Vijayan pointed out that under the draft regulations, the appointment of Vice Chancellors (VCs) would be under the control of Chancellors, who are typically Governors appointed by the central government. He warned that this could lead to politically motivated selections that would harm the quality of higher education. The Kerala CM highlighted what he called "gubernatorial excesses" experienced in opposition-ruled states, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Punjab, where Governors have interfered in university affairs.

He also referenced the state's previous experience with former Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, who had withheld assent to bills related to university administration, forcing the state government to approach the Supreme Court. Vijayan further criticized the draft regulations for introducing "new and arbitrary criteria" for the promotion of academic staff, describing these changes as an infringement on the autonomy of states.



Maharashtra Dy CM Eknath Shinde receives death threat; email warns of blowing up his car



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde received a death threat via email on Thursday, February 20, which warned of an explosion targeting the Shiv Sena leader's car. Along with Shinde, the Goregaon and JJ Marg police stations and the Mantralaya (state secretariat) also received similar threatening messages.

Mumbai Police, along with the Crime Branch, have launched a detailed investigation to trace the sender's IP address and identify those responsible for the threat. In response to the incident, security around Shinde has been bolstered to ensure his safety.

Shinde is currently in Delhi to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Rekha Gupta as Delhi's Chief Minister. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed his joy, stating, "It is a matter of joy that our 'Ladli Behna' (beloved sister) will take the oath in Delhi... We thank PM Modi for this." The ceremony was attended by various political leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and other key Union Ministers and NDA Chief Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

This is not the first time that Shinde has faced a death threat. Earlier, in February 2024, a 19-year-old college student had issued similar threats to Shinde and his son, MP Shrikant Shinde, via social media. The accused student, identified as Shubham Warkad, was arrested by the Mumbai Crime Branch from Pune on February 16, 2024. He had posted the threats on the social media platform X, prompting immediate police intervention.

Authorities had charged Warkad under sections 506(2) and 505(1)(B) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The police investigation into the recent death threat continues, with heightened vigilance around the Deputy CM's security.

Indian Man Arrested For Balloon Explosion That Injured Nepal Deputy PM Bishnu Paudel



TPN Correspondent | Kathmandu

An Indian national, Kamlesh Kumar, has been arrested in Nepal in connection with an incident during the inauguration of the 'Visit Pokhara Year 2025' tourism event, where Deputy Prime Minister Bishnu Paudel sustained minor burn injuries. Police revealed that Kumar was responsible for filling hydrogen gas into balloons, which later exploded during the ceremony.

The explosion occurred on February 15, shortly after Paudel and Pokhara Metropolitan City Mayor Dhanraj Acharya released the hydrogen gas-filled balloons along with a banner. This was part of a symbolic gesture that included lighting candles through an electric switch. The balloons caught fire when the flames from the candles were too close, causing them to explode. Both Paudel and Acharya suffered burns and were airlifted to Kathmandu for medical treatment.

Following the incident, a case was filed against the 41-year-old Kumar in Kaski district court, as confirmed by Deputy Superintendent of Police Basanta Sharma. The explosion was reportedly triggered by a spark from the automatic switch that ignited the hydrogen-filled balloons.

The incident was captured on video by numerous social media users, with footage showing the balloons bursting into a large explosion and injuring those nearby. Paudel, who also serves as Nepal's finance minister, and Acharya suffered burns on their hands and faces. Paudel was discharged from Kirtipur Burn Hospital in Kathmandu on Monday after receiving treatment, while Acharya remained under medical care for a few more days.

In response to the incident, Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak quickly formed an investigation committee to look into the matter and determine the cause and responsibility for the explosion. The event, which was meant to highlight tourism in Pokhara, turned tragic due to the mishandling of hazardous materials.



Russia Holds "The Cards" In Peace Talks With Ukraine: Trump

TPN Correspondent | Russia

US President Donald Trump has stated that Russia holds a significant advantage in the ongoing peace talks regarding the Russia-Ukraine war, as they control a large portion of Ukrainian territory. In comments reported by the BBC, Trump expressed his belief that Russia has the upper hand in negotiations due to their territorial gains. "I think the Russians want to see the war end, I really do. I think they have the cards a little bit, because they've taken a lot of territory. They have the cards," he said.

This statement comes in the wake of a high-level meeting between US officials, led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and top Russian diplomats in Saudi Arabia on February 18. Ukraine was notably absent from the talks, prompting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to cancel his planned visit, which had been scheduled for Wednesday.

Trump addressed the situation at a press conference at his residence in Florida, questioning Ukraine's absence from the discussions. "Today I heard, 'Oh, well, we weren't invited.' Well, you've been there for three years. You should have ended it three years ago. You should have never started it. You could have made a deal," Trump remarked.

In response to the US-Russia talks, Zelensky criticized Trump, stating that the former president was operating in a "disinformation space." He expressed his disapproval of Trump's stance, suggesting that it lacked understanding of the situation's complexity.

Meanwhile, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed that Russia is open to continuing discussions with the US on all fronts. Peskov stated that Russia "absolutely agrees with the American administration" that negotiations are essential to achieve peace and end the conflict as soon as possible.

Germany Prepares for Critical Federal Election: A Race Between Scholz, Merz, and Weidel

- Germany votes on February 23 to elect a new chancellor
- Scholz, Merz, and Weidel lead a highly competitive race
- CDU leads in polls; coalition talks expected post-election

TPN Correspondent | Berlin

Germany is set to hold its crucial federal election on Sunday, February 23, with voters choosing the next chancellor to shape the future of the country and its role within the European Union. The election follows the collapse of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition government at the end of 2024, prompting snap polls to determine Germany's leadership. Scholz, seeking a second term, faces strong opposition from Friedrich Merz, the leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and Alice Weidel, a far-right candidate from the Alternative for Germany (AfD).

Top Contenders

Olaf Scholz: The 66-year-old incumbent from the Social Democrats (SPD) has served as chancellor since December 2021. Scholz is seeking re-election after leading efforts to modernize Germany's military, supply weapons to Ukraine, and tackle energy shortages. However, his three-party coalition suffered infighting, leading to its collapse in November 2024.

Friedrich Merz: At 69, Merz is the leader of the CDU and the front-runner in the race, according to recent polls. A conservative voice, Merz has made curbing immigration a central issue. Though he lacks direct government experience, his leadership has brought the CDU to prominence after Angela Merkel's tenure.



Robert Habeck: The 55-year-old co-leader of the Green Party, currently serving as vice chancellor and economy and climate minister, is another key contender. Habeck's tenure has been marked by his role in managing energy issues and spearheading environmental policies, though his ministry's proposals on heating systems have been divisive.

Alice Weidel: The 46-year-old economist is leading the far-right AfD in a historic bid for chancellor. Though the AfD is unlikely to form a government, Weidel's candidacy highlights the growing influence of far-right politics in Germany.

Election Outlook and Coalition Dynamics

Election results are expected to be confirmed by Sunday evening, though final outcomes may take longer due to post-election vote counting. Germany's proportional voting system often leads to coalition governments, making post-election negotiations crucial. Given the fragmentation in German politics, coalition talks could extend for months.

With no party likely to win an outright majority, the key to forming a stable government will lie in alliances between the SPD, CDU, Greens, and possibly the AfD. Recent polls show the CDU leading with 30%, followed by the AfD at 20%. Scholz's SPD has dropped to third with just 16%, highlighting the shifting political landscape in Germany.

India Responds After Illegal Migrants Deported By US Seek "Help" In Panama



TPN Correspondent | Panama City

India is working closely with Panamanian authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of Indian migrants who were recently deported by the United States to Panama. According to the Indian embassy in Panama, the deportees are currently safe and secure at a hotel where they are being detained. The embassy confirmed that the migrants have access to essential facilities, and a consular team has been granted access to provide assistance.

"Panamanian authorities have informed us that a group of Indians have reached Panama from the US. They are safe and secure at a hotel with all essential facilities. Embassy team has obtained consular access. We are working closely with the host Government to ensure their well-being," the embassy said in a statement on X (formerly Twitter).

This announcement follows reports that nearly 300 migrants, including individuals from India, Iran, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China, were being held in

Panama after being deported from the United States under former President Donald Trump's administration. Some deportees were seen displaying desperate messages through their hotel room windows, pleading for help and stating, "We are not safe in our country."

In response, Panama's authorities have denied claims that the migrants are being detained against their will. Panamanian Security Minister Frank Abrego stated that these deportees are receiving medical care and food as part of a migration agreement between Panama and the United States. However, they are not allowed to leave the hotel until arrangements are made for their repatriation to their countries of origin.

The United States has been using Panama as a transit point for deportees due to logistical challenges in deporting individuals directly to certain countries. Costa Rica is also expected to receive a similar flight carrying third-country deportees. The US has adopted a tough stance on undocumented migration under President Trump, with plans to deport large numbers of individuals as part of his administration's immigration policies.

Why Would One Be Afraid?: Mexican President On Donald Trump's Threats

TPN Correspondent | Mexico

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has expressed confidence in the face of US President Donald Trump's threats of mass deportations, trade tariffs, and military intervention to combat drug cartels. Sheinbaum, speaking at a daily press conference, stated that she does not fear Trump's warnings because she has the support of the Mexican people.

When asked about Trump's recent comments, Sheinbaum confidently responded, "No. I have the support of the people. When one has certainty and conviction and knows what one's principles are, why would one be afraid?" She emphasized that Mexico's sovereignty would never be violated, and if it were, the entire country would stand together to defend it.

Sheinbaum's remarks followed Trump's



statement that Mexico is "run by drug cartels" and his accusations that Mexican authorities were allowing millions of people to enter the United States illegally. Trump also offered his "help" to curb the flow of immigration.

Sheinbaum allayed concerns over Trump's actions by noting that there is ongoing dialogue between the two governments. She stressed that while Mexico does not support

drug cartels or organized crime, it firmly defends its sovereignty and would not accept any "extraterritorial measures" resulting from the US designating drug cartels as terrorist organizations.

The tension escalated earlier this month when Trump threatened, but later postponed, a 25% tariff on Mexican imports, aimed at pressuring Mexico to take stronger action against its drug cartels. Trump had also ordered the designation of some Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations, a move that is expected to be finalized soon.

In response to Trump's tariff threat, Mexico deployed 10,000 National Guard troops to its northern border. Meanwhile, the Mexican Defense Secretary, Ricardo Trevilla, addressed the issue of US military flights, stating they had not entered Mexican airspace, although their purpose remained unclear.

Domestic Markets Consolidate as Metals, Energy & Auto Support Recovery Amid Global Uncertainty

Domestic stock markets closed slightly lower on Thursday. Consolidation is underway in the benchmark and broad indices. If the respective sectoral indices rebound for a few more days, a direction will emerge for the markets. The indices fell in the morning due to mixed signals from Asian and international markets and FIIs leaving. Later, investors bought attractive shares and found support from metal, energy and auto shares, leading to a recovery. Nifty 18 and Sensex lost 203 points.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 75,939 in the previous session, opened at 75,672 on Thursday. It touched an intraday low of 75,463. It reached an intraday high of 75,794. It finally closed at 75,735, down 203 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 22,821, touched a low of 22,812 and a high of 22,923. It closed at 22,913, down 19 points. The Nifty Bank fell 235 points to settle at 49,334.

In the Nifty50, 28 companies gained while 22 lost. Shares of auto, media, metal, PSU bank, realty, oil and gas sectors rose. Bank, finance, IT, and private bank shares faced selling pressure. Shriram Finance, NTPC, M&M, BEL, and Adani Ports were the top gainers. HDFC Bank, Maruti, TechM, Tata Consumer, and HCL Tech were the top losers.



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Market breadth in the NSE today turned in favor of buyers. Of the 2,904 shares traded, 1,998 gained and 830 lost. 22 shares hit 52-week highs. 106 hit 52-week lows.

SEBI chief Madhabipuri Buch said that the key performance indicators for IPOs will be completely changed. The rupee strengthened by 28 paise to settle at 86.66 against the dollar. Experts estimated that the impact of Trump's retaliatory tariffs on Indian pharma companies will be minimal, while the US will suffer the most. India Vicks closed down 4.5% today at 14.71. Sri Lankan cabinet has approved NTPC to set up two solar power plants

in Sampur. Goldman Sachs estimates that the impact of Trump's tariffs on India's GDP will be only 0.1 to 0.6 percent. The Indian Defense Ministry has signed a contract worth Rs 1220 crore with Bharat Electronics. Motilal Oswal has given a buy rating to JSW Steel for Rs 1150 crore. It is learnt that LT Minerals has received orders worth Rs 2500-5000 crore from the steel and aluminum sectors. 10 lakh shares have changed hands in Vedanta.

1. BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange)
The Bombay Stock Exchange is one of Asia's oldest and most established stock exchanges. It provides trading, clearing, and settlement services to a wide range



of securities and plays a pivotal role in the Indian capital market. Strong brand reputation and technological upgrades. Beneficiary of increased investor participation and digital trading initiatives. Outlook depends on overall market sentiment and regulatory developments.

2. Shriram Finance

Shriram Finance is a leading NBFC focused on commercial vehicle financing, consumer loans, and other asset-based lending. It is part of the well-regarded Shriram Group. Consistent revenue and profit growth driven by a robust loan portfolio. Solid asset quality with controlled NPAs and strong returns on equity. Positioned well to benefit from rising credit demand and expanding retail finance.



3. Tata Steel

Tata Steel is one of the world's largest steel producers, operating in both domestic and international markets with a diversified product mix. Historically strong revenue growth, though subject to commodity cyclicality. Focus on cost optimization and sustainable practices supports long-term competitiveness. Global steel market trends and infrastructure demand remain key growth drivers.



4. NTPC

NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) is India's largest power utility, primarily engaged in thermal power generation and increasingly investing in renewable energy projects. Stable revenue stream due to long-term power purchase agreements and regulated tariffs. Consistent cash flows and a strong asset base supported by government backing. Expansion into renewable energy enhances its long-term growth outlook.



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5. IGL (Indraprastha Gas Ltd.)

IGL is a leading city gas distribution company in the National Capital Re-



gion, supplying natural gas to residential, commercial, and industrial consumers. Benefits from the growing demand for cleaner fuels and government initiatives to increase urban gas distribution. Consistent revenue and earnings growth with a robust customer base. Profitability can be influenced by regulatory changes and fuel price volatility.

Indian Auto Component Industry Set for Moderate Growth Amid Challenges

The Indian auto component industry is expected to see an 8-10 percent growth in revenue in the financial year 2025-26, according to a report from rating agency ICRA. This follows a more moderate growth projection for the current year, 2024-25, where revenues are forecast to rise by only 7-9 percent, down from the high growth rate of 14 percent witnessed in 2023-24.

Despite this slowdown in growth, ICRA's report indicates that operating margins for the sector are likely to remain stable, hovering between 11-12 percent in both 2024-25 and 2025-26. This stability is expected to be supported by operating leverage, which allows companies to better manage fixed costs as they scale up production, along with an increase in the content per vehicle and added value from the components produced.

However, there are significant challenges facing the industry, particularly in the form of rising ocean freight rates. The ongoing disruptions along the Red Sea route have caused a surge in shipping costs, with rates jumping 2-3 times higher in 2024 compared to the previous year. This surge in ocean freight rates could potentially impact the margins of auto component suppliers, especially those with substantial exports or imports. A further increase in these rates could lead to additional financial strain for businesses that rely heavily on global supply chains.

Looking ahead, ICRA estimates the auto component industry will incur capital expenditures (Capex) of Rs 25,000-30,000 crore in 2025-26. These investments will be directed towards capacity expansion, localisation efforts, and technological advancements, including the development of electric vehicles (EVs). At present, only 30-40 percent of the EV supply chain in India is localised, with progress made in areas such as traction motors, control units, and battery management systems. However, battery cells, which account for 35-40 percent of the vehicle cost, remain fully imported, indicating a continued dependency on global supply chains in the short term.

Overall, while the Indian auto component industry faces a moderate growth outlook and some external challenges, its focus on expanding capacity and localising supply chains—especially in the EV sector—presents opportunities for long-term stability and growth.



India's Economic Outlook Remains Strong Amid Global Uncertainty

India's economic activity is expected to gain momentum in the second half of 2024-25, according to the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monthly bulletin, which highlights the country's resilience despite global challenges. High-frequency indicators point to a recovery in various sectors, with the economy on track to maintain its position as the fastest-growing major economy in the world during 2025-26, with GDP growth estimates of 6.5% from the IMF and 6.7% from the World Bank.

The report underscores that the Union Budget for 2025-26 has struck a balanced approach, prioritizing fiscal consolidation while supporting growth through continued focus on capital expenditure (Capex). The budget also includes measures to boost household incomes and consumption. The effective capital expenditure/GDP ratio is projected to rise to 4.3% in 2025-26 from 4.1% in the previous year, reflecting the government's commitment to long-term infrastruc-



ture development. Retail inflation has moderated to a five-month low of 4.3% in January, driven by a sharp decline in vegetable prices due to the arrival of winter crops. This has helped alleviate cost pressures for consumers. Furthermore, high-frequency indicators indicate a recovery in industrial activity and overall economic momentum during the latter half of 2024-25, after a slower first half.

Sector-specific indicators reflect this recovery: tractor sales, fuel consump-

tion, and air passenger traffic all show positive trends. Rural demand remains robust, buoyed by higher farm incomes, with FMCG sales in rural areas growing by 9.9% in Q3:2024-25, compared to 5.7% in Q2. Urban demand also saw improvement, with a 5% growth in Q3, almost double the growth in the previous quarter.

Investment intentions from the private sector remain stable, with substantial projects sanctioned by banks and financial institutions, totaling nearly ₹1 lakh crore in Q3:2024-25. External Commercial Borrowings and Initial Public Offerings for capital expenditure also showed an uptick.

Despite global uncertainties, including trade tensions and geopolitical risks, India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals have helped cushion the impact, according to the RBI bulletin. The report emphasizes that global trade patterns may undergo a long-term shift due to these uncertainties.

India set to become high-income country by 2047 buoyed by services sector

India is on track to emerge as a high-income country by 2047, with projections indicating its GDP could reach between USD 23 trillion to USD 35 trillion. The services sector will play a significant role in this transformation, contributing around 60 percent to India's GDP by the target year, according to a report by Bain & Company and Nasscom.

Manufacturing will also make a major contribution, expected to account for approximately 32 percent of the GDP. These two sectors—services and manufacturing—are seen as key drivers of India's future economic expansion.

A crucial element in this shift will be the addition of nearly 200 million individuals to the workforce, which presents India with a unique opportunity to create high-value jobs. This demographic change could unlock substantial eco-

nom potential, positioning the country to harness the benefits of a growing, skilled labor force.

The report emphasizes that a sectoral technology roadmap could be instrumental in fueling this transformation. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI)-driven chip design, touchless manufacturing, and backward integration into component manufacturing are expected to make Indian industries more cost-competitive and innovative. As a result, India's technology export share could rise from the current 24 percent to 45-50 percent by 2047, while the sector's contribution to the GDP could grow from 3 percent to between 8-10 percent.



The combination of these factors—economic growth driven by services and manufacturing, a burgeoning workforce, and technological advancements—could position India as a leading global economic powerhouse by mid-century.



WhatsApp Bans Over 8 Million Accounts in a Month



WhatsApp, India's largest social media platform, has banned more than 8.4 million accounts in a single month to curb fraudulent activities and ensure user safety. The move, announced by Meta—the parent company of WhatsApp—comes amid rising concerns about scams and suspicious activities on the platform.

According to Meta's Transparency Re-

port, this mass ban was a direct response to increasing reports from users about fraudulent behavior, prompting the company to take swift action to maintain the integrity of the platform. The banned accounts, totaling approximately 8.45 million, were identified as violating the provisions of Section 4(1)(d) and Section 3A(7) of the Information Technology Act. These measures were part of Meta's ongoing

efforts to uphold safety and compliance within India's digital ecosystem.

The bans took place between August 1 and August 31, with Meta detailing the types of accounts affected. Of the total number, 1.66 million accounts were immediately blocked due to serious violations, while the remaining accounts were banned after thorough investigations revealed suspicious activities. Interestingly, over 1.6 million of these accounts were flagged and banned proactively during routine monitoring, even before receiving specific user complaints. These accounts were found to be engaged in misuse, underlining the importance of early detection in maintaining a safe environment for WhatsApp users.

Meta's aggressive approach reflects its commitment to addressing concerns over fraud on its platforms and improving monitoring systems. The company's actions also serve as a reminder of the increasing responsibility social media platforms have in curbing online scams and providing users with a secure digital experience.

Uber Ditches Commissions for Auto-Rickshaw Drivers Introduces Subscription Model

Uber has announced a major change for auto-rickshaw drivers in India, eliminating its commission fees and replacing them with a subscription model. In a blog post on Tuesday, February 18, the ride-hailing giant revealed that drivers will now keep 100% of the fares earned through the platform.

Previously, Uber charged a commission on each fare, which resulted in drivers receiving only a portion of the total fare. However, with this new model, drivers will no longer face deductions from Uber. Instead, the company will charge a subscription fee for using the platform, allowing drivers to retain the full fare amount paid by passengers.

The shift to a subscription-based structure is designed to offer more earnings stability for auto-rickshaw drivers, particularly during times of fluctuating demand. Uber's move comes as part of its broader efforts to improve relationships with drivers and enhance the overall driver experience.

Uber's decision to move away from com-



missions is seen as a positive step by many auto-rickshaw drivers who often struggled with the impact of commission deductions on their earnings. Now, they will benefit from a predictable cost structure that allows them to keep the entire fare for their services.

The change is expected to have a signifi-

cant impact on Uber's presence in India's auto-rickshaw market, where it competes with local ride-hailing services. By giving drivers greater financial control, Uber hopes to foster better relations with its driver community while ensuring the platform's long-term growth in the Indian market.

Apple iPhone 16e is here with eye on price

Apple introduced the entry-level iPhone 16e on Wednesday, expanding its iPhone 16 lineup with a more affordable model aimed at price-sensitive markets, particularly in regions like India and China. The new iPhone 16e provides nearly identical performance to its higher-priced counterparts but comes at a lower starting price of Rs 59,900. Pre-orders will begin this Friday on Apple's website, with sales set to start on February 28.

The iPhone 16e is equipped with the powerful A18 chip, the same processor found in the flagship iPhone 16 models, ensuring fast and efficient performance. The device also boasts a 6.1-inch OLED display, consistent with the rest of the iPhone 16 series. It includes features like Face ID within a display notch, a customizable Action Button, and a USB-C port, which was first introduced with the iPhone 15. In terms of design, the iPhone 16e has a look reminiscent of the iPhone 14, maintaining a sleek and modern appearance. Notably, the new model is the most affordable iPhone to incorporate Apple's AI capabilities, supporting Apple Intelligence and offering users access to cutting-edge Gen AI features. The iPhone 16e comes with a single-lens 48-megapixel camera, whereas the more expensive iPhone 16 models feature a dual-lens system for enhanced photography.

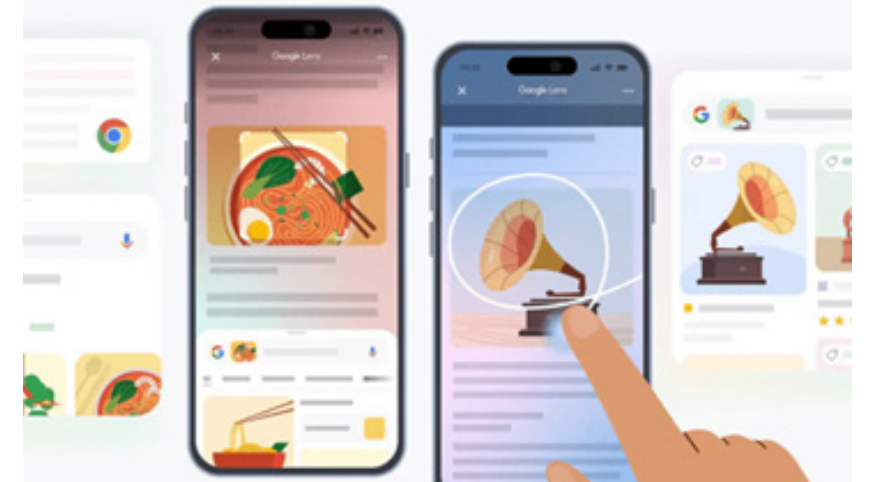
By offering the iPhone 16e, Apple aims to



attract a broader audience, tapping into emerging markets where cost-effective smartphones are in high demand, without compromising on the features that make the iPhone brand so appealing. The

new model delivers a high-quality user experience at a more accessible price, making it an appealing choice for consumers looking for an affordable iPhone with the latest technology.

Google Launches 'Search Screen with Google Lens' for iPhones



In 2024, Google launched an innovative feature called "Circle to Search" for Android users, allowing them to search anything displayed on their screen with a simple gesture. Now, the tech giant has extended this functionality to Apple iPhones with a new feature called "Search Screen with Google Lens."

This enhanced mobile search feature enables iPhone users to search content on their screens without needing to take a screenshot or open a new tab. By using intuitive gestures, such as drawing or highlighting the content they want to search for, users can instantly access search results powered by Google Lens. This allows for a seamless and more efficient search experience.

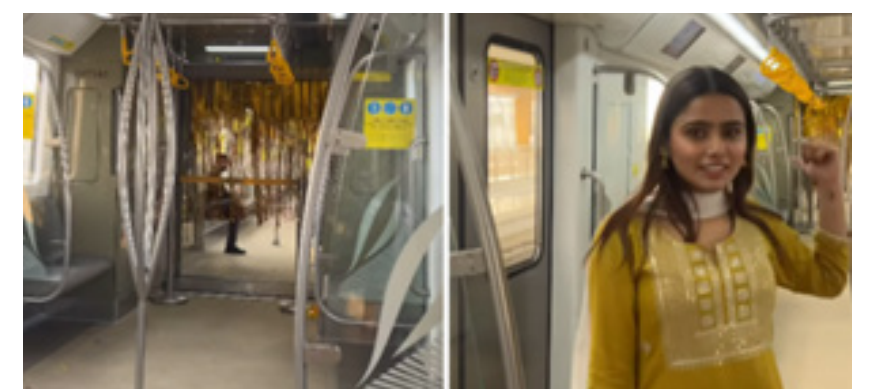
The "Search Screen with Google Lens" feature operates similarly to the Android version, where a user can circle, highlight, or tap text, images, or any other on-screen content. Once the action is performed, Google Lens will instantly analyze the selected content and display rel-

evant search results, making it easier to get more information about anything on the screen in real-time. Additionally, the feature also provides AI-generated overviews, enriching the search experience further.

For example, if users are viewing a foreign language text or an image of an object, they can quickly draw a circle around it, and Google Lens will provide immediate translations or details about the object. This feature brings a new level of convenience to iPhone users by integrating powerful AI technology with mobile search in an interactive way.

This new addition to iOS is part of Google's continued effort to improve and enhance its mobile search capabilities, making it faster, smarter, and more accessible across different platforms. As the search landscape evolves, this feature on iPhones aligns with the growing demand for more efficient, context-sensitive search tools that make information more accessible with minimal effort.

Influencer Claims Haldi Ceremony Took Place Inside Agra Metro Train



A social media influencer has sparked a viral debate after claiming she witnessed a Haldi ceremony taking place inside an Agra Metro train. Divyata Upadhyay, who shared the video on her Instagram account, filmed the unusual event inside a cordoned-off coach of the metro. In the video, Upadhyay pointed out a yellow sparkly curtain hanging at the entrance of the coach, which was allegedly used to separate the designated area for the ceremony. While the exact details inside the coach remained unclear, the influencer claimed that a Haldi function was being organized inside the train.

Upadhyay, sharing her experience with her followers, commented, "Delhi Metro has crowds, we have haldi ceremonies." She explained that, during her journey, she noticed that there were only a few passengers aboard the train, which led her to believe that the authori-

ties may be renting out coaches for private events like these. "It seems like they are renting out coaches for functions," she said. However, the influencer also raised questions regarding the rules of the metro. She pointed out the apparent contradiction, saying, "I have also heard that no eatables are allowed inside the train." The notion of hosting a ceremonial event, which typically involves food and other activities, in a metro train has raised concerns about the logistics and the regulations of the metro system.

While it is unclear whether the event was officially sanctioned, the video sparked widespread attention online, with many users questioning the appropriateness of such an event taking place on public transport. The viral video has since garnered various reactions, with some expressing amusement, while others debated the potential impact on metro operations.

Gill's Century, Shami's Five-Wicket Haul Guide India to Six-Wicket Win Over Bangladesh



Shubman Gill's brilliant century, coupled with Mohammed Shami's career-best five-wicket haul, led India to a comfortable six-wicket victory over Bangladesh in their ICC Champions Trophy opener in Dubai on Thursday. Gill remained

unbeaten on 101 off 129 balls, guiding India to a target of 229 with 3.3 overs to spare. Bangladesh, after opting to bat first, collapsed to 35 for 5 before Towhid Hridoy's fighting 100 (118 balls) lifted them to 228 all out. Shami was the

star with the ball, picking up five wickets for 53 runs and becoming the fastest Indian to reach 200 ODI wickets. India's chase was steady, with Rohit Sharma contributing 41 before falling to Taskin Ahmed. Gill's controlled innings,

alongside important middle-order contributions, ensured India's dominance as they finished at 231 for 4 in 46.3 overs, ahead of their high-stakes match against Pakistan on February 23.

Rohit Sharma Becomes Second Fastest to Complete 11,000 ODI Runs



India's captain, Rohit Sharma, achieved another milestone on Thursday by becoming the second fastest batter to reach 11,000 runs in One-Day Internationals. The milestone came during India's chase of 229 against Bangladesh in their ICC Champions Trophy match, when

he hit Mustafizur Rahman for a boundary in the fourth over. Rohit reached the 11,000-run mark in 261 innings, making him the second fastest behind Virat Kohli, who did it in 222 innings. Rohit is now the fourth Indian and the 10th player overall to achieve this feat.

With 32 centuries and 52 half-centuries, Rohit averages nearly 50 in ODIs and is second on the list of most sixes hit in the format. He follows Sachin Tendulkar (18,246 runs) and is now placed behind Sourav Ganguly (11,363 runs) in the overall ODI run tally.

Fakhar Zaman Ruled Out of ICC Champions Trophy 2025 Due to Injury



In a major blow to Pakistan's ICC Champions Trophy campaign, opener Fakhar Zaman has been ruled out of the remainder of the tournament due to a serious injury. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed the news on Thursday. Zaman sustained a muscular strain while fielding against New Zealand on

February 19 at Karachi's National Bank Stadium. The injury occurred when he sprinted to intercept a shot from New Zealand's Will Young and felt discomfort in his lower back. Despite initially walking off the field with the team physio, he later returned after New Zealand lost their second wicket. Zaman had made 24 off 41

balls before the injury. The PCB stated that Zaman would not travel with the squad to Dubai for their next match, and further medical assessments would be conducted. This injury comes after Saim Ayub was also ruled out of the tournament due to an ankle fracture.

Mohammed Shami Becomes Fastest Indian to Take 200 ODI Wickets



Mohammed Shami etched his name in the record books by becoming the fastest Indian bowler to reach 200 One-Day International wickets during India's ICC Champions Trophy match against Bangladesh in Dubai on Thursday.

Shami achieved this remarkable milestone by taking three wickets in just his 103rd innings, surpassing Ajit Agarkar's previous record of 133 innings. Shami's achievement adds to his growing stature as one of India's

premier fast bowlers, and his five-wicket haul in the same match further solidified his position. Shami's ability to break records and perform consistently under pressure is a testament to his skill and commitment to the game.

Mohammed Shami Becomes Fastest Indian to Take 200 ODI Wickets



India's 17-year-old tennis prodigy Manas Dhamne, alongside experienced players Ramkumar Ramanathan and SD Prajwal Dev, has been granted wild card entries into the singles main draw of the 2025 Bengaluru Open. The ATP Challenger 125 event will take place at the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) courts in Cubbon Park from February 24 to March 2. Dhamne, a rising star in Indian tennis, recently won his first major title at the M15 Monastir in Tunisia and

made history by becoming the youngest player to win a first-round match at the junior Australian Open. Ramanathan, a key player for India's Davis Cup team, and Prajwal Dev, a seasoned ATP Challenger competitor, will bring their vast experience to the competition. In addition, Kriishi Tyagi and Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha will compete in the qualifiers, aiming for spots in the main draw. The doubles event will also feature 16 teams, including top-ranked Indian and international pairs.

Champions League: Real Madrid and Man City Face Do-or-Die Clash

Defending Champions League holders Real Madrid are set for a crucial second-leg showdown against Manchester City in the round of 16. Madrid holds a slender 3-2 lead heading into the return fixture at home, making it a do-or-die situation for both teams. Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola initially suggested his side had just a 1% chance of progressing, but later backtracked, with Madrid's Carlo Ancelotti also dismissing the claim. This marks the fourth consecutive year that these two sides meet in the knockout stages, with the winner advancing to lift the prestigious trophy each time. The stakes are high, as both teams, past champions, face elimination before reaching the quarterfinals. Elsewhere, Paris Saint-Germain and Borussia Dortmund are in command-



ing positions with 3-0 leads over Brest and Sporting Lisbon, respectively. Juventus leads 2-1 going into their second leg against PSV Eindhoven.



Chiranjeevi and Surekha Celebrate Wedding Anniversary on Flight to Dubai



Megastar Chiranjeevi and his wife Surekha recently celebrated their wedding anniversary in a unique and memorable way — on a flight to Dubai. The couple shared the special moment with close friends, including Akkineni Nagarjuna, Amala, Namrata Shirodkar, and others, who were also onboard. Chiranjeevi took to social media to share photos from the celebration, which quickly went viral. In his heartfelt post on 'X' (formerly Twitter), he expressed his deep affection for Surekha, calling her his "dream partner" and acknowledging how lucky he feels to have her by his side. He went on to say, "Her presence is a

constant source of comfort. A great inspiration. She is my motivator." The actor also expressed gratitude to his friends, family, fans, and well-wishers for their warm wishes on their special day. His post read, "Thank you, soulmate. Thank you to all my friends, fans, family, and well-wishers for your wonderful wishes! Bless you!" The beautiful photos of the couple and their friends from the flight have been widely shared, adding to the warmth and joy of their anniversary celebration. Chiranjeevi and Surekha's loving relationship continues to inspire many, showcasing a deep bond that has lasted for decades.



Srileela Charges Rs. 1.75 Crore for Bollywood Debut, Rs. 3 Crore for Telugu Films

Srileela, who made her mark in Tollywood with the film Pelli Sandadi and became a popular face in the industry, is known for charging Rs. 3 crores for each Telugu film. However, for her Bollywood debut, the actress has reportedly agreed to a much lower remuneration of Rs. 1.75 crores. This adjustment in her fee is attributed to her first venture into Bollywood, where she likely accepted a lower pay to establish herself in the new industry. Srileela's career has

seen a mix of successes and challenges, with her pace slowing down due to some flops in between. However, she made a significant comeback with an item song in Pushpa 2, which brought in new opportunities and offers her way. In contrast, Rashmika Mandanna, another popular actress, is reportedly charging Rs. 4 crores for her Bollywood film Chavaa and is receiving similar pay in the South film industry as well.



Rakul Preet Singh: Comfort Over Luxury, Wedding Simplicity was the Key



Rakul Preet Singh, who recently married Bollywood producer Jackie Bhagnani, opened up about their decision to keep their wedding simple and intimate. The couple chose to have a private ceremony with only close friends and family in attendance. One of the unique features of the wedding was the no-phone rule, which sparked rumors that they were concerned about photos and videos leaking. However, Rakul clarified in a recent interview that there was no truth to this speculation. According to Rakul, the intention behind not allowing phones was

to ensure that the guests could fully enjoy the moment without distractions. The actress emphasized that for her, comfort was more important than luxury. She further explained that they wanted to keep the wedding personal and relaxed, focusing on the joy of the occasion rather than on extravagant celebrations. After the ceremony, Rakul shared the wedding photos with the media. On the work front, Rakul is gearing up for the release of her latest film, Mere Husband Ki Biwi, which is set to hit the screens on the 21st of this month.

Did Netflix Actually Remove Urvashi Rautela's Scenes from 'Daku Maharaaj'?



Recent rumors suggested that Netflix had removed Urvashi Rautela's scenes from the Telugu-language action-drama Daaku Maharaaj ahead of its streaming release. However, these claims have been debunked by a reliable source, who clarified that the streaming platform will release the film exactly as it was shown in theaters. Netflix announced that Daaku Maharaaj, starring Nandamuri Balakrishna, would be available for streaming starting February 21, 2025. However, the release poster sparked confusion, as it featured actors like Bobby Deol, Pragya Jaiswal, and Shradha Srinath but omitted Urvashi Rautela, despite her having a significant role in the film. Fans quickly noticed the omission and expressed their surprise online. In response to the backlash, Netflix shared individual character slides later, which included Urvashi's photo, seemingly to address the earlier oversight and acknowledge her presence. Despite the controversy surrounding the poster, the film will stream in its entirety without any alterations, remaining true to the original theatrical cut. Daaku Maharaaj, directed by Bobby Kolli, also stars Rishi, Chandini Chowdary, Pradeep Rawat, and others. The film was released in theaters on January 12, 2025, and will now be available to watch on Netflix.

Ibrahim Ali Khan's Debut Film 'Nadaanian' Set for March 7 Release on Netflix

Ibrahim Ali Khan, son of actors Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh, is all set to make his debut in the film industry with Nadaanian, which will be released on Netflix on March 7, 2025. The romantic drama also stars Khushi Kapoor and is backed by Dharmatic Entertainment, the digital arm of Dharma Productions, helmed by filmmaker Karan Johar.

Directed by Shauna Gautam, Nadaanian follows the story of a South Delhi diva, a middle-class overachiever boy, and an outrageous plan that unravels as they navigate unexpected emotions. Ibrahim plays the role of Arjun Mehta, while Khushi Kapoor stars as Pia Jai Singh. The official synopsis reads: "Hire him as her fake boyfriend to save her squad. But when

real feelings crash their party, can they handle the mess of falling in love?" In addition to Ibrahim and Khushi, the film features an ensemble cast that includes Mahima Chaudhary, Suniel Shetty, Dia Mirza, and Jugal Hansraj. Karan Johar, along with Apoorva Mehta and Somen Mishra, serves as the producer.

